

**COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY SUB-COMMITTEE**

Public Education on Climate Change

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' views on the proposed public education and awareness programmes on climate change primarily for raising the awareness of the community thereof in general as a co-ordinated effort corresponding to the launch of the proposed next public engagement on the same subject.

Background

2. In the past few years, the issue of climate change has come to the forefront of many nations' and cities' sustainable development (SD) agenda as well as the international agenda for co-operation. Few would dispute that climate change is now one of the most relevant SD issue of the day. The prominence of the issue and its impact and relevance to people's daily lives are evident in the various initiatives taken internationally to heighten awareness which in turn drive governments to take concrete actions to combat climate change.

3. The Council, at its meeting on 1 February 2010, agreed that climate change would be the topic for the next public engagement, in light of its present-day importance and its all-embracing relevance. The Strategy Sub-Committee (SSC) was tasked to work out the scope of the public engagement on climate change.

4. The Environment Bureau is now conducting a three-month public consultation on "Hong Kong's Climate Change Strategy and Action Agenda" from 10 September to 10 December 2010 to gauge the community's views on the major recommendations. Details of the public consultation are set out in paragraphs 5 to 13 below for Members'

reference. With the release of the public consultation document, the SSC, at its last meeting held on 22 September 2010, discussed the scope of the proposed public engagement exercise. In general, the SSC agreed that the focus should be on the demand side measures, such as energy efficiency in order to minimise overlapping with the Administration's public consultation outlined below. Prioritised user groups/sectors should be identified for mapping out relevant **response strategies** in mitigating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The SSC will further work out the specific scope of the proposed public engagement.

The Administration's Public Consultation on "Hong Kong's Climate Change Strategy and Action Agenda"

5. The Administration commissioned a consultancy study on climate change in Hong Kong (the Study) in March 2008. The Study is now largely completed, and the Environment Bureau is conducting a three-month public consultation on "Hong Kong's Climate Change Strategy and Action Agenda" from 10 September to 10 December 2010 to gauge the community's views on the major recommendations.

Climate change strategy and carbon intensity reduction target

6. In the consultation paper, the Administration proposes a specific target to reduce Hong Kong's carbon intensity¹ by 50-60% in 2020 as compared with the 2005 level, to chart the way for going low-carbon, with a clear vision to –

- (a) promoting a low carbon living;
- (b) tapping the potential of developing a low carbon economy;
and
- (c) positioning Hong Kong, in the context of the Pearl River Delta (PRD), as the greenest region of China.

7. The proposed target sits well with the voluntary national target announced by the Central People's Government (CPG) in November 2009 to reduce carbon intensity by 40-45% by 2020 as compared with the 2005 level.

¹ **Carbon intensity** is defined as the amount of GHG or carbon emissions per unit of gross domestic product (GDP). This seeks to measure the effectiveness of efforts taken to reduce emissions which are highly associated with economic activities.

8. Specifically, it is proposed that Hong Kong should adopt a proactive strategy in tackling climate change. The mitigation strategy should focus on and be directed at Hong Kong's emission characteristics. It should be forward-looking to demonstrate that Hong Kong, as a leading global financial centre, is participating in and contributing to international community and city-wide efforts in combating climate change. The strategy should integrate the low-carbon notion with economic development, unleashing the economic potential that is enfolded in low-carbon lifestyle, promoting energy conservation and enhancing Hong Kong's competitive advantage.

9. During the process, the Administration is aware of the importance of drawing together participation and support from various sectors of the community in the adoption of a low-carbon lifestyle in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Behavioural changes in our everyday life like avoiding food wastage, practising recycling, supporting greening and conserving water and energy, etc. are small steps that, taken together, will bring significant changes. The business sector also has an important role to play in mitigating carbon emissions, particularly in respect of enhancing building energy efficiency. Community-wide participation will enable Hong Kong to go along the pathway of sustainable development, remain resilient to possible risks brought by climate change, and play a pivotal role in realising the vision of transforming the PRD into a quality living area.

10. Deep in these social, economic and environmental aspirations is a firm belief that our society would grow and prosper in a sustainable manner for the benefit of this and many more coming generations. For Hong Kong to achieve locally the proposed target, it will require determination, immense efforts and support from all walks of life in Hong Kong, including inevitable changes in lifestyle and behaviour.

Climate change action agenda

11. The Consultants have put forward a comprehensive action agenda for Hong Kong in combating climate change. Along with international practice, there are two major parts of it, namely mitigating GHG emissions, and adapting to possible impacts of climate change in major vulnerable areas identified.

Mitigating GHG emissions

12. In respect of mitigation, modelling results of the Study suggest that a low carbon strategy comprising the following measures is required to substantially reduce our GHG emissions –

(Demand side measures)

- (a) maximising energy efficiency, particularly in buildings;
- (b) greening road transport;
- (c) promoting use of clean fuels for motor vehicles;
- (d) turning waste into energy; and

(Supply side measure)

- (e) revamping the fuel mix for electricity generation, so as to reduce reliance on coal and increase the proportion of clean, low-carbon fuels, e.g. renewable and nuclear energy.

Adapting to possible climate change impacts in major vulnerable areas

13. The Consultants have identified the following key areas of vulnerability in Hong Kong –

- (a) biodiversity and nature conservation;
- (b) built environment and infrastructure;
- (c) business and industry;
- (d) energy supply;
- (e) financial services;
- (f) food resources;
- (g) human health; and
- (h) water resources.

