

**HKIoD's response to the Policy Address**  
**delivered on 6 October 2021**

*Note: The response first appeared in Chinese on 6 October 2021.*

**Governing Back to Normal**  
**Brings Better Chance of Forging a Brighter Future**

(6 October 2021, Hong Kong) - The Hong Kong Institute of Directors issued the following response to the Policy Address delivered today.

The Chief Executive delivered her Policy Address this morning, adamant that chaos has reverted to order, that Hong Kong is back on the right track. The speech speaks of a new paradigm and plots a blueprint for a brighter future. In the view of HKIoD, with governing back to normal, there will be that much more urge to tackle livelihood issues and to spur the economy.

**Northern Metropolis, Twin Cities of Three Circles**

The Chief Executive told us of the grand vision of a Northern Metropolis, with its planning concept also to be released this day. The concept is to develop the stretch of land bordering Shenzhen with a vision and mindset that straddles across administrative boundaries, forging a closer connection with the northern neighbour along the Shenzhen River, from the Deep Bay all the way to the Mirs Bay. The Institute holds the view that planning for the New Territories had for too long been hampered by much a HK-centric mentality. But with the prodding from the Fourteenth FYP and the trend of a further integration into the Greater Bay Area, what was seen as peripheral is indeed much more central as far as economic development strategy is concerned.

The Northern Metropolis development will also see transport infrastructure leading the pace. Among the rail lines under the concept, the link connecting Hung Shui Kiu and Qianhai should give Hong Kong entrepreneurs and professionals a route to better take advantage of the opportunities that should come with the deepening of service economy reforms in Qianhai.

**Government restructuring to enhance governing**

The Chief Executive points to a need to reorganise policy bureaux to better match evolving policy focus and will direct a detailed re-organisation proposal be worked out for consideration by the next Government. To have a dedicated bureau on Culture, Sports and Tourism should help consolidate the policy portfolio on cultural and sports affairs, creative industries and tourism. To split the Transport and Housing Bureau should see two major policy areas to each have more focused steering at the top. To expand the Innovation and Technology Bureau into the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau to highlight the role of I&T in reindustrializing Hong Kong should help diversify the real economy.

The Chief Executive also admits a real need to improve the Government's information dissemination and public communication. We agree with the Chief Executive, that effective dissemination of information so that the public can better understand policies and to learn of



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new developments is an important aspect of governance. But as we have also said in our Policy Address recommendations for this year, Government officials must pay more attention to figure out the effect on and the perception of the citizen-customers rather than to satisfy their own department's process requirements. They must let their actual deeds, not words alone, to demonstrate their passion to serve the citizens.

### **Land and housing**

To tackle Hong Kong livelihood issues must require attention to land supply and housing. The Institute believes that, with the completion of more units, we can indeed re-establish a flight of steps for younger persons and families to improve on their housing condition and quality of living in realistically reachable climbs. To increase the overall supply of public housing will in turn make it easier for those seriously in need for public rental housing to satisfy basic housing needs.

The rate at which more housing units become available will necessarily hinge on land supply. The Policy Address a year ago already set the aim to expedite the land development process, streamlining approval and strengthening coordination among departments, so to compress the development schedule from turning raw land to building sites and eventual housing units. The Northern Metropolis concept of this year should in coming years make available certain land for housing units. The Government also looks to increase land supply through other means, including efforts to further screen "Green Belts", to unlock Tso/Tong lands in the New Territories, to extend the standardised land premium assessment scheme to land in the New Territories, to extend the existing measures for revitalizing industrial buildings and to re-develop aging public housing estates.

### **Peace and stability help bring in talents**

The Chief Executive will raise the quota for the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme. Following the recent review of the Talent List, there will also be changes to add or augment the type and scope of professions so to meet development needs in finance, I&T, arts/culture and healthcare sciences. These measures should help bring talents to Hong Kong.

### **Raise the corporate governance game**

HKIoD believes lifelong training for directors in corporate governance knowledge and skills is an important yet often neglected segment when it comes to nurturing talents for the economic development of Hong Kong. Company directors are ultimately responsible for corporate governance. Better quality company directors should mean better corporate governance. HKIoD believes that company directors should have a firm measure of competence to perform when they first assume their posts. Over time, they should strive to remain up-to-date with best corporate governance practices. Similarly, directors/governors of social enterprises, charitable organisations and statutory bodies should also be ready and prepared to discharge their duties when they start out and to keep up-to-date with best governance practices over time.

The Policy Address mentioned that the role of a government in education is not merely a provider of resources, but also a policy maker, administrator and regulator. To restore Hong Kong's education order, the Government must effectively monitor and follow-up on issues that involve school management and the conduct of teachers. The Institute encourages stakeholders to offer views on how to enhance the quality of education. The Institute believes members of

school boards and related sponsoring bodies can also raise their game in meeting the demands of school governance, to enhance the tools they could have in devising right strategy and policies for the betterment of their schools.

The Institute prays for the Government to draw up measures to help directors of business companies or governors of organisations of various kinds, whether those who now are and those who aspire to be, to obtain quality training so to raise the level of their corporate governance practices.

#### **A relaunch to forge a brighter future**

The many Policy Addresses over the years have touched on a good many measures and initiatives and painted a good many visions for the future. Vision, proposal and policies however grand they may sound all need to see implementation to have results. With governing back to normal, there will be that much better chance of forging a brighter future.

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#### **About The Hong Kong Institute of Directors**

The Hong Kong Institute of Directors (“HKIoD”) is Hong Kong’s premier body representing directors to foster the long-term success of companies through advocacy and standards-setting in corporate governance and professional development for directors. A non-profit-distributing organisation with membership consisting of directors from listed and non-listed companies, HKIoD is committed to providing directors with educational programmes and information service and establishing an influential voice in representing directors. With international perspectives and a multi-cultural environment, HKIoD conducts business in biliteracy and trilingualism. HKIoD is a member institute of the Global Network of Director Institutes, a worldwide alliance of leading director institutes.

Website: <http://www.hkiod.com>.