



**POLICY ADDRESS FROM THE  
CHAIRMAN  
KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2022-2024**

22 February 2023

Dear CanChamHK Members and Friends,

Chers membres et amis de la CanChamHK,

The past four years have been extremely challenging for Hong Kong. Covid-19 has turned our personal and professional lives upside down and profoundly changed the world.

While the pandemic and the associated and current economic challenges have directly impacted our members and the Chamber's work; with Hong Kong and the world opening up again, I believe there has never been a better and more important time than now to continue the work we are doing at the Chamber, to support our members, to influence, and be relevant and effective for their benefit.

My initial focus as the newly elected Chairman is much the same as from when I was supporting our immediate past Chair, Amelie Dionne-Charest, as her Vice Chair External. That is, to listen to our members, to engage with our Exco, Governors, and Committee Chairs, and to closely work with the Secretariat team and fellow Officers to ensure that our objectives and direction continue to be relevant and effective for our organization. To ensure we do what works, improve what needs to be improved, connect our amazingly strong networks, offer high quality and timely events, and very importantly, identify our Chamber's key priorities for the next two years.

This 2022-2024 plan aims to outline our priorities and continue the efforts started by my predecessors on refocusing CanCham for the new era.

As Chairman, my commitment for the next two years is to further galvanize the Chamber's rejuvenation along with Hong Kong's, to focus on our organization's foundations, and ensure that we build back a better and stronger Chamber and Hong Kong.

I can assure you of my highest commitment and dedication to you and the Chamber.

However, I also need your help and support so we may join forces in our efforts in making CanCham stronger, more influential, more connected and evermore resilient.



## **A - CANCHAM's MISSION & WHERE WE STAND TODAY**

Before sharing our coming priorities, let us pause and remind ourselves of our mission, who we are, and where our organization stands today.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that was created in 1977.

Over the last 45 years, our mission has remained the same: to promote commerce between Hong Kong and Canada and connect our members with each other and outside partners to enable them to prosper from opportunities they pursue in Hong Kong, Canada, Greater China, and across Asia.

Our mission is guided by our values of free enterprise, rule of law, entrepreneurship, ethical business practices, social responsibility, and sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Today, we have over 2,200 members representing over 300 companies in Hong Kong. This makes us one of the largest Canadian business organizations outside of Canada and one of the most active international chambers in Hong Kong.

Very importantly, we are a welcoming, accessible, inclusive, and diverse organization where 40% of the membership is non-Canadian.

Our value proposition is centered around the delivery of the following services:

- Business promotion, networking and brand exposure;
- Representation and advocacy engagement;
- Learning and training; and,
- Information and insight.

Like many chambers in the world, our competitiveness was already challenged pre-pandemic by the free flow of information and exponential growth of social and professional online networks. Today, all chambers are facing the same challenges: how to stay relevant and engaging with members amongst all the communication and online tools we are bombarded with while being under all the financial and commercial pressures from the inflationary and challenging economic environment.

This is why we have to think outside the box, and build on our entrepreneurial spirit to positively engage with our members on topics that matter.

This is intrinsically the right time for action and the right time to carry forth the reinvigoration of our organization, along with that of Hong Kong.



## **B – CANCHAM’S KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2022-2023**

### **1 – Continuing to Focus on Three Key Overarching Themes**

This will be familiar to you, as it is very similar to the key themes of our prior Chair and Executive Committee/Board (Exco). Thus, with some minor tweaking, the Chamber will continue focusing on these themes over the next two years:

- (1) Building Back a Better Hong Kong;
- (2) Opportunities presented by connecting Hong Kong and Canada; and,
- (3) the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