14. Consultancy findings suggest that Hong Kong possesses significant adaptive capacity and has many systems in place which could be used to adapt to the physical impacts of climate change. It is however likely that some of the policies and facilities may need to be reviewed within the broad framework of five categories of adaptation options, as follows –

- (a) monitoring;
- (b) institutional strengthening and capacity building;
- (c) disaster management and emergency planning;
- (d) research and investigation; and
- (e) education and public awareness.

Public consultation

15. The general public can obtain the consultation document and submit their views via the offices of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), Public Libraries and the Public Enquiry Service Centres of the Home Affairs Department, as well as the EPD website. The Government will also consult the relevant advisory committees, professional bodies, and major business and trade associations.

Proposed Education and Public Awareness Programmes on Climate Change under the Charge of EPSC

16. Although climate change issue would have great impacts on our everyday lives, it appears that there is a wide gap between the impacts of the issue and the awareness of the same of the general public. In parallel with the SSC's front in conducting public engagement to map out relevant response strategies from prioritised user groups/sectors in mitigating GHG emissions, it is proposed that EPSC could ***engage wider community through schools and NGOs*** with the support of intensive campaigns and publicity. The purpose is to enhance general understanding of climate change and ***increase their awareness*** (including the impact and implications of climate change on economic, social and environmental fronts and what people can do in their daily lives) and to ***drive for a change in mindset, lifestyle and behaviour***. During the process, we may impart knowledge, promote buy-ins and gauge views on what actions that members of the community – as individuals or as groups and in their various capacities as students, consumers, global citizens, etc. – are willing to take to help tackle the climate change challenge and rally for their pledges for action.

17. Consideration may be given to the following initiatives proposed to be taken forward under the leadership of the EPSC –

- (a) making use of a range of effective mass media, particularly some **new media**, to reach out to the general public, especially the younger generation, to raise the community awareness on climate change. Internet-based publicity and education programmes may be deployed for reaching out to a wider audience, deepening public awareness and engaging the public to tackle/reverse/reduce the contributing factors to climate change. Proposed infotainment elements may

include interactive online games, discussion forums for opinion mining, quizzes, public voting and “Green Innovation” submission contests designed with “point-earning” scheme for boosting online participation, setting the agenda for public discussion, submitting Internet users’ own ideas and recommendations on promoting low-carbon lifestyle/sustainable consumption, etc.;

- (b) leveraging on the extensive network of radio audienceship, through **on-air promotion** in the form of attention-seeking short segments and other attractive ways to impress upon the audience how climate change is closely related to our daily lives and to drive for behavioural changes;
- (c) producing TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest (**APIs**) **and other publicity programmes** to appeal to the mass public to pursue a low-carbon lifestyle;
- (d) organising programmes/**campaigns/contests** in collaboration with **NGOs/schools/user-groups** for widening, deepening and sustaining the impact of the public engagement on the local communities;
- (e) leveraging on the Council’s established network of the **School Outreach Programmes** and **SD School Award Programme** to mobilise concerted efforts in nurturing a low-carbon culture for sustainable development of our society. We may involve stakeholders to deliver talks and workshops on climate change to secondary schools. We may also collaborate with NGOs and green groups in organising educational programmes and activities for schools;
- (f) lining up **conferences/talks/seminars** in partnership with the tertiary institutes and organisations targeting audience of different sectors; and
- (g) producing and arranging **roving exhibitions** at schools, shopping malls and other public sites, with attractive and interactive elements to effectively convey our messages about climate change to the general public, and to attract the latter to participate in our engagement programmes.

18. Subject to the outcome of the EPSC's discussion on the paper, we will report to the Council accordingly. Details of the above proposed programmes will be worked out subject to the agreement of the Council to ensure attaining synergy between the public education and awareness programme and the public engagement in raising awareness and triggering actions and lifestyle changes. As for the timeframe, it is suggested to run the whole public education and awareness programme for about one year, commencing around the first quarter of 2011, coinciding with the launch of the public engagement, subject to the views of the Council.

Council Secretariat
October 2010

**Proposed Action Agenda for Mitigating Carbon Emissions
Measures to maximise energy efficiency**

(Extract from the public consultation document on
“Hong Kong’s Climate Change Strategy and Action Agenda”
issued by the Environment Bureau on 10 September 2010)

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| (a) | To expand the scope and tighten the requirements of the Building Energy Codes, such that by 2020 major electrical equipments in all new commercial buildings will be up to 50% more energy efficient as compared with 2005 building stock; |
| (b) | To expand the use of district cooling or water-cooled air conditioning, such that by 2020 up to 20% of all commercial buildings will be up to 50% better in refrigeration performance compared with buildings using regular air conditioners; |
| (c) | To reduce energy demand in new buildings by various means such as tightening the overall thermal transfer value (OTTV) standards and promoting wider adoption of green roofing, such that by 2020 all new commercial buildings will reduce their cooling energy demand by up to 50% as compared with new buildings in 2005; |
| (d) | To improve energy efficiency in commercial buildings through good housekeeping, information technology products and intelligent building environmental management system, such that by 2020, 25% of existing commercial buildings can be 15% more energy efficient compared with 2005; and |
| (e) | To expand the scope and tighten the energy efficient electrical appliance standards for domestic use, such that by 2020 all appliances sold in the market will be 25% more energy efficient compared with 2005. |