

The Hon. Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, GBM, GBS
Chief Executive
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Tamar, Hong Kong

Dear Chief Executive,

Submission to the 2018 Policy Address Public Consultation

Since 1983, Friends of the Earth (HK) ("FoE (HK)") has led the environmental dialogue by engaging government, business and community with equitable solutions to protect our local and regional environment. With the vision to promote a healthy and sustainable environment for all, we are pleased to enclose our submission to the Government's 2018 Policy Address.

FoE (HK) envisions Hong Kong as a progressive eco-city and recognises the need to address climate change. Our submission is as attached and makes the following overarching recommendations:

1. Target 80% carbon reduction by 2050 and 10% renewable energy supply by 2030;
2. Mandate the installation of renewable energy equipments on government premises and government-funded institutions;
3. Establish a climate change response office to coordinate against climate threats;
4. Collaborate with Greater Bay Area cities by sharing and exchanging information related to climate change;
5. Adopt an urban forestry policy and strengthen tree management;
6. Demonstrate Hong Kong's green finance leadership and divest from fossil fuels

Going forward, we hope the Government will put climate change on the forefront. We welcome the opportunity to continue working closely with all government bureaux and departments.

If there are any queries on the submission, please contact me at cwcheung@foe.org.hk.

Yours Sincerely,



Mr. Cheung Chi Wah
Chief Executive Officer
Friends of the Earth (HK)

1. Stronger Climate Targets

Climate change is universally regarded as the biggest threat to humanity¹. The Paris Agreement target of limiting temperature rise to well below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels requires global emissions to peak before 2020². The Government currently targets to reduce carbon emissions by 26-36% from 2005 levels and pursue a 3-4% renewable energy generation³. The world however needs to reduce carbon emissions much faster than before. Hong Kong's targets also lags far behind other cities of similar development⁴. FoE (HK) has urged for stronger climate targets on multiple occasions⁵. This is to align with the IPCC's target in achieving the Paris climate goal⁶. The Government has to move on from a 'low carbon' mindset to 'zero carbon'. **FoE (HK) once again recommends the Government to target 80% carbon reduction by 2050 and 10% renewable energy supply by 2030.**

2. Renewable Energy Promotion

The introduction of the feed-in tariff scheme and renewable energy certificates in the new scheme of control agreements is commendable. However, the Government has to act more proactively in promoting renewable energy development in Hong Kong. Beyond government premises, the Government should facilitate deployment by statutory bodies such as the Hospital Authority, Airport Authority Hong Kong, as well as universities. The Government should also enable members of the public – who may not have access to rooftops – to benefit from the scheme through participating in renewable energy cooperatives⁷. **FoE (HK) recommends the Government to mandate distributed renewable energy generation in all government and government-funded premises.**

3. Climate Change Emergency Response Office

Aside from mitigation strategies, FoE (HK) asks the Government to implement an adaptation plan in face of inevitable climate change impacts⁸. The recent floods and heat waves in Japan demonstrated the interdepartmental response required to cope with extreme weather events, which will be exacerbated by climate change⁹. As a coastal city that is vulnerable to climate change, an emergency response team that crosses the relevant departments and bureaux should be established. Adaptation

¹ [New York Times, Biggest Threat to Humanity? Climate Change, U.N. Chief Says](#)

² [UN Environment, The Emission Gap Report 2017](#)

³ [Environment Bureau, Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2030+](#)

⁴ [C40, 25 Cities Commit to become Emissions Neutral by 2050 to Deliver on their Share of the Paris Agreement](#)

⁵ [FoE \(HK\), Submission on the Policy Address 2018](#)

⁶ [IPCC, IPCC: Greenhouse gas emissions accelerate despite reduction efforts](#)

⁷ [Hufen and Koppenjan, Local renewable energy cooperatives: revolution in disguise?](#)

⁸ [Elsharouny, MRMM, Planning Coastal Areas and Waterfronts for Adaptation to Climate Change in Developing Countries](#)

⁹ [Scientific American, Searing Summer Heat Follows Killer Floods in Japan](#)

measures include strengthening the city's resilience to flooding by integrating the sponge city concept¹⁰, establishing water security by tapping local water sources¹¹, and reducing the public's vulnerability against vector-borne diseases through vector control¹². By identifying risk and vulnerabilities, an emergency response plan should also be established in cases of disaster recovery¹³. **FoE (HK) recommends the Government to establish an emergency response office on climate change.**

