WWF’s Recommendations for the 2015 Policy Address – Transform Hong Kong into Asia’s most sustainable city
SUMMARY

**Local Biodiversity**

1. Secure the future of Hong Kong Biodiversity: adopt and implement the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP)

   a. An action plan to establish and manage a comprehensive network of Marine Protected Areas, covering at least 10% of Hong Kong waters, to provide a safety net for representative habitats and all threatened species so as to help restore our marine environment and fisheries resources.

   b. Species management plans that ensure cross-departmental cooperation to protect Hong Kong critically threatened species, in particular the Chinese white dolphin.

2. Strengthened management and conservation of globally important Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay wetlands

   Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar site is a wetland of international importance and is an important stop-over site for the migratory waterbirds in the East Asian Australasian Flyway. The Government should ensure adequate resources are provided for the effective conservation and management of the Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar site to maintain and enhance its ecological value and promote wise use of wetlands.

3. Holistic Planning for Lantau Sustainable Development

   The Government is now formulating an economic and social development strategy for Lantau, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) taking into account both the environmental and social characteristics of Lantau and its surrounding waters should be carried out to ensure a holistic plan is formulated for Lantau to guide its sustainable development.

4. Extension of country parks to cover enclaves of high conservation value by 2017

   Secure country parks through tighter planning in enclaves, incorporating those of high conservation value (such as Sha Lo Tung, Ping Shan Chai, So Lo Pun, Mau Ping and Yung She Au) into Country Parks and tight planning control on others to protect the integrity of country park system by 2017.

5. Take immediate action to save the Chinese white dolphin – Hong Kong’s mascot

   To enhance the carrying capacity of the dolphins in the local waters, the marine protected areas should be extended to cover all the core dolphin habitats – west Lantau waters including Tai O and Yi O, before the commencement of the third runways reclamation works. A solid and holistic Chinese white
dolphin Management Plan in line with CBD and international best practice should be established by 2016.

6. Fully implement the ban of commercial fishing in all marine parks by 2017

The Government pronounced in the Chief Executive’s 2008 Policy Address that commercial fishing would be banned in all four existing Marine Parks; process should be speed up and fully implemented by 2017.

**Climate**

7. Adopting an absolute GHG Reduction Target for 2030 and 2050

The proposed target of carbon reduction by 50%-60% by 2020 (compare to 2005) by Hong Kong government equates to an absolute reduction range of 19%-33%, which is excessively wide; an ambitious absolute reduction target for 2030 and 2050 to drive the city to a low carbon and sustainable future is needed.

8. Setting a renewable energy target and obligatory energy saving target in the new term of Scheme of Control Agreement (SCA)

The Government should set a mandatory and progressive target of renewable electricity production for the new term of Scheme of Control Agreement (SCA) with the two power companies; an aggressive an obligatory energy saving target should be set as well.

**Footprint**

9. Accounting for our overconsumption pattern – measure our Ecological Footprint

We urge the HK Government to take on the role of partnering with the Global Footprint Network (GFN), the global partner of CBD, in compiling and monitoring the ecological footprint of HK and reporting on this publicly in order to measure and disclose this important sustainability indicator for HK on a regular basis.

10. Increase the positive impact of Government internal dining policy

Government to forge ahead and include more unsustainable seafood as highlighted as “Red – Avoid” category in WWF-Hong Kong Seafood Guide into the dining policy, in particular the Humphead wrasse (Cheilinus undulatus), high-finned grouper (Cromileptes altivelis) and the Hong Kong grouper (Epinephelus akaara).
Introduction

Our own living planet cannot afford everything human being wants, the latest edition of the Living Planet Report reveals the true that humanity is over-consuming nature’s resources, at the global level; we are using the equivalent of 1.5 Earths to support our lifestyles. Situation in Hong Kong is even more alarming, Hong Kong people are using 540 times more resources than the territory can provide, if everyone in the world lived the lifestyle Hong Kong people lead, we would need 3.1 Earths to fulfill our resource needs.

