



# 公道自在民心

The Civic Way, the Fairer Way



# Election Manifesto

(Announced on 13 July 2008 at the Civic Party's Legislative Council Campaign Launch Meeting)

Since its establishment on 19 March 2006, the Civic Party has strived unceasingly to work towards a democratic and fairer Hong Kong. During this time, we have been baptized in a series of three elections: the elections for members of the sub-sectors of the Chief Executive Election Committee, the election of the Chief Executive and the District Council elections. None of them were easy for a young party to contest. However, we emerged from the tests pretty well, thanks to our voters.

Apart from electoral activities, the Party has been occupied with a myriad of public affairs on a daily basis, with issues ranging from metropolitan design to trans-fat regulation. We have taken part in these activities within LegCo and outside, interacting with the public in street forums, and project partnerships with civic organizations and by visits to families in their homes. At no time has the Party spared its efforts in working for the common good. Thus, Party members have made many sacrifices in terms of time, money and so on. We are driven by the Party's motto "The Civic Spirit, The Hong Kong spirit". The hard slog to develop the Civic Party has not dampened our belief in democracy and the severe challenges we have faced have not changed our commitment to social justice.

We are now facing an even more formidable battle: the Legislative Council election. Although this is a battle for legislative seats, we must recognize the deeper meaning behind it. This is to secure an effective platform to work for the people's well-being, using our professional knowledge and skills. In other words, it is a battle for social justice. Hence, our campaign slogan is "The Civic Way, the Fairer Way". Fairness is a virtue desired by all. Fairness is a virtue required at all times. Fairness is a virtue that knows no boundary. Citizens in a modern society like Hong Kong should never be so absorbed with themselves to become indifferent to the injustice suffered by others. The economic prosperity achieved in Hong Kong should not lessen our dedication towards creating a fairer society. A civilized metropolis cannot afford to achieve a low score on the score sheet of fairness.

Dear candidates of the Civic Party, you are sent out today to preach "The Civic Way, the Fairer Way". Hong Kong needs to rebuild fairness! The call of fairness involves granting all people an equal right to full citizenship, without which they can never be true masters of their own destiny. It also involves putting an end to monopolistic practices and attempts to manipulate the

market. Helping the disadvantaged to free themselves from poverty so that they can live a normal life is no less important. It is fair to let our descendants inherit a sustainable environment conducive to a good life for all.

Thus, the goal we are striving at is the replacement of sham harmony by dependable fairness and the substitution of interest-skewed prosperity with a fair sharing of economic gains.

In the present battle, nineteen members of the Party have determinedly marched to the front, forming a crack force with their campaign managers, volunteers and fellow Party members. The Party has assembled quite a few new young talents who together with experienced legislators and district councilors, form a vibrant, skilled and creative contingent ready to serve the community after the election. We have many kinds of professionals in the Party with vision and dedication, thus making us an effective power to participate in public affairs.

Today is a great day. Let us stride proudly ahead to meet type of challenges. The result of our 56-day campaign will affect the extent to which we in the democratic camp can counter balance the influence of the conservative force in the legislature, in the interest of rebuilding fairness in Hong Kong. We shall engage in the elections with enthusiasm and vigour, yet we should remain circumspect in our words and deeds. We shall fully capitalize on the strengths of the Party to deliver with excellence. Let us promise to do our best for the campaign and render full support to our candidates at the front, so that on the morning of the 8th September when the election results are announced, we will be proud of the good seeds we have sown.

Last but not least, the Civic Party appeals to the general public and the voters: "Don't be aloof spectators; show an interest, and take part actively!" The point is not to canvass your vote for the Civic Party (although we would be grateful if you did). The point is to remind you that the works of the government and the Legislative Council (including its will and capability to monitor the government) have a direct and an indirect effect on your daily life. Therefore, your participation in the election has a bearing on the future distribution of gains and losses to you in future. Never believe that the words of the lowly carry little weight and that one vote has no impact on the overall picture. If everyone were to think this way, it would become a self-fulfilling prophecy meaning that the influence of the few who have voted is magnified and their interests further consolidated at your long-term expense. However, should every one of you think otherwise and comes out to vote, the influence of the multitude is brought into play thereby guaranteeing greater fairness of legislation and governance. The core value of fairness requires each of us to play an active citizen's role. I do hope that all registered electors turn out to vote on 7 September.

