

The DAB focuses on five critical areas as it submits its “Proposals for the Policy Address” to the Chief Executive

Media Press Release

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Today, the DAB met the Chief Executive and submitted its new “Proposals for the Policy Address” to the government. At present, Hong Kong is returning from chaos to order following the implementation of the National Security Law and improvements made to the electoral system. Facing the dawn of a new era, the DAB believes the Chief Executive must lead the SAR government with the courage to reform to seize opportunities to respond to challenges from all sides.

The DAB will use “Dedicated to Reforms and Embracing the New Era” as the central theme in this “Proposals for the Policy Address.” The document will focus on five key areas, comprising eight sections with 89 suggestions. Some of the focal points include:

(1) UNDERSTANDING THE NATION’S DEVELOPMENT TO SHAPE A POSITIVE CHINA NARRATIVE

1. Strengthen the promotion of Chinese culture

1.1. Establish policies to promote civic participation

Provide clear policy support and make good use of existing government and social resources to facilitate the widespread promotion of Chinese culture among all sectors. Fund and encourage non-government organisations, research centres and universities, etc., to strengthen research on Chinese history, culture and art, focusing on the theme of the Chinese spirit, values, and power. Explore from multiple perspectives, including political, economic, cultural, social and conservation, to help the Nation promote Chinese values and culture to the world.

1.2. Fully integrate Chinese culture into education

Based on phased learning and step-by-step teaching principles, integrate the Chinese culture’s “Five Ways of Life” into the system, comprising moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic education. Allow the concepts to penetrate all stages of learning: formative, basic, vocational and higher education.

2. Request the SAR government’s offices in foreign countries to promote a positive China narrative

Assist the Nation in demonstrating to the world a genuine, multi-faceted and comprehensive China that would allow foreign countries and people to understand China’s development and Chinese culture better. The SAR government’s overseas offices should expand their functions to promote China’s development and achievements and the successful practice of One Country, Two Systems.

3. Understanding History and Strengthening National Identity

3.1. Strengthen publicity of the heroic deeds of martyrs against Japanese militarism

Strengthen publicity of Hong Kong's anti-Japanese heroes, including establishing a permanent exhibition hall documenting the history of the anti-Japanese resistance and setting up relevant education and heritage trails based on the route taken by the Dongjiang Column guerrilla force and the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade.

3.2. Set up the Museum of Modern Chinese History

Set up a Museum of Modern Chinese History to raise the public's understanding of the development of the Communist Party of China, the achievements of New China, and the development of One Country, Two Systems.

(2) IMPROVING GOVERNANCE EFFECTIVENESS AND STRENGTHENING THE RULE OF LAW

4. Conduct reviews of the Political Appointments System

With the global landscape experiencing sharp changes in recent years, the rapid rise of our Nation and the escalation of deep-seated conflicts in Hong Kong have brought severe challenges to the entire body of political appointees and accountability system. The government should promptly review the Political Appointments System. The review should learn from experience and expose deficiencies in the system to build a solid foundation for future accountability system reforms that ensure senior officials embody the spirit of power and responsibilities, thereby improving governance effectiveness.

5. Restructure the Development Bureau and the Housing Bureau

Restructure the Development Bureau, the Transport and Housing Bureau to rationalise land planning and expand to a series of policy work on housing supply to enhance the efficiency and accountability of decision-making on land and housing supply. In terms of specific proposals, the government should integrate the housing policy of the Transport and Housing Bureau with the planning and land policy of the Development Bureau into a new Housing, Planning and Land Bureau. Meanwhile, it should restructure all infrastructure development, planned public works and water-related matters under the transport policy and Development Bureau into the Transport and Public Works Bureau.

6. Set up official branches in Greater Bay Area cities

The government should set up offices in the nine Mainland cities in the Greater Bay Area, with non-civil servants familiar with Mainland affairs serving as principal officials. It would help strengthen communication and cooperation with the Mainland government, better grasp the latest state of development at the national, provincial and city levels, strengthen support for Hong Kong-funded enterprises and Hong Kong residents living on the Mainland.