Sustainable development has been a prominent international agenda for more than a quarter of a century, which includes environmental, social and economic dimensions of development. In Hong Kong, the Council for Sustainable Development was established by the Chief Executive as one of the initiatives to promote sustainability in Hong Kong since 2003, however a recent polling exercise revealed that about 58% of 1,000 respondents thought the HK government has been placing too much emphasis on economic development, and do not strike a good balance between development and conservation.

**Striking a balance between development and conservation policies is crucial to transform Hong Kong into a sustainable city.** Hong Kong is a small and compact city where land is an expensive commodity and vital for urban development, adapting an appropriate conservation strategy to protect and recover local wildlife and their habitats is a key factor which can enhance quality of life in Hong Kong. Hence, a policy vision and framework is needed to address cumulative and strategic environmental impacts across multiple development projects.

WWF’s vision is to transform Hong Kong into Asia’s most sustainable city, where nature is conserved, carbon pollution is reduced and consumption is environmentally responsible. We hope the Chief Executive will deliver a win-win situation for all in his 2015 Policy Address, without neglecting or missing opportunities to conserve our environment and tackle unsustainable consumption.

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1 Living Planet Report 2014, WWF International, Switzerland
2 Opinion survey on the Third Runway EIA assessment 2014. Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey, CUHK. Study commissioned by WWF-Hong Kong
WWF would like to present recommendations for the 2015 policy address:

**Local Biodiversity**

1. Secure the future of Hong Kong Biodiversity: adopt and implement the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP)

   This first Hong Kong BSAP, built upon close collaboration between the Government, the environmental NGOs, academics, other stakeholders and the public, will become a powerful strategy and plan for conserving Hong Kong’s biodiversity and high quality of life, and is key to sustainable development. **For its successful implementation, not only adequate resources will need to be allocated, but also strong support across the government.** It will ensure the exceptionally rich and unique biodiversity in Hong Kong will be conserved while meeting the social needs of the society.

   Marine conservation is on a top priority in BSAP. Hong Kong has many precious marine habitats and vibrant marine life, only 1.6% of Hong Kong waters are protected versus around 40% of land areas is within Country Parks. According to the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, **at least 10 % of coastal and marine areas should be conserved through well managed and connected protected areas system.**

   Besides, a number of species in Hong Kong have suffered from drastic decline and the Chinese white dolphin is the most prominent and studied case. To reverse that, all the major threats have to be adequately addressed which requires different Government departments and bureaus working together. A management plan laying down cross-departmental actions is urgently needed for this iconic marine mammal species.
a. Adopt the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) as the nature conservation framework for Hong Kong and ensure it is sufficiently resourced and is supported across the government for its effective implementation.

b. An action plan to establish and manage a comprehensive network of Marine Protected Areas, covering at least 10% of Hong Kong waters, to provide a safety net for representative habitats and all threatened species so as to help restore our marine environment and fisheries resources.

c. Species management plans that ensure cross-departmental cooperation to protect Hong Kong critically threatened species, in particular the Chinese white dolphin.

2. Strengthened management and conservation of globally important Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay wetlands

Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar site is a wetland of international importance and is an important stop-over site for the migratory waterbirds in the East Asian Australasian Flyway. 75% of Hong Kong bird species have been recorded in the area including 40 species that are of global conservation concern such as the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Black-faced Spoonbill. In spring and autumn 20,000 – 30,000 shorebirds migrate through Hong Kong and use the Ramsar Site as a temporary re-fuelling station. As coastal wetlands are being reclaimed along the flyway, Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay are becoming more important. Therefore active management is needed to maintain and enhance the conservation value.

a. The Government should ensure adequate resources are provided for the effective conservation and management of the Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar site to maintain and enhance its ecological value and promote wise use of wetlands.

