

**Hong Kong, China's Statement for
71st Session of the United Nations
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**
(to be delivered in the ministerial segment)
**Balancing the Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development:
from Integration to Implementation**

Your Excellency the Chairman, Executive Secretary, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Hong Kong, China (HKC) delegation, I would like to congratulate the Government of Thailand and the ESCAP Secretariat on the very successful organisation of this meeting. I am also grateful to the Government and people of Thailand for the very warm hospitality extended to us.

Snapshot of Economic Outlook for Hong Kong, China

2. I would like to begin my remarks with a brief overview of HKC's economy. Our economy grew modestly by 2.3% in real terms in 2014, down from 2.9% in 2013. This was mainly attributed to the slow global economic recovery, slackened tourist spending and a weakened domestic demand.

3. Looking ahead, HKC's export performance will still be affected by various uncertainties, including the slow global economic recovery and the geopolitical tensions in various regions. In the latest round of review, Hong Kong's economy is forecast to grow by 1-3% for 2015 as a whole.

HKC Government's Efforts in Supporting Sustainable Development

4. According to the World Commission on Environment and Development, sustainable development refers to "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the stability of future generations to meet their own needs". To this end, HKC has been working whole-heartedly through a multi-pronged approach. We fully share the view of ensuring a balanced and integrated approach in taking forward sustainable development from integration to implementation.

5. Sustainable development for HKC means –

- (a) finding ways to increase prosperity and improve the quality of life while reducing overall pollution and waste;
- (b) meeting our own needs and aspirations without doing damage to the prospects of future generations; and
- (c) reducing the environmental burden we put on our neighbours and helping to preserve common resources.

6. In simple terms, we endeavour to build HK into a world-class city and make Hong Kong a clean, comfortable and pleasant home. To achieve this, we recognise that every citizen, every business, and every Government Bureau and Department has to work in partnership. I would like to spend a few minutes to share HKC's experience.

7. To ensure the integration of sustainability considerations into the policy formulation and decision-making process, the HK Government has put in place a sustainability assessment system for all its major initiatives before they are submitted to the top decision-making bodies within the Government for consideration.

8. The sustainability assessment system provides a structured framework for Bureaux and Departments to examine the sustainability implications of their proposals, and identify cross-sectoral or sensitive issues for early attention.

9. The system comprises a computer-aided evaluation tool to guide policy and project proponents to go through a structured and step-by-step process by answering a number of key questions relating to economic, social and environmental aspects. Results generated will help policy and project proponents to critically assess the sustainability implications of their proposals.

10. Such a rigorous process has helped to promote the concept of sustainable development within the civil service. It has also raised the awareness of colleagues about the importance of integrating sustainability consideration into their policy formulation. Let me share with you some major initiatives which we have implemented to ensure sustainable development.

11. Under the "Hong Kong: Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022", we have mapped out a comprehensive set of

strategy, targets, policies and action plans for waste management for the coming 10 years. Our aim is to reduce the per capita disposal rate of municipal solid waste by 40% by 2022.

12. We have taken actions to protect the marine environment by implementing pollution control strategies, and planning and developing sewerage infrastructure to prevent significant adverse impact to ecosystems. To combat land-based water pollution, we continue to enforce the Water Pollution Control Ordinance and implement sewerage programmes, including the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS). Among others, the Scheme involves the implementation of an integrated sewerage system for collecting sewage generated around the Victoria Harbour for centralised treatment before disposal.

13. We have established Water Quality Objectives (WQOs) to protect HKC's marine waters. Our aim is to achieve and maintain the water quality by implementing various measures, including development planning, controlling pollution sources, expanding sewage collection systems, improving sewage treatment facilities, implementing extensive monitoring plans to track water quality trends, and collaborating with authorities in the Guangdong province of Mainland China to protect shared water bodies.

Community Engagement

14. The concept of sustainable development requires a change of mindset to bring about full integration of the needs for economic and social development with that to conserve the environment. We fully recognise that Government's efforts alone cannot build a sustainable society. Sustainable development requires the Government and all sectors of the community to work hand in hand. We have therefore been establishing close contacts with non-government organisations, both locally and overseas, with a view to delivering the message of sustainability to the wider community through international symposia, roving exhibitions and presentations at public fora.

Closing Remarks

15. In closing, I would like to thank the Commission for giving me this opportunity to share with you our efforts and achievements in taking forward the initiatives of sustainable development in Hong Kong.

16. Looking ahead, building on the results, experience and feedbacks from the public on the above initiatives, HKC will continue to spare no efforts to work towards the goal of ensuring sustainable development. We look forward to working closely with ESCAP and the members in building a more sustainable environment for us and our next generations. Thank you.

[about 1,200 words]