

## Hong Kong's Role in Supporting 'Global Sustainable Development'

---

---

The United Nations has presented 17 goals to transform our world, called 'Sustainable Development Goals'. Issues such as poverty, gender equality and climate change are included goals to be conquered. I believe Hong Kong can play an important role in achieving the goals such as in promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and giving decent employment and working conditions for everyone in the society. I also believe that Hong Kong may lead by example and help make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

'Sustainable development' is the improvement made in societies that may be done successfully and for an extremely long period of time, perhaps permanently. The goals I have selected are goal 8- 'promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all' and goal 11- 'make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'. Current barriers confronting inclusive and sustainable economic growth are inflation, a lack of quality education, or any education at all, and a resulting lack of employment and decent work opportunities.

---

---

Hong Kong may play a supporting role in The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. We may support them by focusing on achieving one goal. One of the points of the goal 'promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all' is to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Employers, and other stakeholders, can help achieve productive employment by choosing the right people for the right job and encouraging a happy atmosphere in the workplace so that employees may enjoy their working environments. With a happy working atmosphere, employees will feel more at ease when completing their work. It can also enhance the quality of work as it is a fact that surroundings affect the way people do things and handle situations.

It is also necessary for employers to give decent work to employees. Employers should not push employees to do inappropriate and harmful tasks such as carrying

heavy items on their backs for a long period of time for only a little amount of money. Such a scenario causes more problems for society as exploited workers would not be able to provide for themselves and their family. Economic progress would also be stifled.

Lastly, it's important that employees and employers treat one another with equal amounts of respect, even if one has disabilities. Employers should pay women and disabled persons the same amount as work done by able bodied men. Women currently receive less pay than men do, and some employers belittle people with a disability and pay them less. By treating everyone as equals, the society will also become more peaceful and harmonious.

Governments should legislate to prevent inequality in salaries and exploitation in the workplace. Legislation can be a long term strategy for tackling such matters.

---

---

The ideal future includes cities with opportunities for all, with access to basic services, energy, housing, transportation and more. This can be done by achieving goal 11- 'make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'.

Hong Kong should ensure access for housing and basic services, and also work towards the eventual dismantling of all slums. Housing is what everyone in the world needs, but Hong Kong's housing prices are so high that many people are left to rent or live with roommates. The government should set a maximum price for specific types of housing so more people can own their own house. Basic services such as transportation, water and electricity should be provided, which has already been done. However, governments should upgrade slums so that people living in the slums can also have access to basic services and also have equal opportunities as those in the city.

Efforts should also be made to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. Things change over time but it is important to protect our natural and cultural heritage like temples and traditional festivals as each country has their different cultures which make it unique. Tourists may learn about Hong Kong's history and culture. We can also give the next generation and those afterwards hands-on experience and knowledge of culture and heritage.

Finally, another goal is to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women, children, and older persons and persons with disabilities. Hong Kong has taken some action in regard to this goal,

like providing priority seats for women, older persons and persons with disabilities on different forms of transportation like busses and the MTR. This can motivate all citizens to be more inclusive in society, knowing that society is giving them consideration and providing them with safe opportunities to travel.

---

---

It is important that Hong Kong plays a role- even just a supporting role- in contributing to global sustainable development as these little things can help everyone live in harmony and peace side by side. However, factors limiting and affecting Hong Kong in playing such roles may include controversies raised like equal salary. Some may argue if the quality of work done by men and women is much better than the quality of work done by disabled persons, why should employers still pay equal amounts of money? Giving them a job with even low income is already doing them a favor. Another factor may be money and resources. Hong Kong may not have enough money and resources to make the city safer than it is. Hong Kong may not have money to upgrade slums and may receive complaints by Hong Kongers for using their tax money to upgrade slums.

All these are factors to consider and to be discussed, but I do believe all countries and cities may think of a compromise to satisfy one another and achieve the 17 sustainable development goals of the United Nations to make our world a better place.

---

---

By Stephanie Villaeba Gurung S. 5A (7)