3. Holistic Planning for Lantau Sustainable Development

The Government is now formulating an economic and social development strategy for Lantau and a Lantau Development Advisory Committee has been set up to solicit
proposals. Lantau is the largest offshore island in Hong Kong and remains largely natural and rural; it is very hilly and hosts the second and third highest peak in Hong Kong, over half the land area is designated as country parks which serve as important wildlife habitats, water-gathering ground and popular destinations for Hong Kong people. The island also has many historical, cultural and religious features. The existing ecological, social, recreational, cultural, religious and historical value should not be compromised by any future development. Therefore, these should be fully considered in the early planning stage of the development strategy. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) taking into account both the environmental and social characteristics of Lantau and its surrounding waters should be carried out to ensure a holistic plan is formulated for Lantau to guide its sustainable development.

4. Extension of country parks to cover enclaves of high conservation value by 2017

Hong Kong is within an internationally recognized biodiversity hotspot. In addition we are a Key Biodiversity Area within the hotspot, meaning Hong Kong is of extra-high conservation priority. One major factor contributing to this success is our extensive country park system, which is of the utmost importance to the conservation of our exceptionally rich biodiversity, and is of outstanding educational, aesthetic, leisure and recreational value to the people.

However, it is also heavily biased towards hilly areas and many flat, lowland areas of high conservation value, though surrounded by Country Parks, are not protected. These country park enclaves are connected to existing country parks and form part of the eco-system. However, they are under threat and there are several cases of rampant destruction in the last few years.

WWF supports the Government policy in protecting these enclaves through incorporating those of high conservation value (such as Sha Lo Tung, Ping Shan Chai, So Lo Pun, Mau Ping and Yung She Au) into Country Parks and tight planning control on others to protect the integrity of our valuable protected area system by 2017.

5. Take immediate action to save the Chinese white dolphin – Hong Kong’s mascot
a. Extend the marine protected areas to west Lantau waters including Tai O and Yi O

The local population of CWDs in Hong Kong has dropped by more than 60% in the past decade in Hong Kong waters. Simultaneously, the intensity of threats has increased: habitat loss from coastal development, disturbance from marine traffic, underwater noise and water pollution. To date, only 5% of the dolphin habitats in the western waters are protected. In order to enhance the carrying capacity of the dolphins in the local waters, the marine protected areas should be extended to cover all the core dolphin habitats – west Lantau waters including Tai O and Yi O, before the commencement of the third runways reclamation works. The management of these protected areas should be first and foremost to contribute to dolphin conservation.

b. Establish a holistic Chinese white dolphin Management Plan by 2016

A far more rigorous and proactive approach to address threats is urgently needed if the decline in dolphin numbers is to be halted, and reversed. Based on international best-practice, a comprehensive management plan with clear objectives, strategies, actions and timeframes shall be developed to conserve these remaining individuals in an urgent and timely manner.

Apart from having operational measures suggested, the plan will also help call for cooperation of different government departments, i.e. Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), Environmental Protection Department (EPD), Marine Department (MD) and Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), which a management plan is essential to guide the actions by various departments and ensure smooth coordination.

6. Fully implement the ban of commercial fishing in all marine parks

The Government should speed up the banning of commercial fishing in marine parks and fully implement the ban by 2017. Marine parks and geo parks offer great opportunities of eco-tourism.

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The pilot eco-tourism activities carried out by AFCD so far have been well received and proven successful. The banning of commercial fishing in marine parks and the designation of more marine parks will help fully utilize the potential of our nature for such sustainable economic activities enjoyed by both local and overseas visitors. No-take zones offer an inexpensive option to help recover depleted fisheries resources and should be pursued immediately for the following reasons:

