

Written before the release of Hong Kong's First Five-Year Plan

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This year marks the opening year of the National 15th Five-Year Plan. Faced with accelerating change globally and significant opportunities brought by national development, Hong Kong must better integrate into and serve the overall national development, enabling our economic progress to reach new heights while enhancing people's livelihood and well-being.

This February, I announced that the HKSAR Government would formulate Hong Kong's First Five-Year Plan. I led the compilation work, with the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs taking primary responsibility for implementation, and the Principal Officials and Heads of Departments all participating. Producing Hong Kong's First Five-Year Plan carried significant responsibilities, including meeting our citizens earnest expectations for Hong Kong's long-term development.

Conceiving Hong Kong's First Five-Year Plan, with its demanding tasks, was done under an exceptionally tight schedule. It often takes one to two years of preliminary research and discussion throughout for Mainland cities to construct their Five-Year Plans.

We had less than a year to finish Hong Kong's First Five-Year Plan from scratch. I am grateful to all policy bureaux and departments, and the individuals involved, for their outstanding efforts under pressure – a breakthrough in the HKSAR Government's public governance capabilities.

My team and I began by reviewing the Five-Year Plan experiences of Macao and cities in the Mainland. The Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau visited Mainland cities to learn from their experience.

In April, I introduced a research and public-opinion gathering channel between the Government and the Legislative Council

(LegCo). My thanks to all LegCo members for organising multiple opinion-collection sessions based on professional and sectoral divisions, and for submitting research reports covering six major areas to the Government.

Working together, the executive and the legislature allowed the Government to race against time while ensuring that the representative and scientific foundations of the Plan remained solid.

In June, the HKSAR Government published the consultation document, launching a two-month public consultation on Hong Kong's First Five-Year Plan. During this period, the Government held over 100 consultation sessions. I personally hosted more than 30. I also visited communities to listen to the opinions of the public on Hong Kong's future development.

Among the more than 17,000 submissions we received, 80 per cent came from individuals. Given the public's overwhelming response, my Government made use of artificial intelligence to assist

with opinion analysis.

The voice of the public is clear. Hong Kong people support the Five-Year Plan's creation and the reinforcing of our traditional advantages, including our international financial, trade and maritime centres and our aviation hub. They want the Government to build an international innovation and technology centre, accelerate the Northern Metropolis' development and boost their livelihood and well-being.

A member of the public once asked me: "The Five-Year Plan talks about major economic issues. What does that have to do with ordinary citizens like us?" My answer then, as now, is direct: I want the people of Hong Kong – every one of you – to share in the dividends of development, and feel a sense of happiness and fulfillment.

And I am firmly convinced that the Plan, and its vision for economic and social development, will do just that – safeguard and

improve people's livelihoods.

The Plan's proposals – boosting Hong Kong's traditional advantages, developing emerging and future industries, accelerating the rise of the Northern Metropolis, deepening the Greater Bay Area's development and building global co-operation – focus on the economy, but their ultimate goal is to enable citizens to flourish. With better employment opportunities and more upward mobility for our youth, that can become a tangible reality, turning governance from measures into results.

I have also been asked whether formulating a Five-Year Plan would change Hong Kong's original system. The answer is no. The Five-Year Plan will uphold Hong Kong's rule of law and capitalist system, implement the Basic Law and adhere to "One Country, Two Systems" without distorting Hong Kong. It will also uphold its status as an international city, ensure the free flow of capital, people, goods and information, while giving full play to the flexibility and advantages of the capitalist market. As President Xi Jinping has

pointed out on multiple occasions, “One Country, Two Systems” is a good system that must be adhered to over the long term.

I will release Hong Kong’s First Five-Year Plan on September 16, followed immediately by the publication of the 2026 Policy Address. This is designed to allow the public to read both documents together, giving people a better understanding of the close interconnection between the two.

The Five-Year Plan maps out the long-term blueprint and strategic direction for Hong Kong’s development, while the Policy Address serves as an annual report – the focus of that year’s governance in implementing the Five-Year Plan.

In the coming years, the annual Policy Addresses will continue to implement the blueprint, introducing policies and setting measures according to changing circumstances and economic dynamics.

The Five-Year Plan is a vastly ambitious initiative

accomplished through collective planning, the participation of all sectors and the building of social consensus, a formidable task saddled with responsibility and far-reaching significance. As for the result, I am encouraged and confident, and look forward to the comments of the people of Hong Kong.

With the strong support of our country, Hong Kong is on its way to opening a bold new chapter in its journey from stability to prosperity.

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