

(Translation)

**Hon Kenneth LAU's motion on
"Formulating a comprehensive rural development policy"**

Wording of the Motion

That as the Government lacks a long-term and comprehensive rural development policy in the process of developing the New Territories, rural areas have failed to strike a balance between development and conservation, resulting in ever-increasing conflicts and confrontations between urban and rural areas; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to formulate a comprehensive rural development policy covering such areas as rural living environment, infrastructure support, promoting the culture and traditional customs of the New Territories and boosting the economy, so as to meet the livelihood needs in rural areas and implement a sustainable development strategy for the New Territories, thereby achieving urban-rural symbiosis; specific proposals are as follows:

- (1) proactively allocating resources to supply fresh water, electricity and sewerage systems to remote villages; carrying out road construction projects and enhancing public pier facilities to increase the flow of people and goods; and facilitating agricultural rehabilitation in villages, promoting eco-tourism and developing sharing economy, so as to revive remote villages;
- (2) actively and expeditiously considering relaxing the frontier closed area restriction of Sha Tau Kok ('STK') Town and opening up the STK public pier to facilitate public access to STK and peripheral islands such as Kat O and Ap Chau, with a view to promoting leisure tourism, thereby revitalizing these districts and improving the local economy and employment situation;
- (3) making optimal use of innovative technology to progressively promote the development of 'smart rural areas', including rolling out 5G mobile network system to increase Internet access speeds in villages; setting up smart recycling system pilot sites in villages to collect recyclables at designated time and locations; extending the use of intelligent monitoring systems to rural areas to detect natural disasters such as hill fires, floods, thunderstorms and landslides, and to provide instant forecasts; setting up 'smart lampposts' in villages to improve the use of single two-lane carriageways in villages; progressively developing

teleconsultation so that patients in villages with stable conditions who have to attend follow-up consultations can receive appropriate treatment; and

- (4) setting up a 'rural development and construction fund' comprising five parts, namely 'infrastructure development', 'cultural heritage', 'rural tourism', 'nature conservation and land development' and 'emergency support', with a view to fostering sustainable rural development in a comprehensive and orderly manner, including promoting rural infrastructure, cultural heritage, eco-tourism and conservation, as well as providing appropriate support should incidents affecting livelihood in rural areas occur.