# Our beliefs



- Hong Kong and its people deserve a brilliant future for surpassing the colonial past.
- Everyone should be given a fair chance to succeed and work towards the fulfillment of his or her potential.
- We believe in the creation of sustainable communities and in the improvement of the quality of life as a common goal.
- Economic development should be pursued in that context and not for its own sake.
- Social harmony and stability can only come about with social justice and equity.
- We believe in protecting public resources which belong to the entire community for the enjoyment of present and future generations.
- A civilized society is one which is pluralistic, compassionate, which respects the dignity and worth of each individual and values diversity.
- Such a society can only be built upon the rule of law, the protection of individual rights and freedoms, and an elected government which truly enjoys the wide support of the people. That Government must take civil society into partnership, reflect the will of the community, and affirm the commitment to constitutionalism.
- All those who take Hong Kong as their home should recognize their civic duty, and do their part in bringing about a fair and just society.
- The Government of the HKSAR must use the powers entrusted to it to remove the entrenched privileges and out-dated bureaucratic barriers which are causing stagnation and stifling free enterprise. Only then can the gap between the rich and the poor be addressed and the vulnerable be given the care they require, the diligent allowed to reap their reward and the young look to the future with hope and confidence.

## Education: Not for Profit, but for Profiting the Next Generation

Ms. Chan Yin-bing, a 30 years old mother with two sons, is worried about her elder son, now in Primary 5, who has suffered from mild Hyperkinetic Disorder since Primary 2, and is unable to concentrate during classes. 'The teachers regard him as a naughty boy,' said Ms. Chan. 'And they keep complaining to me about this. I have to inform them about my son's condition each year, and request them to pay more attention to him.'



However, when teachers have to deal with big classes of more than 30 students, it is difficult for them to take proper care of a student like Ms. Chan's son. In order to maintain discipline in the classroom his teachers have sometimes felt they had no choice but to make her son stand outside the classroom. Ms. Chan has tried in vain to urge her son's teachers to follow up on his case. 'The teachers had promised to follow-up' said Ms. Chan. 'but I found out later that they were too busy. When I called a teacher at 8pm, I was told that she was still at school, marking students' homework, then I felt sorry for bothering her again.' Ms. Chan continued, 'It is difficult in a class of 30 or more students to offer a proper environment for my son, but I don't want to send him to a special school, as he is neither mentally retarded nor violent. He could be taken better care of if the size of the class could be reduced.'

Although the Government has promised to implement gradually small-class teaching at primary level, Ms. Chan's son, expected to be promoted to Primary 6 in September this year, will not benefit from the new policy. 'As the Government has not promised to implement the small-class policy at secondary level, my son may have to face a more difficult curriculum, and my nightmares of recent years will be repeated,' said Ms. Chan, who believes that small-class teaching



has always been desired by teachers, parents and students. 'When we have demanded small-class teaching over the years, the Government has done nothing but shift responsibility, until Mr. Donald Tsang promised to implement the policy at primary level while campaigning for his second term as CE. What are our education policies for? The needs of students? Or the needs of politics?

What Ms. Chan has experienced is an example of the lack of progress in education reforms in recent years. The reality is that any education reform needs to engage the schools themselves, calling on the experience of teachers who stand in the frontline. Even before the implementation of the reforms, teachers' workloads were excessive. Reforms such as the New Banding System, School-

based Management, School-based Curriculum, Curriculum Integration and School-based Innovation have further increased workloads, but the Government has not provided adequate resources to assist the teachers. As a result, schools are under threat of cutting classes or even closure. Meanwhile teachers are pre-occupied by non-teaching tasks and have no choice but to pay less attention to the students. We must now act to restore fairness by removing the red-tape which is tying-up schools and teachers.



The Civic Party continues to advocate small-class teaching and does not accept the Government's excuse that would be too costly Ms Claudia Mo believes that the Government's claim is misleading. 'The Government's calculation has not only ignored the reality of a decrease in the size of the student population,' said Ms. Mo. 'but has also over-estimated the burden of every extra class.' She believes that Hong Kong could afford a gradual implementation of small-class teaching at secondary level

in the near future. Ms. Mo believes that the Government's emphasis on commercial efficiency has led to flaws in our education policies. 'The Government regards an increase in economic productivity as the only goal of education,' said Ms. Mo. 'It defines education as a way of distinguishing students' academic results, to help employers to hire workers by identifying educational certificates or qualifications'. She accuses the Government of simply promoting 'Education Makes Profits' in some recent pro-

grammes, such as, Youth Pre-employment Training, Yijin, IVE Courses or Associate Degree Programmes, and says that this idea has brought about numerous problems. For example, the Government has on the one hand refused to increase subsidized undergraduate places in universities but on the other hand encouraged the provision of self-financed Associate Degree places that lack quality supervision and have raised problems with the acceptance of these qualifications for students wishing to

pursue further studies. The result has been to produce an over-supply of AD places without guaranteeing the acceptance of the qualifications they generate. Indeed some of these courses have not even been recognized by the professional bodies whose acceptance is required to make them relevant.

