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Cities must lead way to climate solutions, Hong Kong environment minister says

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Wong Kam-sing will attend the Paris conference. Photo: David Wong



Wong Kam-sing will attend the Paris conference. Photo: David Wong

Cities have created most of the world's climate problems by generating about 60 per cent of the global emissions and thus must take the lead in finding solutions, Hong Kong's environment minister says.

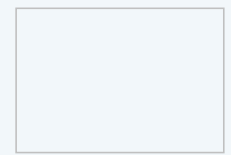
A team of officials led by Wong Kam-sing, the secretary for environment, will attend a climate forum for cities and municipalities before joining national-level officials at the Conference of the Parties (COP21) meeting in Paris next month.

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Speaking to the *Post*, he said the objective was to engage in city-level dialogue with counterparts to explore mitigation, adaption and resilience measures on the climate front.

"Of course, everyone hopes that on a state-to-state level, a strong climate agreement can be made, but cities also play a key role in energy and emissions," Wong said.

Nearly two-thirds of global carbon emissions were generated in cities and there was a need for further cooperation among city-level players to work to find measures to tackle them, he said. "Cities are the source of the problems, but are also the source of the solutions," he said.

After the city dialogue, Wong's team will attend COP21 as part of the mainland's national delegation. He will spend time at the China pavilion to share information about how Hong Kong is dealing with climate change.

Premier Li Keqiang has pledged that the nation's carbon emissions will peak by 2030. Beijing has set a goal to reduce carbon emissions per unit of GDP by 60 to 65 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030, and increase the share of non-fossil fuels in its energy mix by 20 per cent.

Hong Kong has set a similar carbon-intensity target for 2025 and pledged to reduce energy intensity by 40 per cent, both from 2005 levels.

Wong said the city's emissions should be able to peak "around 2020" as coal plants were retired and a new fuel mix involving more electricity generated by natural gas started.

But Cheung Chi-wah, WWF Hong Kong's senior head for climate, said that while Wong was readying for "peak 2020", most other nations and cities, including those in China, attending COP21 were already looking at targets by 2030 and beyond.

"We hope Wong will come back from Paris and give us a more detailed explanation on when we can set targets for 2030. The homework wasn't submitted before COP21 but the least he could do is to hand it in when he's back," Cheung said.

Wong said he would also be making a presentation at the first ever Green Buildings Day to be held at COP21. "The built environment generates 30 to 40 per cent of energy use and emissions, and in Hong Kong it's even higher," Wong said.

This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as Cities 'must lead the way' towards climate solutions

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Sam Clemens

Nov 23rd 2015

4:32pm

Mr. Wong and the other 40,000 (40,000!) attendees of the annual week-long Climate Change Bonkfest being held this year in Paris could demonstrate their environmental bona fides by walking or cycling to the event, and then upon arrival refraining as a matter of principle from using anything that is powered by fossil-fuels, like the hotel lifts or airport taxis.

Like that'll happen. Hypocrites of the world unite!



johnyuan

Nov 23rd 2015

4:45pm

Without the power and ability to control our tycoons' wayrunning their business in Hong Kong, the environment minister is just a figure-head of the Environmental Protection Department.

The Department even has trouble in gathering environment data or work from other government agencies less to formulate and implement one single policy in protecting our environment successfully. It is a window dressing department to placate the public but in essence colluding with tycoons by just talking.

There is no true intention for the Environmental Protection Department to protect Hong Kong's citizens except for the tycoons' businesses.

CY Leung must get rid of this shop-talk minister. As environment minister he is harmful to the health of Hong Kong people.



nainoa1@*****

Nov 23rd 2015



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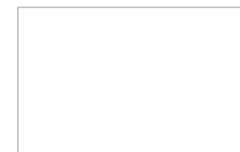
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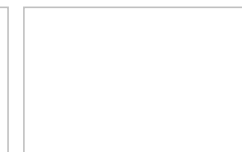
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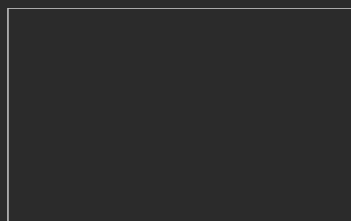
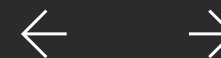


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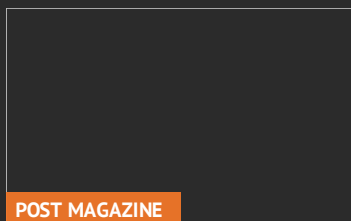
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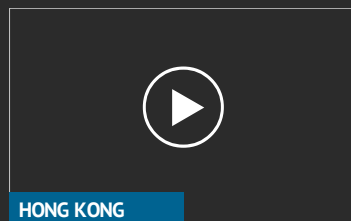
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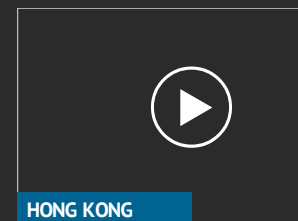
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