4. Greater Bay Area Collaboration

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said that climate change affects everyone regardless of borders¹⁴. Many direct and indirect impacts – coastal flooding and disease transmission for example – do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. Collaboration between cities within the Greater Bay Area can strengthen risk analysis, enhance climate trend monitoring, improve knowledge base, and facilitate resource allocation¹⁵. Cross-border cooperation can reduce the cost of implementing adaptation measures while enhancing synergy¹⁶. The EU has set up early warning and detection systems for drought¹⁷ and flood¹⁸ on a continental scale. **FoE (HK) recommends the Government to form an alliance with governments in the Greater Bay Area to exchange experience on climate change.**

5. Urban Forestry

Hong Kong ranks highly amongst neighbouring Asian cities in the per-capita green space available¹⁹. Excluding country parks however, citizens only enjoy 2.5m² of urban green space²⁰. For comparison, Chinese cities have an average of 5.7m², Singapore has 7.5m², and Seoul tops the rest with 14.6m². Urban greenery provides a number of environmental, social and health benefits²¹. China has developed urban forestry policies for its municipalities²². Singapore also targets to double its 100ha of high-rise greenery by 2030²³.

Although the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section was established in 2010 to promote a new strategic greening policy, the Government continues to face

¹⁰ [The Conversation, China's 'sponge cities' aim to re-use 70% of rainwater – here's how](#)

¹¹ [Public Utilities Board, Four National Taps](#)

¹² [Campbell-Lendrum, Climate change and vector-borne diseases: what are the implications for public health research and policy?](#)

¹³ [American Planning Association Washington Chapter, Climate Change Planning and the Role of Emergency Management](#)

¹⁴ [UN News, Climate change has no respect for borders and affects all, says Ban Ki-moon](#)

¹⁵ [UN Habitat, International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning](#)

¹⁶ [Climate-ADAPT, Take trans-boundary issues into account](#)

¹⁷ [European Commission, EDO Home – European Drought Observatory](#)

¹⁸ [European Commission, European Flood Awareness System \(EFAS\)](#)

¹⁹ [Siemens, Asian Green City Index](#)

²⁰ [David Aldous, Greening South East Asian Capital Cities](#)

²¹ [Project EverGreen, Environmental Benefits of Green Space](#)

²² [FAO, Urban Forestry in China: Status and Prospect](#)

²³ [The Straits Times, More rooftop gardens, urban farms planned](#)

intense criticism for felling trees²⁴. FoE (HK) has joined the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in the Jockey Club Enhancement of Urban Tree Risk Management Project. The project aims to utilise smart sensing technology and geographic information system to better monitor tree stability, allowing preventive measures from early detection²⁵. We hope the results from the 3-year project will be adopted by the Government and strengthen urban tree management in Hong Kong. **FoE (HK) recommends the Government to realise a long-term urban forestry policy for Hong Kong.**

6. Sustainable Investment

The shift to sustainability rely not just political will, but also investment into new infrastructures and technologies. The signing of the Paris Agreement is estimated to unlock around US\$90 trillion of low-carbon investments over the next 15 years²⁶. As a world-class international financial centre, the Government should take advantage of the Greater Bay Area development to position Hong Kong as the regional leader in green finance²⁷. FoE (HK) lauds the Green Bond Grant Scheme launched in June²⁸. The Government should also facilitate green IPOs and lending and support such investments with tax incentives²⁹.

Although the Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) published the 'Principles of Responsible Ownership', adoption rate has been slow owing to its voluntary nature³⁰. Similar stewardship codes in the United Kingdom and Japan have demonstrated a positive impact on corporate governance and accountability³¹. FoE (HK) recommends the SFC to adopt a “comply or explain” approach for all major asset owners – such as the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), Subsidised Schools Provident Fund (SSPF), Hospital Authority Provident Fund Scheme (HAPFS), and Housing Authority – and their external asset managers. The top ten major asset owners alone can mobilise over US\$1 trillion of Asset Under Management (AUM)³². Likewise, the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) Authority should also follow the stewardship principles. **FoE (HK) also recommends the Government to demonstrate its green finance leadership by investing in green projects while divesting from fossil fuels.**

²⁴ [SCMP, Hong Kong's old trees suffer the unkindest cut of all: felling accelerates despite creation of management office](#)

²⁵ [Hong Kong Polytechnic University, PolyU to apply smart sensing technology in urban tree management](#)

²⁶ [The New Climate Economy, The New Climate Economy 2016](#)

²⁷ [Financial Services Development Council, Hong Kong as a Regional Green Finance Hub](#)

²⁸ [GovHK, Government launches Green Bond Grant Scheme](#)

²⁹ [Climate Bonds Initiative, Tax incentives for issuers and investors](#)

³⁰ [Securities and Futures Commission, Principles of responsible ownership](#)

³¹ [Reuter, Changes in chaebol governance culture could diminish the 'Korea discount'](#)

³² [Willis Towers Watson - Take good care of your portfolio health](#)