- Only 3% of all the catch from Hong Kong waters comes from marine parks, most fishers live far away from the parks and they already fish in other areas. This means that stopping commercial fishing in marine parks will not mean hardship to the few remaining fishers that still utilize them.
- Ex gratia but not vessel buy-back will be necessary, and this is straightforward to implement as the 435 fishers in the parks are known through the permits they hold. Ex gratia payments should be commensurate with the loss of revenue.
- Stopping fishing in Marine Parks does not require new legislation, just the cancellation of existing permits.
- Banning fishing in Marine Parks has strong public support. WWF commissioned two polling exercise in 2005 and 2008 respectively, a total of and 96% thought that Marine Protected Areas with no-take zones should be created.
- The cost of banning fishing in Marine Parks is relatively low, at HK$ 73 million, yet the benefits to society through increased tourism, habitat and fisheries recovery are massive, at around HK$ 1.5 billion\(^4\).

The Government pronounced in the Chief Executive’s 2008 Policy Address that commercial fishing would be banned in all four existing Marine Parks; however, no timeframe has been set up for plan implementation until now.

**Climate**

7. Adopting an absolute GHG Reduction Target for 2030 and 2050

WWF is pleased to see in the last fuel mix consultation that the Government remains committed to achieving the proposed target of reducing carbon intensity by 50%-60% by 2020 when compared to 2005. However, the target equates to an absolute reduction

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WWF’s recommendation for the 2015 Policy Address

range of 19%-33%, which is excessively wide. The Government should focus on achieving the most ambitious end of the target range consistent with climate science and with concrete action plans. Meanwhile, we need an ambitious absolute reduction target for 2030 and 2050 to drive the city to a low carbon and sustainable future.

8. Setting a Renewable Energy Target (government’s overarching goal) and obligatory energy saving target in the new term of Scheme of Control Agreement (SCA)

i) Setting a Renewable Energy Target

The city’s electricity generation relies heavily on fossil fuels, which contributes to 60% of our carbon emission. Every kilowatt-hour of electricity generated from renewable energies plays a part in freeing us from the conflicts over dwindling resources, reduces the major negative consequences of sourcing and using coal, natural gas and grid purchase, protects the climate and reduces the risks presented by nuclear energy. We therefore urge the Government to adopt a specific and ambitious target for renewable energy (RE) production locally and regionally.

a. Negotiation of the new term of Scheme of Control agreement (SCA)

The Government should set a mandatory and progressive target of renewable electricity production for the new term of Scheme of Control Agreement (SCA) with the two power companies. Enabling policies should be devised for distributed generation of RE for the new term of SCA with the two power companies.

b. Feed in tariff

- Experience in other countries also shows that distributed generation can accelerate the deployment of wind energy (offshore and onshore) and solar energy (photovoltaic (PV) and solar thermal, when coupled with long-term enabling policies. Renewable energy policies, namely feed-in tariffs or renewable portfolio standards have been adopted by at least 69 countries5. These policies successfully attract private sectors and individuals to invest in renewable energy, which boost the production of renewable electricity.

- The Government should provide economic incentives and simplified application procedures to grid-connected renewable electricity generation, especially for individual projects with less than 10KW generation capacity.

ii) Setting of an aggregate absolute energy reduction target

Energy conservation is one of the prerequisites of a future fully powered by renewables. We will not be able to meet the needs of our planet’s expected nine billion inhabitants if we continue to use it as wastefully as we do today. According to WWF’s Energy Report (2011), aggressive demand-side management will be able to reduce global energy demand by 50% by 2050. WWF believes that the Government should demonstrate much stronger policy determination to decrease the city’s overall energy needs through the setting of an aggregate absolute energy reduction target. We challenge Hong Kong to consider this ambitious but essential energy efficiency target. Experience in many countries shows that the cost of energy saving is much lower than the retail electricity price.

a. Setting energy saving target for the new term of SCA

The Government should impose an aggressive and obligatory energy saving target (e.g., 1%-2% of 2014 total energy consumption, which will result in a 50% reduction in energy demand by 2050) to the two power companies for the new term of SCA. Government should obligate the power companies to set up a fund to invest in low-income households for energy saving.

b. Transforming Existing Grid System to Smart Grids

To support the increasing use of renewable electricity, the existing grid system has to be upgraded to a smart grid. Smart grid helps to adjust the fluctuation and ensure the liability of electricity supply, through instant information exchange of both demand and supply side. When the renewables stop generating electricity, natural gas-firing power plant could

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increase electricity supply immediately to ensure the stability. On the other hand, the power plant could burn less fossil-fuel when renewables is available. As a result, the electricity generation becomes more efficiently and environmental friendly.

