

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Perfecting tree management system”
moved by Hon Tanya CHAN
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 15 June 2011**

Motion as amended by Hon CHAN Hak-kan, Hon IP Wai-ming, Hon KAM Nai-wai and Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing

That with the presence of high-rise buildings everywhere, air pollution and the heat island effect are very serious in Hong Kong, and planting trees may achieve the effects of improving air quality, alleviating the greenhouse effect and lowering the temperature in urban areas, and improve the urban environment; greening may also improve community landscape as well as people’s living environment, thereby upgrading quality of life; a comprehensive system of tree preservation and management is an indispensable segment of the greening process; while proper tree management may strike a balance between conserving trees and protecting people’s lives and properties, it can also reduce the chances of the Administration having to handle tree risk management and hazardous trees in the future and reduce expenditures; in this connection, in order to further perfect Hong Kong’s tree preservation and management system, this Council urges the Government to:

Establishment of a framework and perfecting resource allocation –

- (a) set up an independent and dedicated department to co-ordinate the work of green planning, tree preservation and tree risk management, which is at present scattered among various government departments;
- (b) set up an advisory framework comprising tree and greening experts as well as community members for advising the relevant policy bureaux and government departments on policies and specific measures relating to green planning as well as tree preservation and management;
- (c) increase resources for green planning, tree preservation and tree risk management;
- (d) study enacting specific legislation on tree management, establish a comprehensive legal framework, and formulate various policies and measures on tree preservation and management, so as to ensure that trees can receive comprehensive and appropriate protection;

Perfection of green planning –

- (e) add green elements to various large-scale public and private works projects as well as new development areas, and formulate a tree preservation and management mechanism;
- (f) formulate a comprehensive green planning system, and comprehensively examine the greening arrangements in Hong Kong;

Perfection of the training and regulation of talents –

- (g) formulate a licensing and regulatory system for tree management personnel and tree management contractors, and establish a demerit point system and a penalty mechanism for the Government's outsourcing contractors for tree management work, so as to strengthen the monitoring of outsourcing contractors' quality;
- (h) strengthen the training of tree preservation and management personnel, and encourage various organizations to offer courses on tree preservation and management as well as green planning;

Strengthening of community work –

- (i) establish a comprehensive database of trees in the communities for recording the basic information of trees, their health conditions and locations, etc., to facilitate the Government to carry out tree management and the public to access the relevant information, and conduct tree surveys in the various communities, so as to identify trees of conservation value, and include such trees in a specific register, and conserve them through specific legislation on tree management;
- (j) strengthen public education on tree preservation and management, set up a complaints hotline operated by a dedicated department, make use of various channels such as smart phone or the Internet, etc., to facilitate the reporting of problematic trees by the public, and organize the participation of interested people and groups in tree preservation and management work in the districts; and
- (k) allocate funds for encouraging the community to organize research projects and activities in relation to greening management and tree preservation, so as to enhance public awareness towards tree conservation;

Establishment of a framework and perfecting resource allocation –

- (l) as the urban Greening Master Plans have been in implementation for quite some time, consolidate the relevant experience in a timely manner, take on board the community opinions, and promote public engagement, so as to further develop and upgrade the effectiveness of the urban Greening Master Plans on the basis of collective wisdom and concerted efforts, thus enabling more effective tree management;
- (m) drawing on the experience of implementing the urban Greening Master Plans, incorporate the features and characteristics of New Territories districts and seriously heed and take on board the views of District Councils and the community, so as to formulate a clear timetable on drawing up the Greening Master Plans for the New Territories and an implementation schedule as part of perfecting tree management; and

Strengthening of community work –

- (n) adopt proactive and effective measures for strengthening the conservation of local plants of economic value, such as Buddhist pines and incense trees, etc., so as to eradicate these plants from being stolen and felled by people, and educate the public about caring of trees with local characteristics as well as relevant conservation knowledge, so as to protect Hong Kong's green environment;

Establishment of a framework and perfecting resource allocation –

- (o) study establishing a trees and greening conservation fund to offer funding on a 'dedicated-funds-for-dedicated-uses' basis for application by various types of organizations or institutions, including civil society institutions, so as to conserve trees and valuable trees which are beneficial to the community and which are grown on non-government land (for example, the land under the Hong Kong Housing Authority, the Hong Kong Housing Society and public organizations, as well as private land of public welfare purposes) and not managed by the Government; this fund may also be used to increase resources for green planning, tree preservation, tree risk management, public education and the promotion of green tourism;
- (p) set penalties for prohibiting any persons from felling, transplanting, trimming or damaging trees without authorization, so as to ensure that trees can receive comprehensive and appropriate protection;

Perfection of green planning —

- (q) review and increase the green belts as provided in the statutory town plans of Hong Kong (especially the urban areas);

Strengthening of community work —

- (r) study establishing a tree protection and observation team in various districts; and
- (s) implement a tree adoption scheme to put community-wide tree observation into action; at the same time, invite relevant professionals to provide the public with tree protection knowledge and training;

Perfection of green planning —

- (t) undertake extensive greening in the vicinity of residential areas and on urban structures, including wall faces, slopes, pavements and rooftops, etc.;
- (u) formulate strategic green planning with special landscape design features for various districts and the planting of theme trees in selected streets and places for showing various shades of colours in different seasons, so as to create beautified streets and scenic spots to attract tourists and stop any haphazard planting from ruining the beauty of trees; and

Strengthening of studies on sustainable development —

- (v) through conducting studies on planting bamboo groves or other plants, develop a green economy to dovetail with sustainable urban development; in particular, as bamboo grows quickly and its photosynthetic rate is three times that of other plants, it can convert more carbon dioxide into oxygen, thereby helping to alleviate greenhouse effect; at the same time, bamboo has the property of tightly gripping the surface of the soil and is safer than other trees; bamboo can also provide substantial natural construction materials and can be used for manufacturing bamboo products; planting bamboo can even increase employment opportunities in the fields of research, planting, landscaping, manufacturing, design and certification, etc.; with the economic benefits of sustainable development, put in more resources to perfect tree preservation and management work.