

By Hand

2 January 2015

The Honourable LEUNG Chun Ying GBM GBS JP
The Chief Executive
Office of the Chief Executive
Tamar
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Leung

On behalf of the Institution, I am pleased to present to you our views and suggestions as set out in the enclosure for your consideration in the preparation of the 2015 Policy Address.

With our expertise and experience, the Institution welcomes the opportunity to work with the Government on areas of concern for the benefits of the profession and the general public as a whole.

Yours sincerely



Ir Victor CHEUNG Chi Kong
President
The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

Enc

VC/WC

Cc : Policy Address and Budget Consultation Support Team (Fax: 2147 5770)

**Views from the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
to the Chief Executive for Formulating 2015 Policy Address**

General

As a professional institution striving for sustained excellence in the engineering profession, the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) looks forward to the continuous development in the engineering sector and our further contribution to the betterment of Hong Kong.

2. The HKIE hopes that every citizen can reap benefits from the sustainable development in Hong Kong. Noting that there is still much room in Hong Kong for further enhancement so as to sustain our competitiveness and put our next generation to the path towards thriving, we would like to put forward our suggestions on a number of concerned areas for the development of Hong Kong to the Administration for the formulation of 2015 Policy Address.

Sustaining Development on Infrastructures

3. The HKIE holds our firm view that resources and efforts invested on the infrastructural development would yield multifold advantages, from the immediate employment opportunities for more than 360,000 members of workforce in construction industry, to the far reaching benefits of better public/social facilities and sophisticated foundation for Hong Kong to secure international business opportunities. After all, for the sake of the overall welfare of all citizens in both short and long term, we urge the Administration never to allow slowdown in infrastructural development in Hong Kong.

4. In recent months, the HKIE shares the worries with many enthusiasts on Hong Kong development that the pace of infrastructural development appears dwindling. The slow and low approval of funding for public works in the Legislative Council is alarming, revealing a likely undesirable gap in construction works in Hong Kong in near future. This is surely not healthy, especially towards young practitioners and engineering programme students who might soon suffer for such development fallout which, in effect, could put their future career growth and the overall economic development in Hong Kong at risk.

5. The HKIE therefore strongly advocates the Administration to exert every endeavour to call for the collaboration of all stakeholders in Hong Kong to sustain the infrastructural development of Hong Kong. Even at uneasy occasions when some essential infrastructural works might not be launched instantaneously, the Administration should never spare any opportunity to enable our project preparedness, in particular conducting feasibility studies and carrying out preparatory/ enabling works, such as the “Artificial Islands in Central Waters”, so that any current pending projects in infrastructural development could be timely resumed when circumstances allow.

Engineering Profession Development

6. With more than 32,000 members, the HKIE always concerns both the development of our profession and how engineers contribute more to people's living in Hong Kong. We hope that the Administration can further identify ways to team up with practitioners and academics of various engineering disciplines to drive for the overall excellence in engineering in Hong Kong. With dedicated efforts in enhancing standard and quality, we are confident that our engineering professionals could elevate the quality of community living as well as establishing footprints on the international front by securing a prominent share of engineering-related opportunities in the region. Therefore, we earnestly look forward to collaborate with the Administration to foster a sound platform for the long term development of the engineering profession.

7. Engineering is a profession that requires quality education and dedicated training. Yet, the HKIE is worried that the funding to engineering education in tertiary institutions has appeared decreasing in recent years. While balanced development of diverse types of professions and occupations to suit Hong Kong development model is necessary, the Administration should never omit the importance of continuously nourishing high-caliber professional engineers and engineering technologists for building Hong Kong. Hence, for the sake of ensuring steady supply of competent engineering graduates in coming years to support our works in future land supply, new development areas as well as other blueprints in housing and transport network provision etc., the HKIE strongly recommends the Administration to reserve sufficient funding and provide study/ training opportunities for next generation of engineering professionals. To encourage and facilitate further continuous development of engineering professionals in advancing their knowledge and skills, we also suggest the Administration to include engineering related courses into the reimbursable course list of the Continuing Education Fund.

