

**Speech by the Secretary for the Environment
at the Finance Committee Special Meeting (2021-22)**

Chairman,

The Financial Secretary continues to support the bureau's work towards carbon neutrality and environmental protection in the Budget this year.

2. The 2020 Policy Address announced that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region would strive to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050. To this end, the Government will update the "Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan" in the middle of this year to set out more proactive strategies and measures to reduce carbon emissions. This year, the Budget proposes the following measures to further strengthen such efforts:

- earmark an additional \$1 billion to install more small-scale renewable energy systems in government buildings and infrastructure; and
- earmark \$150 million for a new "Green Welfare NGOs" programme to conduct energy audits, as well as install the more energy efficient variable-speed air-conditioners and light emitting diode (LED) lighting, at the premises of eligible welfare non-governmental organisations free of charge.

3. The Government will also set aside \$500 million to carry out enhancement works on facilities in some country parks, such as providing recreational elements; improving facilities in country parks; and enriching visitors' experience, enjoyment and awareness at the countryside.

4. To promote waste reduction and recycling, the Government announced the "Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035" on 8 February this year with the vision of "Waste Reduction • Resources Circulation • Zero Landfill". The Blueprint sets out a number of measures to enhance participation of the entire community on waste reduction, promote resources circulation and develop necessary waste management infrastructure, with a view to moving away from over-reliance on landfills in the long term. Measures related to waste reduction include:

- inject an additional funding of \$1 billion to the Recycling Fund and extend its application period to 2027;
- set up more Recycling Stores and smart recycling facilities to enhance the coverage of the community recycling network;
- extend the outreaching services of the Green Outreach to all districts over the territory to strengthen on-site recycling support;
- continue to implement various producer responsibility schemes (PRSs), and we are consulting the public on the PRS on plastic beverage containers and carrying out a pilot scheme on reverse vending machines (RVMs) to collect plastic beverage containers; and
- continue to co-operate with the Bills Committee of the Legislative Council on the scrutiny work of the bill on municipal solid waste charging with a view to facilitating its early passage.

5. To promote new energy transport, we announced the first ever “Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles” last month, which sets out the vision of “Zero Carbon Emissions • Clean Air • Smart City”. The Roadmap elaborates our long-term policy objectives and plans on promoting the use of Electric Vehicles (EVs), with a view to attaining zero vehicular emissions before 2050. Key measures include no new registration of fuel-propelled private cars in 2035 or earlier, expanding the EV charging network and promoting its marketisation, training EV technicians and mechanics, formulating a PRS for retired EV batteries, etc. We will also continue to take forward the relevant work including:

- subsidise the installation of EV charging-enabling infrastructure at more than 60 000 parking spaces in existing private residential buildings through the \$2 billion EV-charging at Home Subsidy Scheme; and
- formulate trials for various electric public transport and commercial vehicles, such as a pilot scheme for electric public light buses; and a trial for electric ferries serving in-harbour routes which is expected to be launched in 2023.

6. We will also update the “Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong” in the middle of this year to set out challenges, targets and strategies to further improve the air quality of Hong Kong.

7. We anticipate that the measures abovementioned could create or support thousands of job opportunities in the next few years. The Budget also allocates additional resources to support green recovery. The measures include:

- provide about 900 additional temporary jobs in the realm of environmental protection, involving over \$100 million; and
- extend the rental reduction waiver for tenants of EcoPark, country park refreshment kiosks and Hong Kong Wetland Park for another six months.

8. My colleagues and I are happy to listen to Members’ views and respond to questions.