## Planning: We Must Plan Our Own Communities

Mr. Lau Wai-chung first heard about plans for the reconstruction of the Kwun Tong community when he was still a primary student. His father was glad, as he believed this could significantly improve the environment where he lived. However, the wait has been prolonged for more than 20 years. All residents in the community thought that the government would sooner or later acquire their flats, so they were unwilling to pay for further maintenance or repair of their buildings. As a result, the buildings have decayed and Mr. Lau's old father had to use the stairway everyday, until he died several years ago from cancer. Even the start of the reconstruction in this year, this did not lessen Mr. Lau's sorrow whenever he mentions his father. 'The government should be responsible for what my father suffered in the last several years of his life,' said Mr. Lau. 'While it delayed the reconstruction, it stopped the private developers from participating in it. Finally my father had to leave this world with regret. Even when many old residents in this district could see the Government acquiring their flats, they did not have many days to make use of the renewed community. The government owes an answer to them.'

To fulfill his father's wishes, Mr. Lau has paid much attention to the renewal of Kwun Tong in recent years. When he endeavoured to improve the living environment of the elderly in the district he discovered more and more injustice, especially in the way the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) consulted residents on the reconstruction programme. 'The URA only told us the whereabouts of the reconstructed area, commercial buildings and the bus stops, without telling us key facts like the number of buildings or even how many storeys there would be,' said Mr. Lau. 'Many residents have a strong sense of belonging to their community; why should they be prevented from taking part in the planning? There are now more than 200 elderly families around Yue Man Square, which is the place that they have lived and spent most of their lives, but their request for settling them in the same district was simply refused,' Mr. Lau continued. 'If the URA acquires our flats, it should strive to accommodate our wishes, instead we are simply denied a choice. It is so unfair that after spending 20 years to considering the reconstruction programme, the URA leaves no room for the residents to consider whether to move or not.'

Although there was hope that the reconstruction programme would help long standing, small business and allow residents to retain homes in the district, this has not happened. Mr. Lau says, 'some political parties simply came to explain the Authority's procedures and tried to calm us down; but we don't believe that the government should be so arrogant, it is not entitled to force us away by virtue of so-called "procedures". Other political parties may tell us the shortcomings of the law and help us fight for our interests. We must review and amend the unfair laws, so as to bring about a fair urban renewal.'



The Hon. Alan Leong, an incumbent lawmaker, believes that the current Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) is outdated as it obliges URA to 'self-finance'. He would like to see 'Planning before Acquisition'. 'Under the URS, the URA will simply plan a profit-making reconstruction project, or even finance the project by adopting an excessively high plot-ratio and a dense distribution of buildings. Projects of this kind usually fail to satisfy the public's concerns and the planning process is prolonged indefinitely,' said Mr. Leong. He also criticizes the government for its denial of responsibility. 'These flaws in the strategy have never been dealt with by the administration, which should have reviewed and amended the strategy every two or three years.' The Development Bureau has recently promised to undertake a review of the URS, but the review will not be completed within the next three years. Mr. Leong regards this as an intentional delay, hindering the restoration of fairness to residents in the reconstructed zones.

Mr. Leong believes that the government should not simply delegate the critical responsibility for urban renewal to the URA solely, but should review the whole policy across government departments and engage public opinion. 'The URA must change its role,' said Mr. Leong, 'from a quasi-developer to a facilitator of urban renewal. One way to achieve this change is to establish a fund containing HK\$10 billion to re-form the URA. Proposals for urban renewal could be made by the district councils with professional assistance, followed by discussion with private developers by the URA, who will finally provide loans for the projects from the fund. This offers citizens a chance for to participate in the planning of their own communities.'





## Economics: Fair Competition Brings Quality Lives

Ms. Pat-mui, who is in her 50s, lives with her two daughters. Each time she buys food and other items for her family, she walks 20 minutes to the market stalls near Taipo Market rather than to the supermarket downstairs. Why? Because the prices are lower there. 'It costs around \$70 or so to prepare a meal just one year ago,' said Ms. Pat-mui. 'But with inflation, it's at least \$100 now. Every day in the newspaper we see prices gradually going up. Why would you want to go to the supermarket, if one bottle of peanut oil costs at least ten dollars more there than in the local grocery shop?'

Ms. Pat-mui remembers that there once had been small grocery shops and vegetable

stalls downstairs, but they had no choice but to close down after a supermarket opened in the town centre. 'I can still recall, when the supermarkets battled with each other by means of massive price cuts, that the price for Coke at the supermarkets was so low that even the grocers nearby would purchase Coke from them,' she said. 'But the groceries eventually went out of business.' Even the hawkers she had patronised for over 20 years had to close when the supermarkets started to sell meat and seafood, and opened a branch near her home. 'I had originally thought that it was good that the supermarkets battled with each other to have the lowest prices,' said Ms. Pat-mui. 'But I suddenly understood the truth, when all the

small shops closed. Now we can see how the supermarkets, with fewer and fewer competitors, can increase the prices massively.'

