

CE's statement on 2020-21 Budget

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (February 26) issued the following statement on the 2020-21 Budget:

The Financial Secretary today delivered the third Budget of the current-term Government, at a time when Hong Kong is facing unprecedented challenges to the health of our economy and well-being of our entire community.

I support the bold and substantive proposals in the 2020-21 Budget, and I am confident that they will help to boost our efforts to combat the coronavirus epidemic, take care of people in need and bolster the economy. The counter-cyclical measures proposed in the Budget, amounting to more than \$120 billion, represent an unequivocal commitment by the Government to rise to the challenge of overcoming adversity and helping people in need. These proposals also complement the initiatives set out under the recently established \$30 billion Anti-epidemic Fund. Taken together, this substantial funding commitment will provide comprehensive support for people from all walks of life.

I also support the Budget initiative of providing a cash payout of \$10,000 to Hong Kong permanent residents aged 18 and above. I believe that given the extraordinary challenges that our community is facing, this is a justifiable and effective measure. For some people, the cash payout will help to make ends meet in their hour of need. It will also encourage local consumption and inject some much-needed impetus into the economy.

While the Government should make good use of Hong Kong's healthy fiscal reserves accumulated over the years to help our city weather the storm, the Financial Secretary's forecast of Budget deficits continuing in the next few years serves as a reminder that Hong Kong needs economic growth to generate more revenue to support our social development. While the Government will press ahead with various strategies to diversify our economy and create new areas of opportunity for business and job creation as set out in previous Policy Addresses and Budgets, we need concerted efforts by all in the community.

I am pleased that the Financial Secretary, while focusing on the need to help the people of Hong Kong, has doubled the Government's efforts to promote both our traditional economic pillars such as the financial services sector as well as emerging sectors where Hong Kong has a competitive edge such as innovation and technology. Concurrently, we should not lose sight of our response to global environmental challenges. I therefore welcome the measures to promote the development of decarbonisation and green technologies contained in the Budget.

In these unprecedented times, I am confident that the 2020-21 Budget proposals will provide effective and targeted support to help the Hong Kong community withstand the current difficulties and gear up for a brighter

tomorrow.

I appeal to Members of the Legislative Council and society at large to support the 2020-21 Budget proposals, with a view to facilitating their early implementation.