Manpower

Supervisory/ Skill Technologist Talent Gap

8. Across the labour market in Hong Kong, the HKIE notes the inadequacy of manpower and talent gap at supervisory/ skilled technologist level which may be due to lack of development pathway and recognition of such level of occupations. But this cluster of manpower is an essential backbone to Hong Kong development in particular the construction industry. The HKIE believes that effort in shortening such talent gap can enhance the upward social mobility of many young and aspiring adults from the lower class. Therefore, the Administration is suggested to take the lead in developing more widely-received recognition framework and registration of supervisory skilled technologist level of occupations to enhance the attractiveness of such occupations, especially to the school leavers. Also, more financial subsidies for further studies should be provided for youngsters as well as local workforces to pursue qualifications for such level of occupations.

Labour Market Equilibrium

9. To build Hong Kong, we feel it important to devise a precise, updated statistical database to identify specifically the disciplines in which there may have high shortage

of labour, with a view to identifying further training and coping strategies. It is understood that many construction companies are now experiencing inadequate labour in carrying out various construction works while the long lead-time required of labour import application further strains the project completion schedule. With more accurate picture of the labour shortage situation, the Administration may then consider setting up in advance a centralised labour import and quota pool before launching new public works projects, so as to save contractors' application lead-time for applying labour import after bidding the projects. This will also ensure better control and monitoring for adequate but not excessive supply of labour of relevant disciplines without harming the local employment.

Innovation and research

10. The HKIE with our focus on engineering knows well that our profession will prosper further only when our counterparts in academic and research sectors are aptly supported with eager application of their state-of-the-art research outcome and technologies in our future engineering projects. Similarly, we believe that other sectors in our economy will be benefited if Hong Kong can continue to invest in the research and development. We urge the Administration to conceive the long term exponential benefits of innovation and research and to strategically intensify more subsidies on applied researches and commercialisation of research outcomes, especially to those which can benefit local community.

Education

11. The HKIE has been pursuing for initiatives to inspire the young, because we see that good nourishment of our next generations would keep vitalising our society, especially that the aging issue in Hong Kong is imminent. We also view that good education would enable more young and middle-aged adults to enhance their capabilities. Hence, we believe that the Administration should provide more subsidies to all school leavers for pursuing post-secondary education, especially on subject areas that would be of manpower shortage in coming years. Moreover, all young adults should be encouraged to pursue professional training and higher education, especially those who may have missed the chance of doing the University Grant Committee (UGC)-funded courses before.

12. In regard to secondary education, we are of the view that the Education Bureau should consider relaxing the geographical restrictions on the Secondary School Places Allocation System to allow more students to freely select schools in other districts, as this would also allow fairer choices for the pupils and parents, as well as fostering better integration of the citizens living in different districts in the territory.

Environmental Protection

13. The HKIE believes that Hong Kong should be livable, and is concerned on the imminent climate change and our resilience against it. We hope that the Administration can demonstrate more visionary determination in driving for total commitment and participation in combating climate change. The Administration needs to exhibit more fortitude to drive for collective efforts for a common goal of

enabling Hong Kong with good living and investment environment. To put this in more practical and tangible actions, we look forward to the Administration's missions with concrete direction for Hong Kong to evolve as the pioneer in environmental protection in the region, such as substantially adopting electric vehicles and renewable energies in Hong Kong.

14. We aspire to see more concerted efforts of various Government Departments in supporting environmental protection and building resilience against climate change. The Administration should consider setting up a lead entity which can orchestrate and coordinate all Departments' objectives and efforts to support combating climate change and to cultivate a culture on environmental protection in all sectors and levels in our society. We wish to join force with the Administration to lead and inspire the construction industry to adopt more Green Building measures for new buildings construction and old buildings renovation. We believe that with proper monitoring in place and comprehensive analysis, the Administration should devote resources to support certain environmental protection businesses, such as recycling industry.

Towards the New Economic and Social Structures

15. The HKIE opines that it is of utmost importance for the Administration to conduct an overall review and then lay down a strategic plan to enhance the human capital and competitiveness of our future generations. To instill hope and passion for developing Hong Kong, more support should be given to facilitate and support the next generations over their needs on housing, life-long education and professional/career development.

16. The Administration should actively incorporate the young generation, lower class and middle classes, and intellectuals in the public consultation platform for receiving and assimilating different views to facilitate better public policies making for our coming decades. The Administration may always review and adapt its framework and structures, so as to be more flexible in interacting with the citizens to understand and plan for their needs, and be more responsive to create better condition for entrepreneurs and investors. With a view to securing harmony and driving all for embracing constructive change and pursuing favourable development for a better future, it would be imperative that the Administration can establish a better platform to assimilate diversity into an overall goal for Hong Kong.