Hon. Ronny Tong, an incumbent Legislative Council Member, regards the way that oil companies control the price of oil worldwide and the 3 major supermarkets' domination of the market set as clear examples of monopolization, and he believes that this will eventually harm consumers. 'In spite of Hong Kong's reputation as the most open economy in the world, markets in Hong Kong cannot be considered to be really fair and open,' said Mr. Tong. 'Policies have always favoured the big enterprises, and at the same time reduced the people's right to choose.' He says that fair competition can benefit consumers, and he takes the IDD market as an example, which the introduction of more competition after the Handover had led to huge reductions in service prices. 'A Fair Competition law would not be an intervention in our free economy,' said Mr. Tong. 'On the contrary, the law, which would protect everyone's opportunity to fairly access and compete in the markets, would be a foundation that strengthens the free economy.'

The government's recent proposal for a Fair Competition Bill does not provide any guidance on principles of competition, and it also gives immunity to the government and statutory authorities from the law. As a result, electricity would still be

monopolized by the two major electric companies, while the MTR Corporation would still run the whole rail network, with no accountability to the public. Mr. Tong urges the establishment of an independent Fair Competition Commission that is responsible for ensuring that all business, and statutory and government authorities are based on fair competition, so as to eliminate unfair practices like bid-rigging, price-rigging, market allocation, price-fixing and production quotas.

Mr. Tong believes that all citizens of Hong Kong, a rich and prosperous society, deserve a guarantee of a quality life. In response to the insufficient statutory protection for consumers, Mr. Tong urges the Government to initiate the second phase of an amendment to the law on consumer protection as soon as possible, so as to include property sales and service industries, and to empower the Consumer Council in more areas. 'Hong Kong's competitiveness can only be enhanced by benefiting everyone in society with the prosperity of our economy, not just a tiny portion,' he said.



## Medical Services: Reforms instead of Stigmatization

Ms. Lui Yeung-ho, who is more than 72 years old, had always been in good health until recently, when she was told by a social worker at the community centre she attends that she has high blood pressure. The social worker suggested that Ms. Lui go for a medical check-up at the Taipo Jockey Club Clinic. Ms. Lui repeatedly tried to make an appointment on the phone, but failed, because she could not follow the recorded instructions and she could not press the buttons on her phone fast enough. She had no choice but to ask her son to help make an appointment. "I was sorry to bother him to ask him to do this for me, as he is busy with work. Why is there no hotline with live operators?" asked Ms. Lui. "That kind of service would be convenient for the elderly."



Even after she had made her appointment successfully, she had to spend more than two hours to wait for treatment, which lasted for only 20 minutes. "The doctor confirmed that my blood pressure was too high, and prescribed some medicine for me. He also said that I should have my cholesterol level checked, but there was no time slot available to check this, so I had to return home to wait again."

She finally finished the check-up after waiting more than a week to get an appointment and almost three hours waiting at the clinic. Ms. Lui said that at least this check-up was better than her experience waiting for an operation for haemorrhoids. "I was told I would have to wait six months for an operation, so I went to a pharmacy to buy some medicine. I still had three months to wait when the haemorrhoids disappeared!"

Ms. Lui has a daughter who lives on Hong Kong Island. When Ms. Lui learned that the parents of her son-in-law does not have to wait long before treatment or a check-up at the PYN Eastern Hospital, she was upset by the rule that she was not entitled to be treated in a hospital on Hong Kong Island, because she lives in Taipo. "I am almost as old as my son-in-law's parents," said Ms. Lui. "My health is not worse than theirs. The fact that I live in Taipo and they live on the Hong Kong Island has stigmatized me as a burden to the medical services. This is unfair to me."

According to Dr. Hon. Fernando Cheung, an incumbent Legislative Council Member, the Hospital Authority has organized all hospitals under its management into seven clusters, with an uneven distribution of resources among these clusters. Taking Kowloon East Cluster as an example, Dr Cheung said that whilst serving 14 per cent of Hong Kong's total population, it receives only 10 per cent of the total medical appropriations, resulting in a lack of services, such as cerebral surgery and oncology, that are essential to the good health of the huge aged population served by the cluster.



Dr. Cheung further mentioned how poor the ratio of beds to population is in the New Territories West Cluster. "Each 1,000 patients in the New Territories West are allocated only 1.65 beds and 0.52 doctors, while those in the Kowloon Central Cluster have 5.88 beds and 1.19 doctors" said Dr. Cheung. "During the recent flu outbreak, patients in the emergency room of Tuen Mun Hospital had to wait for five hours, and the rate of patients to beds reached 130 per cent at one point. How could such unfairness be found in a so-called fair medical system?"