- **Building Back a Better Hong Kong:** we submitted in late 2022 our views and recommendations (the “Policy Submission”) in response to the Hong Kong government’s 2022 Policy Address Public Consultation. The Policy Submission outlined CanCham’s key priority policy recommendations for the new Chief Executive of Hong Kong and his administration. We believe that first and foremost, as a chamber, we must do all we can to maintain Hong Kong as an attractive place to do business for our members and for Canadian businesses which are contemplating establishing a presence in our city – in particular, riding on Hong Kong being back on the world stage to promote its vitality as a commercial, financial, and cultural centre of Asia. The HK Policy Address adopts the theme of “Charting a Brighter Tomorrow for Hong Kong” as Hong Kong moves forward from the recent challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, social unrest, and political uncertainty. Our Policy Submission covers a broad range of interests and concerns that matter to the Canadian business community in Hong Kong. Some of our recommendations are set out below under “5 - Representations & Advocacy”, and is outlined in our 2022 Policy Submission available on our website.
- **Connecting Hong Kong and Canada for Commerce:** The Chamber has been witness to an ongoing and longtime mutual interest between Hong Kong and Canada for commerce, investing, living, working, and studying. Connecting the many Hong Kongers with Canadian ties, including the 300,000+ Canadians living in Hong Kong, the over 175,000+ Canadian University Alumni in Hong Kong, as well as tapping into the over 500,000 strong Hong Kongers in Canada is a key priority for our Chamber. Opportunities vary greatly from connecting and networking for investment and business opportunities, to education, immigration and visa requirements, tax regimes, healthcare, to cost of living and working in both Hong Kong and Canada, and to the opportunities to tap market scale especially from the GBA and market expertise in both Canada and the GBA. Leveraging on the people to people ties and connecting talent from both Canada and Hong Kong to support our member businesses in Hong Kong is also one of our key priorities.
- **GBA:** The Greater Bay Area presents a major strategic opportunity for Hong Kong where the population is twice that of Canada and occupies an area approximately the size of the corridor between Calgary and Edmonton, (and encompassing 9+ major cities in addition to HK.). Ranked by GDP against countries on the global



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stage, the GBA would be 11<sup>th</sup> in total GDP just behind Canada at number 10. By 2030 it will jump to 4<sup>th</sup> just behind Japan and ahead of Germany. This world-class urban cluster, which Hong Kong is not only a part of, but very much its international city launching pad, will rival other global cities also situated on bays, such as New York, San Francisco, Shanghai, and Tokyo. However, the opportunities Hong Kong presents for our members and Canadian businesses it unrivaled. With its access to the GBA's massive scale efficiently via our Hong Kong gateway, its geographic advantages, financial centre benefits, and overall business expertise. We envision to support our members, our community, and Canadian businesses to connect into these opportunities while bringing our Canadian attitude of cooperation, inclusivity and environmental sustainability.

**CanChamHK Objective:**

Supporting our focus on three key themes: building back Hong Kong, connecting for commerce, and the GBA. It will be a priority for our Chamber to run a series of events exploring the opportunities and challenging the barriers for successful execution in Hong Kong and the GBA; as well as covering the topics of connecting, investing, living, studying, and ongoing commerce between Canada and Hong Kong.



## **2 – Increasing & Strengthening our Membership**

Today, we estimate that there are over 300,000 Canadian citizens living in the city and this makes us the second largest Canadian expatriate community outside of Canada. Seven in ten Canadians living in this city have family in Canada and one in four maintain their Canadian professional credentials – with hundreds of thousands having attended Canadian schools and universities, (the number often quoted is over 175,000 Canadian university alumni in Hong Kong.)

Canadians hold a very special place in Hong Kong and this is something our community is immensely proud of. There isn't one day where you do not come across a Canadian in Hong Kong, nor is it surprising to come across a Hong Konger in Canada. When including people who have studied in Canada and Hong Kongers now living in Canada, the influence and linkages between Hong Kong and Canada likely number over a million.

- **Alumni 'Affiliate Membership'**: For this reason, CanCham will continue to support reaching out to these Canadians and Hong Kongers: with the 'Affiliate Membership' for Canadian Universities Alumni based in Hong Kong which has allowed CanChamHK to increase our membership base and engage with new member segments across the Greater Bay Area.
- **Strengthening our value proposition**: We need to better serve our members according to their membership profile and specific needs. This requires us to roll out programs and value-added events that specifically match each membership segment - including the recent launching of our new Sourcing, Transport, and Manufacturing committee (STMC) and expanding the reach of all committees.
- **Ensuring strong, active, and engaged Committees**: Launching the STCM is part of our refocus on engagement via our committees. We want and need to work effectively with our 10 industry and special interest committees, supported by the Chamber's leadership including our Officers, Exco, Governors, Secretariat, and the very important Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs. Committees are the lifeblood of our organization and strongly contribute to enhancing our value proposition. We must continue to cultivate them, and have them lead the engagement with our membership, and support them in business development and networking.

