

Family Council

Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050

PURPOSE

This paper seeks to brief Members on the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050, and the strategies and targets of Hong Kong on combating climate change and achieving carbon neutrality.

BACKGROUND

2. Combating climate change is an important issue across the globe. Hong Kong has been responding positively to the goal of the Paris Agreement to limit the increase in the global average temperature, and published in January 2017 "Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2030+" to set out the target to reduce Hong Kong's carbon intensity by 65% to 70% by 2030 from the 2005 levels. With the implementation of various decarbonisation measures, we are moving steadily towards the 2030 carbon reduction target. The total carbon emissions have shown a downward trend after reaching its peak in 2014. The carbon intensity in 2020 was about 42% lower than that in 2005. The per capita carbon emissions have reduced from the peak level of 6.2 tonnes in 2014 to 4.5 tonnes in 2020.

3. In 2020, President Xi Jinping made it clear that China would endeavour to achieve the peak of carbon emissions before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060. To align with the country's "dual carbon targets", the Chief Executive announced in the 2020 and 2021 Policy Addresses respectively that Hong Kong would strive to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050, and to reduce Hong Kong's carbon emissions from the 2005 level by half before 2035. In this connection, the Chief Executive chaired an inter-departmental Steering Committee on Climate Change and Carbon Neutrality established in mid-2021 to formulate the overall strategy and oversee the coordination of various actions. The Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB) will also set up the Office of Climate Change and Carbon Neutrality to strengthen coordination and promote deep decarbonisation, and to encourage

different sectors in the community, including young people, to participate actively in climate actions.

4. To achieve Hong Kong's target of carbon neutrality before 2050, the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050 was released in October 2021, setting out the vision of "Zero-carbon Emissions • Liveable City • Sustainable Development" for Hong Kong in striving towards carbon neutrality. In 2019, electricity generation was Hong Kong's largest source of carbon emissions (66%), followed by transport (18%) and waste (7%). Therefore, our decarbonisation work should focus on these three key areas. Our four major decarbonisation strategies are "net-zero electricity generation", "energy saving and green buildings", "green transport" and "waste reduction":

- i. "Net-zero electricity generation": Cease using coal for daily electricity generation by 2035; increase the share of renewable energy in the fuel mix for electricity generation to 7.5% to 10% by 2035, and to 15 % subsequently; develop zero-carbon energy, and raise the share of zero-carbon energy to 60% to 70% by 2035; and try out the use of new energy and strengthen co-operation with neighbouring regions to achieve the long-term target of net-zero electricity generation before 2050.
- ii. "Energy saving and green buildings": Reduce the energy consumption of buildings through promoting green buildings, improving energy efficiency and promoting a low-carbon lifestyle. The goal is to reduce the electricity consumption of commercial buildings by 30% to 40% and that of residential buildings by 20% to 30% from the 2015 level by 2050, and to achieve half of the above targets by 2035.
- iii. "Green transport": Achieve the long-term target of attaining zero vehicular emissions and zero carbon emissions in the transport sector before 2050, through the electrification of vehicles and ferries, development of new-energy transport and measures to improve traffic management. The Government will cease the new registration of fuel-propelled and hybrid private cars in 2035 or earlier. Apart from promoting electric buses and commercial vehicles, the Government also plans to collaborate with the franchised bus companies and other stakeholders in the next two years to test out hydrogen fuel cell electric buses and heavy vehicles.
- iv. "Waste reduction": To achieve the long-term target of carbon neutrality in waste management before 2050, the Government will strive to develop adequate waste-to-energy facilities by 2035, so as to move away from reliance on landfills for municipal waste disposal; and support the

development of a circular economy; the Government will further promote waste reduction and recycling, and expects to implement municipal solid waste charging in the second half of 2023 the earliest, and advance the implementation of the first phase of the regulation on disposable plastic tableware to earlier than the originally proposed year of 2025.

5. Hong Kong's target to achieve carbon neutrality in less than 30 years will undoubtedly bring a myriad of challenges and difficulties, but it will also open up new opportunities for Hong Kong. As an international financial centre, Hong Kong has the capabilities and advantages to develop into a green finance hub in the region and serves as a premier financing platform for green enterprises and projects. We anticipate that public and private investment will create tens of thousands of job opportunities in relevant industries such as energy supply, green finance, green technologies, energy saving and green buildings, waste reduction and recycling, electric vehicles, new energy transport, and their ancillary industries.

6. In the next 15 to 20 years, the Government will devote about \$240 billion to take forward various measures on climate change mitigation and adaptation, covering areas such as renewable energy, energy saving and green buildings, green transport and waste management.

7. Innovative technologies play a critical role in achieving carbon neutrality. The Government has set up the \$200 million Green Tech Fund (GTF) to provide better and more focused funding support to research and development projects which can help Hong Kong decarbonise and enhance environmental protection. The response has been overwhelming. An additional funding of \$200 million has been injected into the GTF, with a view to further advance the development and application of decarbonisation strategies that are suitable for Hong Kong. The funding injected will primarily be used to subsidise projects in priority areas such as net-zero electricity generation, energy saving and green buildings, green transport and waste reduction.

8. Public support is necessary in order for Hong Kong to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050. To promote community support for climate action, the EEB has been organising a series of climate-related education and publicity activities, in form of leaflets, TV and radio programmes, APIs, posters and a dedicated Climate Ready website (www.climateready.gov.hk/?lang=1). The latest round of promotion was launched on 5 June 2022 (World Environment Day), with a music video and API featuring "Carbon Neutrality" Ambassador Lee Wai-sze demonstrating to the public how to switch to a low-carbon

lifestyle. The Low Carbon Living Calculator (www.carboncalculator.gov.hk/en) was also updated on the same day, with more interactive elements and tips on low-carbon living added to the newly introduced mobile version. The Low Carbon Living Calculator was launched in April 2018 to help members of the public assess their individual carbon emissions in respect of clothing, food, living and travel, and understand how they may further transition to a low-carbon lifestyle. The number of users has reached 56 700.

9. To encourage students to enhance the use of information technology for self-directed learning, and to promote a low-carbon lifestyle, the Council for Sustainable Development, the EEB and the Education Bureau has jointly developed an E-Learning Platform on Decarbonisation (<https://www.susdev.org.hk/elearning/en/>) which provides adequate educational resources on decarbonisation for schools and students.

ADVICE SOUGHT

10. Members are invited to note the content of EEB's presentation and provide comments.

Environment and Ecology Bureau
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