Dr. Cheung believes that the difficulties in the current public medical system are caused by the system itself, rather than because of a lack of resources. Any attempt to re-finance the medical services before setting clear reform goals would only create more unfairness. "According to the 'user pays' principle, patients under re-financing would simply be divided into two classes," said Dr. Cheung. "Those living in poverty would

receive inferior treatment. Mandatory individual contributions would not only burden the unprivileged, but also limit their choice of medical services. Currently 56 percent of the total number of households in Hong Kong have a monthly income below HK\$20,000. Many families just cannot afford further contributions on top of paying into the MPF."

Dr. Cheung believes that the government must strengthen access to primary medical services by putting the emphasis on 'health protection' instead of 'treatment'. Measures such as allowing the Elderly Health Centres to play a role in the prevention of diseases, or the creation of a healthy environment for habitation and employment should be taken. Should these reforms incur additional expenses that require re-financing, then the government will be obliged to propose a feasible new model, after proper consideration of the people's ability to pay.

# Human Rights: Equal Rights under Rule of Law

Leo Yau, a 3rd year business administration student at Hong Kong Shue Yan University, had often taken part in the June 4th candle-light vigils and July 1st Marches. After indecent photographs of canto-pop singers were circulated on the internet, and the police arrested Chung Yik-tin, who was suspected of releasing the photos, Yau organized a demonstration of about 500 internet users. 'It was Edison Chan who was the source of the pictures,' said Yau. 'So why was he, instead of an ordinary internet user free from prosecution?'

When organizing the demonstration, Yau had frequent dealings with the police. Apart from having to make numerous applications, he had to give them detailed accounts of all his activities and even had to give them his home phone number. At first he estimated that there would be around 150 participants taking part in the demonstration; when the numbers eventually reached 500, he was warned by the police that 'you will be responsible for any accidents that may happen'. 'As a citizen, all I wanted to do was simply to arouse the public's concern about internet freedom. I don't have much experience in organizing demonstrations, so I expected to be assisted, rather than be harassed by the police.'

When the Olympic Torch arrived at Hong Kong in early May, he went to join the crowd at Tsim Sha Tsui, where he saw people shouting and waving the National flag. After some excitement, he started to feel a bit uneasy. 'I saw a totally unified expression, which was in contrast to what I had seen during the July 1st marches,' said Yau. 'Then I had seen many different kinds of slogans, to do with universal suffrage, gay rights or the minimum wage. What I saw at Tsim Sha Tsui was just one unified group'. When the torch relay reached Hong Kong, some people, claiming themselves to be 'protectors of the torch', were allowed to stay just outside the designated area for the event, while those who called for improvement in China's human rights were surrounded by police officers. Yau felt angry later when he saw on TV Ms. Christina Chan, a student in HKU supporting religious freedom in Tibet, being taken away by police officers. 'Christina was just simply waving a banner. Those officers were just standing by when she was struck violently by other people, and then they bundled her off the scene. We've already seen how police obstruct anti-government assemblies, and how they favour pro-government ones. It is so unfair.'

There have been more instances of human rights violations in Hong Kong in recent years: Jens Galschiot, the famous international human rights activist, was refused entry into Hong Kong; activists protesting about reconstruction in Wanchai had to strip naked when searched by the police officers. 'The Government claims that it is constructing a harmonious



society,' said Margaret Ng, a Legislative Council Member, 'but it further polarizes it by gratifying some privileged class on the one hand, and causing difficulties to dissidents on the other.'

One kind of special privilege can be found in the election of LegCo Members. Currently all seats in LegCo are divided in two groups, one returned by geographical constituencies (GCs) and the other by functional constituencies (FCs). All electors can choose candidates as their representative in the GCs, while a small portion of electors can also cast a vote in the FCs, thus having representation by two members in LegCo. 'According to the International Covenant, an election should be governed by the principles of universality and equality, and a FC election could never comply with these principles. Passages of Motions moved by Members even require a majority in both halves

of the Council, leading to FCs being controlled by a minority, overriding the majority's will in the GCs elections.'

Since the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress' Decision allows for the possibility of the election of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage in 2017, the development of Hong Kong's democracy has entered a critical phase. 'It should be up to the Legislative Council Members of the next term to guarantee that the proposal of Constitutional Reforms in future will comply with the international standard of universality and equality,' said Ms. Ng. 'The LegCo election in September is of vital importance, and the prerequisite for preventing the passage of any unfair proposal will be the pan-Democrats's success in retaining 20 seats or more.'