To maximize the benefit of the smart grid system, it is vital to replace the conventional meters into smarter meters. Smart meters create a two-way communication between the demand and supply side on electricity consumption. The smart meters could display real-time electricity usage to the customer, which helps to increase consumer’s motivation on energy saving. It also helps those who generate electricity from renewables to manage to better manage their electricity consumption. The increase of energy saving and renewable generation could further help to reduce the city’s reliance on fossil-fueled electricity. We urge the Government to roll out new terms with two utilities to replace all the conventional meters and construct a smart grid system in Hong Kong by 2020.

**Footprint**

9. Accounting for our overconsumption pattern – measure our Ecological Footprint

The Ecological Footprint, in brief, measures how much natural resources we use on an annual basis. Based on the 2010 data, the latest analysis done for Hong Kong, Hong Kong’s Ecological Footprint ranks 15th among the roughly 150 countries and territories analyzed, and if we are to sustain our demand by the resources in Hong Kong alone, we would need 540 Hong Kong! Such “bio capacity deficit” is the largest in Asia. Based on 2008 data, our daily consumption at household and business sector shapes 78% of our Ecological Footprint. “Clothing”, “food”, “electricity” and “transportation” are four main areas driving up Hong Kong’s Ecological Footprint

We urge the HK Government to take on the role to measure the use of natural resources through the calculation of Ecological Footprint, reporting on this publicly and regularly, and to address areas of major ecological burden to reduce such footprint in long term.

a. Sustainability and sustainable use of biodiversity should be considered as a priority issue
b. Measure Hong Kong's Ecological Footprint, reporting on it publicly, review areas of local consumption and commerce that have the greatest impact on biodiversity outside of Hong Kong

c. Establish strategy and actions to reduce HK's Ecological Footprint to a more sustainable level, starting with areas of greatest ecological burden

10. Increase the positive impact of Government internal dining policy

One of key drivers for the relatively high Ecological Footprint of Hong Kong is our consumption of seafood. From the latest available figure, Hong Kong’s per capita seafood consumption is 2nd in Asia and 6th in the world. Hong Kong depleted seriously our own marine resources and now, in order to cater to our demand, we are importing as much as 90% of our seafood, and we have been sourcing the seafood from over 170 countries and territories. A recent survey for live seafood available in Hong Kong’s major markets revealed that about 50% of them are regarded as unsustainable, as highlighted in WWF-Hong Kong Seafood Guide.

The Hong Kong Government has in last year taken the lead to issue an internal ban on the consumption of blue fin tuna and shark fin in their official dining. The Government was seen as the role model for society in this front and has exerted a positive influence on the dining practice of a lot of public organizations and their staff in Hong Kong.

WWF strongly recommends the Government to forge ahead and include more unsustainable seafood as highlighted as “Red – Avoid” category in WWF-Hong Kong Seafood Guide, particularly those live reef food fish, into the dining policy. In particular:

Humphead wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*) – wild population is globally recognized as “Endangered” by the IUCN

High-finned grouper (*Cromileptes altivelis*) – wild population is globally recognized as “Vulnerable” by the IUCN

Hong Kong grouper (*Epinephelus akaara*) – wild population is globally recognized as “Endangered” by the IUCN
Notably, some leading corporations in Hong Kong have already included these few species into their own internal dining policy, as advised by WWF-Hong Kong.

ENDS