### **CanChamHK Objective:**

We aim to deliver value through driving membership engagement, especially via our 10 committees, and in doing so, we envision the Chamber's membership numbers increasing further from the current 2,200 members to over 3,000 members by 2025.



### **3 – Digitalizing the Chamber**

This continues to be a key objective for the Chamber and whilst the pandemic pushed us towards more online engagement, we ironically did not have the bandwidth to evolve the digitization of the Chamber beyond “Zoom” meetings and events. So whilst, the Canadian Chamber in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong-Canada Business Association (HKCBA) jointly presented the 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>, Transpacific Entrepreneurial Conferences virtually – these events expressly tailored to educate Canadian entrepreneurs, companies, startups, SMEs and corporations alike on the advantages of conducting business with Greater China, Asia Pacific, and Canada using Hong Kong as the foundational business platform – we did not get the opportunity to give focus on the required digital platform and processes needed to further the objectives of our membership and Chamber.

Because the conferences were held virtually, we were able to welcome over 30 speakers and over 400 participants from all over Canada, Hong Kong and Greater China as well as host engaging networking sessions via Airmeeet. So whilst we have been successful in holding Transpac virtually, our Chamber still needs to develop a stronger, more sustainable digital engagement platform, and thus, the means to better communicate with our members, such as to combine virtual and in person hybrid meetings more successfully, and allow members to choose their preferred and most convenient form of digital engagement and networking. We need to better use digital technologies to transform our business platform and create new opportunities and value for our members.

- **Relaunching CanCham’s digital presence and online platform:** Transforming the CanCham’s digital presence into a platform that shares information, content, and insight about business in Hong Kong, Canada, and the GBA; and where technology and our events’ content is made accessible to members; and networking and connectivity are embedded efficiently and productively.
- **Virtual and hybrid member-centered events:** Hosting quality online, in person, and hybrid events such as webinars, podcasts, hybrid seminars, and investing in production and social capabilities and technology applications that make it easy for members to engage with the Chamber and with each other, increasing the value of our network.
- **Creating new networking opportunities:** Creating and investing in online and digital oriented networking opportunities and applications to enhance and ease opportunities for our members to connect and engage.

#### **CanChamHK Objective:**

Digitalizing the Chamber and increasing its value proposition and membership reach via a sustainable and scalable digital platform, relevant and engaging for in person, virtual, and hybrid events, and adaptable for new online networking formats.



#### **4 – Revenue Diversification and Continued Business Discipline**

The digitalizing of our activities entails that we have to continue to evolve and adapt our revenue model. While our signature Annual Ball will remain a key event and priority, we will focus on developing and strengthening other revenue streams and embed business discipline and productive processes, ensuring that the Chamber will always operate with positive operating leverage, (where in the long-term, our income grows faster than our expenses.)

- **Expand Transpac conference and add anchor events:** We will further build-out the Transpacific Entrepreneurial conference, (which will run for the 10<sup>th</sup> time in 2024,) to diversify event revenues, foster greater engagement and connectivity for commerce, and extend our reach to members and non-members and create a catalyst for business growth and change. And we will look to add another one or two anchor events, such as our recently run “Christmas Fete”, in addition to the Annual Ball and Transpac conference.
- **Sponsorship:** We will further develop our corporate and business sponsorship revenue streams with focus on ensuring and adding value to our members and supporters, whether via advertising, events, podcasts, or our future digital platform, providing valuable return and exposure for sponsorship and ensuring connectivity for commerce.
- **Services:** We will explore which services the Chamber can offer in-house and on our new digital platform, to our members and community and whether such services could provide steady revenues in the years ahead.