# Public Open Spaces: Fair Spaces Created by Fair Development



Ms. Law Nga-ning, who is in her forties, has lived in Caine Road, Central since childhood. She remembers that when she was young, she could see the clear sky and blue sea from the window, and children played on the streets near her home. Nowadays the place she lives is occupied by more and more tall buildings. 'with less open areas and more air pollutants on the road, my kids cannot stay long on the street,' said Ms. Law. 'We like to use electric fans in the summer, but people living opposite to my building use air-conditioners, and the gas emitted gives me no choice but to use air conditioner as well.'

In response to these serious problems, she has joined some of her neighbours to form the 'Central & Western District Concern Group', which monitors over-development in the community. When the group was protesting against the sale of

the former Police Quarters site in Hollywood Road, Ms. Law and her colleagues discovered a planning guideline produced by the government which says that each resident is entitled to a certain amount of open space. However there is a lack of such public open space in Sai Ying Pun and Sheung Wan, where Ms. Law lives. 'We are entitled to those public open spaces,' said Ms. Law, 'but our rights are ignored by the government that has nothing but making money in its mind.'

Ms. Law believes that most of the ordinary citizens have no idea about these planning guidelines, as it was not easy for her to obtain information from the staff of the Planning Department. 'When I asked for some latest information from the Planning Department early this year,' said Ms. Law, 'I met considerable delay. As a responsible taxpayer, why could not I ask for the information that is related to



the planning of my own community? Those conservationists who protested on the streets were clearly motivated by these unfair policies.'

Albert Lai, Chairman of Engineers Without Borders - Hong Kong, criticizes the current planning regime for its flaws that make the system amenable to government manipulation. 'The government has divided the public open spaces into many types, with regional ones, district ones, government-owned ones and privately-managed ones,' said Mr. Lai. 'Citizens are confused by such a complexity in definition, so they are unable to participate in building their own communities. This makes urban planning and development more unfair.'

Mr. Lai explains that the imbalanced development in Hong Kong has not only caused excessive denseness in the urban area, but has also led to under-development in the New Territories. 'To break the deadlock, we must "Walk Tall, Watch Forward",' said Mr. Lai. 'Hong Kong must be planned as a single entity, and the planning strategies in different districts must be reviewed and adjusted. For example, we should consider a development of a secondary city centre in the New Territories, which is similar to the development of the South Bank of London's River Thames, La Défense in Paris and the Rinkai Futohoshin (Waterfront City) in Tokyo.'

The agreement to build the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link will soon make Hong Kong accessible from tens of Mainland cities by express rail. Mr. Lai suggests that the station for the Rail Link in Hong Kong should be named as 'Hong Kong Station, National Express Rail Link', and it could be built at Kam Sheung Road in Yuen Long, which could become the core of a multi-functional area extending northward to Au Tau, westward to Yuen Long, and southward to the Pat Heung Depot. Such an area could become the nucleus of Hong Kong's proposed secondary city centre. 'The development of this area, as the transport hub of business and trading between the Mainland and Hong Kong, could generate immense economic power for the sustainable development of the New Territories,' said Mr. Lai, 'and at the same time reduce the pressure on urban development.' He further suggests that the government adopts measures, like the removal of government offices into this area, the building of a regional government headquarters and a Mainland-oriented exhibition centre, and the grant of tax breaks, plus reasonable rates or rents for enterprises moving into the area. This would encourage the participation of the business sector in this scheme 'The recent setback of the tender for building the cruise terminal at Kai Tak has been caused by the government's lack of foresight, its choice of a wrong site and its error in planning,' said Mr. Lai. 'We must "Walk Tall" so as to see the real opportunities for development, and to enhance the quality of life for the people in Hong Kong'

# Our Promises

Motivated by our firm beliefs, the Civic Party is committed to the development of democracy, social justice and people's livelihood in the next four years. The main plank of our platform is as follows:

## To Re-position Hong Kong as China Rises

Hong Kong plays a key part in the motherland's open-door reform process, as the rise of China generates new opportunities that could further strengthen the SAR's role as a global economic and cultural link. While in-depth studies have yet to be done on how Hong Kong should re-position itself, the first steps must be taken to improve interaction and communication between Hong Kong and the Mainland by upgrading the relevant services we provide.

The Civic Party advocates:

1. The strengthening of the SAR Government's ties with the mainland, by setting up more liaison offices in the major provinces and cities to promote the commercial, tourist and cultural services that Hong Kong offers, and by providing more information to SAR residents on aspects of business and everyday life in the Mainland through a range of activities, with a view to assisting those interested to develop their work there;

2. The strengthening of the current 'Liaison Mechanism' run by the SAR Government, so as to assist the Hong Kong residents who are detained in the mainland to stay in touch with their families and obtain necessary legal counseling;

3. Dialogue between the Central People's Government and the SAR Government, so as to ensure that all SAR Permanent Residents are entitled to the right to travel between Hong Kong and the mainland, so as to facilitate commerce and tourism on both sides;

4. A positive approach in the way the SAR Government deals with immigrants from the Mainland, through upgrading the assistance and services it provides to those in need, helping the immigrants to understand their rights and duties, and laying down a population policy that enhances interaction and interflow between the people on both sides, in order to enhance the long-term economic and social developments of Hong Kong;

5. The promotion of National Studies and Exchange programmes, so as to foster Hong Kong's understanding of the real conditions of life in the country and facilitate services at the community level in the Mainland.

