



Make it or break it

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The term 'sustainable development' has been frequently mentioned in Macau's policy addresses in these few years. This

implies that instead of focusing merely on our current economic growth, it is also essential to take into careful consideration our long-term prospect and future development.

As Macau citizens, we may have different ideas about what will become of our ideal hometown in the future. In order to make our expectation practical and realistic, while we are looking forward to Macau's prospect with unlimited creativity, we should not forget about Macau's current challenges and social problems. In any case, I believe we all expect our government to shoulder its responsibilities to ensure a good living quality for the citizens and equip the city with competitiveness to thrive in the global market. However, lurking behind the social prosperity there is hidden danger with its disastrous effect on Macau's future and the government's performance.

For one thing, our existing policies cannot fully respond to the citizens' basic demands or

cope with the constantly increasing population. According to a study by the Statistics and Census Bureau, by 2036 the population of Macau will have soared to approximately 750,000. If we refuse to make a change, the problems of housing, transportation and medical services will be more severe, resulting in the deterioration of the quality of living. Moreover, the gap between the rich and the poor will have widened, giving rise to public grievances. In order to avoid such a state of chaos, the government should take immediate action to improve public welfare, as well as carrying out appropriate urban planning in accordance with the rising population.

In addition, at present, Macau solely depends on the lucrative income from her prosperous gaming industry. However, our over-reliance on a single industry can bring risks to our future development. Not only will it cause negative effects on our economy, it will also undermine our core values concerning money and lead to social problems such as pathological gambling, proliferation of 'loan-sharks' and a series of crimes. Economic diversification is a vital step the government should seriously consider.

All in all, it is only when we are willing to brave the weaknesses in our current policies and try to seek improvement that we can find the most suitable path of our future development and welcome the uncertainties with confidence. Seeking sustainable development in Macau is a challenge we need to overcome. It is the tower of dream. We can either make it or break it!