7. Reorganise the government's district governance system and governmental structure

The government should abandon the outdated concept of “local administration” and establish a new “people and performance-oriented” style of “local governance” to properly solve the long-standing backlog of livelihood problems in the community. We recommend that the government reorganise the district governance system and governmental structure and politically appoint district commissioners to carry out regional governance work. Their work includes presiding over the district management committee to coordinate and lead various regional departments, solve livelihood issues in the community, complete various governance goals, and assess the effectiveness of governance. Additionally, in the future, the administrative divisions of different government departments should be redrawn according to the local administrative districts so that the departments can fully cooperate with the local administrative districts to perform their duties well.

(3) PROMOTING THE NEW TERRITORIES NORTH TO BECOME A NEW DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

8. Development of six major districts

The government needs a more well-rounded plan to develop New Territories North. The scale of development can be expanded in the future based on the existing foundations, with the six strategic districts in New Territories North as the core to create the “Hong Kong-Shenzhen Economic Cooperation Belt”. The six strategic districts are as follows: developing the Hung Shui Kiu area into a western logistics hub and innovation corridor; turning Au Tau/Ngau Tam Mei/Pat Heung into a new development area to provide more housing and employment; developing the Man Kam To/Lo Wu Port belt into a trade, medical and education region, with mainland educational resources ushered in to open school branches in the New Territories North; converting Sha Tau Kok/Yim Tin into a biological and historical tourism belt; developing Huanggang/Lok Ma Chau/San Tin into a hub for Hong Kong and Shenzhen innovation, and look into reforming customs clearance models to facilitate the convenient exchange of talents between the two places; turning Sheung Shui South and Gu Dong South into a modernised agriculture industrial park, with room to add more sporting and leisure facilities.

The six districts will be used to develop vital industries such as modern logistics, innovative technology and tourism. They will create a synergistic effect with the economic development layout of the Shenzhen Port and form a “Dual Hubs Along One Corridor” structure with Central.

9. Use infrastructure projects to spur development

Use infrastructure projects to spur development, including railway planning and highway planning. For railway planning, we recommend fully connecting the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Express Rail Link. For example, branch lines should be reserved for the Northern Link to connect the rebuilt New Huanggang Port through the Lok Ma Chau Loop while adding an Innovation and Technology Park station at the Lok Ma Chau Control Point. At the same time, look into building the first and second phases of the Northern Link simultaneously to speed up construction.

Also, build a new North-South Railway to connect the Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point and construct additional stations at Ta Kwu Ling and Queen’s Hill. In

addition, a Western thoroughfare could be built to connect to the Shenzhen Bay Port. Also, explore the possibility of developing a southbound railway from Shenzhen.

For highway planning, build a new North-South route. It can utilise the existing bus network and allow dual-plate private cars from Hong Kong and Shenzhen to freely enter and exit the port.

10. Unleash the potential of land in the New Territories

Increase the ratio of land for residential purposes when planning New Territories North and ratio the plot ratio from eight to 10 times to save land. At the same time, we recommend reviewing the wetlands in the Loop area and free up wetlands with lower ecological value for housing purposes. Then invest funds to focus on conserving land with high ecological value to balance development, conservation and industry.

In addition, learn from the Mainland's experience with its "Old Area Renovation" model, such as Liede Village in Guangzhou and the Yunong fishing village in Shenzhen. Under the premise of respecting private property rights, strategically choose villages in the New Territories as pilots to transform them into new communities so that the population can live in a concentrated area to free up more land.

On the other hand, look into lowering the criteria for the sale of ancestral lands (Tso/Tong lands) and developing green belt areas as ways to increase land supply. As new land is being developed, ensure that affected operators of brownfield sites are accommodated appropriately and reserve land for the resettlement, upgrading, and transformation of the agricultural and fisheries industries.

(4) STRENGTHENING ANTI-EPIDEMIC EFFORTS AND STRIVING TO REOPEN BORDERS

11. Strive for borders to reopen before October 1

Make every effort to get borders to reopen with the Mainland before October 1, and allow passage for Hong Kong residents who have received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine (one dose for those recovering from the coronavirus). These Hong Kong residents must also obtain negative results from two nucleic acid tests provided by government-recognised institutions no more than 24 hours before departure, in order to have their quarantine period sharply reduced to between three and seven days. This paves the way towards eventual quarantine-free cross-border travel.

12. Enhancing the COVID-19 vaccination programme

12.1. Through cooperation between the public and private sectors, the government should provide the public with free basic and essential body checks and medical assessments so that citizens may know whether they are suitable for vaccination;

12.2. With more and more different types of coronavirus vaccines making their way to the market, there are already pharmaceutical companies producing vaccines suitable for chronically ill patients and the elderly (such as the ZF2001 vaccine developed by Anhui

Zhifei Longcom Biopharmaceutical Company) to solve their concerns about their suitability for the vaccine due to poor health. The government should import these vaccines as soon as possible to allow chronically ill patients and the elderly to get vaccinated;

12.3. Cap the fee for self-paid COVID-19 antibody testing services at \$240 by referring to existing self-paid coronavirus testing services. The government should reimburse the remainder of the costs to recognised testing institutions. Should any citizen be found to have insufficient antibodies, the government should make arrangements for them to receive a third dose of vaccine;

12.4. Begin making preparations for citizens who have already received two doses of the vaccine to get a booster dose for enhanced protection against the threat of the delta variant.

(5) Promoting the development of sports

13. Strengthen support for active and retired athletes for further studies and employment opportunities

13.1. Review and improve remuneration of all Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) athletes

Review and improve the treatment and remuneration of HKSI athletes of all levels, including the amount of funding for all elite athletes and senior team athletes. Review the treatment of athletes trained by the Hong Kong Sports Institute. Allow athletes who have or have not won medals in world-class events to enjoy a reasonable level of remuneration.

13.2. Optimise numerous existing employment and educational programmes for athletes

Provide comprehensive support to the personal development of active and retired athletes, and make special arrangements for them to receive education. Assist them in searching for different career paths, expand the scope of help to include more athletes with disabilities and HKSI's Tier B sports (para sports) athletes, etc. Encourage more secondary schools to participate in the HKSI's "Partnership School Programme" to provide more flexible secondary school courses for full-time student-athletes;

13.3. Optimise the "Retired Athletes Transformation Programme" under the Home Affairs Bureau

Increase the amount of subsidised remuneration for school sports promotion coordinators and positions in sports institutes; optimise existing employment development arrangements and cooperate with enterprises to launch athlete internships and employment programmes to help athletes broaden their employment channels.

14. Promote the professionalisation of athlete training

14.1. Continue to increase funding for the development of elite athletes

The government should allocate additional resources and continue to increase funding for the development of elite athletes.

In line with the development trends of international sports, actively push for sports management, sports science, and sports medicine to be professionalised to enhance support for elite athletes comprehensively. Increase the number of skill coaches, fitness coaches, dietitians, physiotherapists, emotion management experts and psychologists, etc., to provide specialised support for athletes. The government should accelerate the development of scientific training, identify the latest technologies, tools and equipment and import them to Hong Kong to maximise opportunities for local athletes to rank among the world's elite ;

14.2. Cross-annual funding for well-developed and more influential sports associations

The government should implement the recommended measures in the “Sports Subvention Scheme” review and provide cross-year funding for well-developed and more influential sports associations based on the Pilot Scheme model.

It would allow them to lay down relatively more extended development plans and continue supporting sports associations in promoting team sports such as basketball, handball, and hockey.

15. Make a bid for the 2025 National Games and the 2029 Asian Youth Games

With the expected completion of the Kai Tak Sports Park in 2023, the government should actively consider bidding for the 2025 National Games; discuss with the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong about making a bid for major sporting events such as the 2029 Asian Youth Games and the biennial Universiade, so as to demonstrate to the world Hong Kong's ability to organise large-scale sports events, and consolidate the city's position as the capital of international sporting spectacles.

16. Accelerate the popularisation of sports

16.1. Complete the 26 projects in the “Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities” as soon as possible

Complete the 26 projects in the “Five-year Plan for Sports and Recreational Facilities” as soon as possible to avoid the situation of low construction efficiency. Review the causes of the lengthy building period of recreational facilities from consultation to construction, set up project supervision teams within the department to speed up the planning process. For example, the redevelopment of Kowloon Tsai Swimming Pool has stalled for more than 12 years from planning to its expected completion in 2024. The government must rectify the situation of lengthy planning and construction;

16.2. Solve existing difficulties in public sports venue reservation

Optimise the reservation mechanism for sports venues and facilities as soon as possible to ensure their booking and allocation are more equitable, thereby achieving the goal of “popularisation”.

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