**CanChamHK Objective:**

Strengthen and develop revenue streams - leveraging on and expanding our “Transpacific Entrepreneurial Conference” along with other events such as our Christmas Fete. Actively engaging, connecting members, and addressing the needs and priorities of our sponsors will be integral to this objective.



## **5 - Representation & Advocacy**

It is part of the Chamber's mission to effectively represent members' views on relevant policy issues to the governments of Hong Kong and Canada. In order to raise our profile and voice as an organization and community, it is important that we better coordinate and increase our policy work.

- **Membership and Committees:** To facilitate internal communication and coordination between our members and committees on policy and advocacy matters, in particular on sustainability, inclusivity, diversity, education, innovation, commerce & trade, financial services, and entrepreneurial business.
- **International business community:** Coordination and outreach with other major Hong Kong Chambers and Business Associations on important issues and on Canada's strategy on the Indo-Pacific region. Extend where relevant to our members our connectivity to Chambers and business associations in Hong Kong and across Asia Pacific, such as other country business chambers and other country Canadian Chambers of Commerce in Asia Pacific.
- **Canadian organizations:** We will continue our outreach to Business Councils and Business Associations both in Asia and outside of Asia such as to the Hong Kong Canada Business Association (HKCBA) and the Toronto Board of Trade, the Business Council of Canada, the Asia Pacific Foundation and more.
- **Charities we support:** Our community is compassionate and charitable, one of the Canadian values we are very proud to carry forth. Over the years, we have had the good fortune to support many charities in our various charitable fund raising efforts. Going forward, including as part of our advocacy work, we would like to give focus and attention to charities which our members are involved with and supporting in Hong Kong. In particular, where worthwhile charities may have been founded or already directly supported by our members, especially in the areas of the sustainability, inclusivity, education and supporting the community.
- **Canadian and Hong Kong governments:** We will increase our outreach to Hong Kong and Canadian governments and member representation on relevant policy matters. In particular, we will focus on our outreach to:
  - Promote measures to bring Hong Kong back to the world stage and build back better, Hong Kong's international reputation and profile, including initiatives that make Hong Kong's commercial platform even more sustainable and inclusive, such as highlighting the importance of Hong Kong's potential and role in Canada's Indo-Pacific region strategy, supporting and coordinating trade delegations from Hong Kong to Canada and vice versa, and making it easier to recruit talent (including marketing/promotions) from Canada to work in Hong Kong;
  - Make and encourage Hong Kong's business and innovation platforms, such as the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, Hong Kong Science Park and Cyberport; and Hong Kong's Talent attraction schemes to be even more accessible and available to our members, Canadian businesses, Canadian issuers, and to Canadians and Hong Kongers in Hong Kong and/or Canada, looking to raise capital and expand in Asia; and,



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- Continue to encourage and support Hong Kong in joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) as well as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which Hong Kong has already started proceedings to join.

**CanChamHK Objective:**

To invest time and resources in coordinating, shaping, and increasing our membership's representation and advocacy in Hong Kong and Canada.



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In this policy address, you will find many ideas, I hope, that will inspire you to work closely with the Chamber to build a prosperous environment for our membership, for Canadian companies, for Canadians in Hong Kong and Canada, and all our friends and partners in Hong Kong and increasingly the Greater Bay Area.

I encourage you to take full advantage of the opportunities the Chamber offers and play a key role in our continuing growth and transformation.

Please share with me any ideas you may have that will bring our mission to fruition.  
([Chair@Cancham.org](mailto:Chair@Cancham.org))

Your voice continues to be most important. I invite you to come to our events, participate in our webinars and join our committees.

A special thank you to all our **Governors**, the **Executive Committee**, **Committee Chairs and Co-chairs**, **Chamber Secretariat** and our **2,200+ Members and Sponsors**. Your dedication, support and contribution to building a thriving and diversified international business community in Hong Kong have been critical to shaping our Chamber's footprint in the region.

Yours sincerely,

Alex KC Tam

Chairman  
The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong