

To : Mr. Raymond Tam, Secretary to the Commission on Strategic Development
From : Christine Fang, Chief Executive, The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
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Response to the Selected Questions in Questionnaire on Hong Kong's Positioning in Our Country's Economic, Social and Political Development

General Response

Hong Kong's positioning in our country should not be thought just from the angle of Hong Kong, but from that of the rest of the Nation and the Central Government, in order to arrive at a more comprehensive picture. We should not be identifying our roles independent of whether these roles are perceived as important by both the Central Government and the neighboring cities or provinces. We always need to identify the very strengths which we have and which are of strategic value to ourselves, and THEREFORE to the rest of the nation and the Central Government.

In short, Hong Kong's unique contribution to the nation has always been its proximity of the international arena in terms of values and practices in different areas or professional fields.

Issue 2 and 9

Our experiences in exchanges with Mainland guests and visitors from municipal, provincial and central government departments have consistently shown us that the officials and NGO practitioners in the Mainland are desperately in need of knowledge and skills from Hong Kong for their institutional setup. While they have plenty of opportunities to get experiences or ideas from overseas, they find Hong Kong's experiences and ideas more relevant, comprehensible and adoptable in their local contexts. Specific measures include:

- Institutional platforms for exchanges of these knowledge and skills are essential for forging occasions for mutual understanding, which shall adjudicate the tension between flexibility and being independent. Only when such mechanisms are created can Hong Kong be able to communicate with officials and professionals from the Mainland about the importance of maintaining the way Hong Kong is, thereby maintaining our independent institutional setup while demonstrating our flexibility.
- Communication platforms can be forged not just by the HKSAR Government, but also by NGOs and professional bodies in Hong Kong. However, the support of the government is indispensable for establishing such cross-border platforms. Currently, the support of the government depends on the will of the individual departments or bureaux who often are not sure to what extent they should be involved in such cross-border exchange or initiatives. We are supportive of the idea of setting up a specialized office to help government departments and bureaux as well as other organizations and professional bodies in Hong Kong to facilitate cross-border communication and cooperation.

- In addition to initiatives for nurturing national identification by the Civic Education Committee, the Government should consider setting funds to support NGOs, professional bodies and the like to consolidate knowledge and skills for sharing of experiences in problem-solving and effective public policies with the Mainland and neighboring countries

Issues 3, 6 and 8

Measures should focus on enhancing the quality of Hong Kong citizens not just in terms of knowledge and skills, but also the whole mindset, values orientation towards global citizenship. Measures thus proposed comprise two areas:

Creating opportunities for international exchanges by:

- Encouraging international NGOs or intergovernmental organizations to set up regional headquarters in Hong Kong
- Supporting NGOs to host international conferences on all relevant areas of development in Hong Kong
- Enhancing networking capacity to participate not just in overseas conferences or study visits, but also in those important global events that enable us to keep abreast of the global agenda and to advocate for changes at different levels
- Setting up policy to support and encourage international exchange at all levels. International exchange should aim more at longer term networking for experiences acquisition and sharing instead of short-term tour

Promoting global citizenship education by:

- Promoting a more vision-based and horizon-widening oriented education, with exposures to knowledge about the world and its relations with the region, the Mainland and Hong Kong
- Assuming more responsibility for regional disaster relief and development aid for neighboring developing countries, demonstrating to the general public our responsibility, as global citizens, in the global community. Our actions can take the form of monetary aids, services, or knowledge and skills transfer.
- Initiating proactive approach to attracting foreign students and interns to study or work in Hong Kong, thereby broadening the horizons of local students.
- Enhancing language competence: English and Chinese as basic, a third language to complement

Issue 7

In the paper circulated in last meeting on Feb 9, it was mentioned that we should base our contributions to our nation on institutional design and market forces. If we believe in market force and systematic design, the government should focus on how to enhance HK's capacity. The Eleventh

Five-Year Plan is our country's visionary response to both local and global strategic considerations. The position of HK in those strategic considerations is unmistakably our linkages with the international arena. It would make more sense, having known the strategic considerations of our nation, to benchmark against the international standards and reflect upon our strengths and weaknesses. Following this line of thought, measures to enhance Hong Kong people's understanding of the motherland and promote a sense of national identity should take a more inclusive approach, aiming at enriching the HK identity with more national flavor. The way we design our social and cultural policies is therefore very important. In specific, we should be:

- ensuring equal opportunities for all people, irrespective of their races, ethnicities, genders, religions, cultural backgrounds, ages, physical and mental conditions.
- encouraging people with different potentials, qualities or capacities (technical skills, environmental, social, cultural and political horizons and aspiration) to develop themselves

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