## To Fight for Every Inch for True Democracy

In light of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress' confirmation that the SAR may institute universal suffrage for its CE Election in 2017, the development of democracy in Hong Kong enters a crucial phase. It remains to be seen whether our constitutional reform will eventually lead to a system that meets the internationally recognized norms of universality and equity in democratic election. We must therefore develop a set of clear targets in our common struggle for the true goal of democracy.

In the next four years, the Civic Party shall advocate the following:

1. Openness, Universality and Fairness in the Chief Executive Election

- The formation of the Nominating Committee through a mandate of the people, so that it can fully reflect and represent the will of all citizens;

- An open and fair nominating procedure, in which the threshold for nomination should not be set at too high a level for the qualified candidates, and all citizens are entitled to free choice with their ballot;

- Elimination of the unreasonable restriction that a member of political party cannot be elected as the Chief Executive.

2. Eliminating Functional Constituencies in the Legislative Council Election

- The need to develop the clear understanding among the public that FC seats have become the biggest obstacle to the making of a fair electoral system in the SAR;

- Thorough discussions among all political parties and the society at large to arrive at a consensus and a roadmap for the elimination of all FCs.

3. Delegation of Power and Elimination of Appointed Seats in District Administration

- Elimination of all appointed seats in the District Councils;

- The reform of District Councils, so that they will be empowered to make decisions on district planning affairs;

- The delegation to District Councils of the power to manage community facilities with full financial autonomy;

- People's participation in the decision-making process on district affairs.

## To Improve the Environment and Re-vitalize the Economy

With the ongoing challenges of globalization and the rapid currents of growth in the Mainland, the scope of Hong Kong's economic development has narrowed. As monopoly within and across sectors intensifies, business environment becomes very difficult for the small and medium-size enterprises. This also keeps overseas investors away from the Hong Kong market. Meanwhile, the limited economic recovery cannot actually help local employment, and in the job market salary levels have polarized to the most severe extent. The way out for the future hinges really on innovation and talents, the cultivation of which must be key to any breakthrough in the years ahead.

In the next four years, the Civic Party shall advocate:

1. Improvement of our Business Environment, so as to ensure freedom, fairness and creativity:

- Creation by Government, Universities, Business and other stakeholders of the programmes and infrastructure that foster and attract creative talents;

- Support for the Creative Industries, particularly on the development of local culture and arts;

- Development of environmental industries that also create job opportunities for workers with less education or technical skills;

- Strengthening the Consumer Council's role in the protection of the consumer's rights and interests;

- Speedy enactment of the Fair Competition Law and substantial improvement in market transparency so as to prevent monopoly;

- Review of the current modes of operation of the various public utilities, in order to protect the users' interest as public-private partnerships are introduced;

- Further opening up of the market to achieve greater freedom for foreign capital flow in and out of Hong Kong.

2. Government Adoption of a People-oriented Policy in Public Finance

- Assurance that all revenues are properly allocated, so as to generate more funds for social investments that benefit more people;

- Reform in the taxation system to ensure a stable public finance for the SAR.

3. Improvement of our Urban Environment, and in particular, Air Quality and Waste Disposal Scheme, so as to enhance Hong Kong's Competitiveness.

- Adoption of the WHO International Standard as the air quality standard in Hong Kong, so as to benchmark with the international level of air quality indicators;

- Formulation of long-term policies, including ways to cut down emission and a timeframe to open up the electricity market, so as to enhance efficiency and reduce the impact on global warming;

- Review of the Programme of Charges for Plastic Bags after one year of its implementation, and the establishment of a fund to use the fees collected from the Programme to develop ways of reducing wastes;

- Outline of a timeframe for public consultation and legislation on Charges for Domestic Waste;

- Legislation on the implementation of the Producer Responsibility Scheme.

## To Sustain Quality Life through Heritage Conservation

People in Hong Kong today pay much more emphasis on the intangible values of our city life, showing greater concerns for the standards of heritage conservation, quality buildings and the renewal of old districts. Accordingly, our urban planning and development work must from now on be integrated with public engagement, with aims to improve the quality of life in the community for the residents.

In the next four years, the Civic Party shall advocate:

1. Opening up of the Urban Planning Process, with a system that offers Professional Assistance to the Civil Society, so as to ensure the Efficacy of Collective Wisdom & Community Participation in Decision-making

- Reform of the Town Planning Board, to be led by non-officials working with more elected members who have the people's mandate, so that it can function as an independent and professional planning authority, to be backed up by a Secretariat operating independently from the Administration and reporting directly to the Board;

- Reforming the Antiquities Advisory Board into a new Heritage Conservation Board, which should be a statutory body led by a non-official expert with the full support of an independent Secretariat and district-level committees established under the Board.

2. Review of the Current Policies, with aims to improve the Quality of Life

- Formulation of mature policies, measures and statutes, following the review of the density and height levels in urban development, so as to ensure ventilation and light flow and avoid the spread of 'wall buildings';

- Urgent review of the Urban Renewal Strategy, in which the red tape binding the Urban Renewal Authority to be self-financing and to carry out 'Resumption after Planning' ought to be removed, so as to enable URA to adopt the new approach of 'community revitalization' in addressing the broader interests of the society at large;

- Adoption of international best practices, standards and systems in setting the procedures of identification, planning, management and conservation of heritage sites and monuments;

- Review of the definition and scope of antiquities and monuments, so that the policy of conservation can be extended from buildings to groups of buildings, their neighbouring streets, the entire cultural landscape, as well as the various categories of intangible heritage;

- Pro-active protection of historical monuments on the government-owned land by the Government;

- Setting up a Cultural and Natural Heritage Conservation Fund as soon as possible

## To Promote Civic Creativity and Cultural Diversity

There is a lack of clear direction and goals in the Government's Arts and Cultural Policies. In actual practice, Government-led or dominated projects tend to marginalize creativity in the civic and community sectors. We need strategic targets to develop local cultural diversity, creating space for the growth of alternative and innovative forms of artistic and cultural work.

The Civic Party urges the Government to:

- Increase substantially the recurrent funding of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, with specific aims to foster a dynamic, diversified and balanced developments in culture;

- Set the focus of our Arts & Cultural Policies, so as to promote local education in arts and cultures, enhance people's appreciation of a wide range of arts and culture, facilitate the making of alternative cultural space across class and community, and consolidate the subjectivity of our audiences and readers.

- Review the model, regulations and effectiveness of the various subsidy schemes for arts and culture, in order to encourage more creative groups and individuals to take part in cultural and creative work, and to open up more room for culture and creativity in the communities.

## To Improve People's Livelihood and Ensure Common Access to Happiness

Escalating pressure on people's livelihood is felt today by the grass-roots and the middle class alike, while more of our young people do not feel confident that their education allows them to aim high. Indeed, the wealth gap has given rise to a critical situation in our society. The Government must take the responsibility to strengthen its investments in education, medical service and social security.

A. In Medical Protection, the Civic Party urges the Government to Reform the Current Medical System and Improve the Efficiency of Medical Services BEFORE Reviewing the Funding. Reforms should include:

- Allocation of Medical Vouchers to the 20% of the population with lowest income, thus promoting the notion of primary medical services among the public;

- Extension of access to the Electronic Patient Record Network to the private practitioners;

- Strengthening the training of community doctors, nurses and provision of facilities, so as to enhance integral medical services within the communities;

- Out-sourcing of some medical services to the private system, such as services with low risks, non-urgent services, services with a long queue, primary medical services, general out-patient services, and surgery for cataract etc.;

- Maintaining an equilibrium between the interests of the medical profession and those of the patients, as well as between the public and private services.

B. To Improve our Education, the Civic Party Advocates:

- Extension of Free Education to the pre-primary level, amounting to 15 years;

- Implementation of Small-class teaching at the secondary level as soon as possible;

- Immediate co-operation between the Government and Tertiary Institutions to improve the quality and prospects of associate degree courses;

- Same subsidy provided for both the ordinary tertiary students and those enrolled in self-funded Associate Degree courses;

- Increase in the full-time University undergraduate places.

C. The Civic Party supports the development of social enterprises and local economy in the communities, so as to create job opportunities for the disabled, the middle-aged and the single parents. We shall: (a) advocate the establishment of trusts to raise funds for the social enterprises and (b) work with NGOs in developing social enterprises for services such as education, emergency aids and environmental protection.

D. To achieve an appropriate level of Social Security in order to improve People's Livelihood in the long run, the Civic Party Advocates:

- Enactment of the minimum wage and standard working hours to protect the interest of workers;

- Implementation of the universal Retirement Pension Scheme after public consultation;

- Increase in resources for the support of families;

- Formulation of a comprehensive set of domestic violence laws and policies, together with the establishment of a sufficiently-resourced central mechanism to prevent and tackle domestic violence.