

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 7 November 2007

The Council met at Eleven o'clock

MEMBERS PRESENT:

THE PRESIDENT

THE HONOURABLE MRS RITA FAN HSU LAI-TAI, G.B.M., G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JAMES TIEN PEI-CHUN, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT HO CHUN-YAN

IR DR THE HONOURABLE RAYMOND HO CHUNG-TAI, S.B.S.,
S.B.ST.J., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LEE CHEUK-YAN

THE HONOURABLE MARTIN LEE CHU-MING, S.C., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE DAVID LI KWOK-PO, G.B.M., G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE FRED LI WAH-MING, J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE LUI MING-WAH, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MARGARET NG

THE HONOURABLE MRS SELINA CHOW LIANG SHUK-YEE, G.B.S.,
J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JAMES TO KUN-SUN

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG MAN-KWONG

THE HONOURABLE CHAN YUEN-HAN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE BERNARD CHAN, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KAM-LAM, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS SOPHIE LEUNG LAU YAU-FUN, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG YIU-CHUNG

THE HONOURABLE SIN CHUNG-KAI, S.B.S., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE PHILIP WONG YU-HONG, G.B.S.

THE HONOURABLE WONG YUNG-KAN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JASPER TSANG YOK-SING, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE HOWARD YOUNG, S.B.S., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE YEUNG SUM, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU KONG-WAH, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU WONG-FAT, G.B.M., G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MIRIAM LAU KIN-YEE, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE EMILY LAU WAI-HING, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHOY SO-YUK, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW CHENG KAR-FOO

THE HONOURABLE TIMOTHY FOK TSUN-TING, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE TAM YIU-CHUNG, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LI FUNG-YING, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE TOMMY CHEUNG YU-YAN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT CHAN WAI-YIP

THE HONOURABLE FREDERICK FUNG KIN-KEE, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE AUDREY EU YUET-MEE, S.C., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE VINCENT FANG KANG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WONG KWOK-HING, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE LEE WING-TAT

THE HONOURABLE LI KWOK-YING, M.H., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE JOSEPH LEE KOK-LONG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE DANIEL LAM WAI-KEUNG, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW LEUNG KWAN-YUEN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALAN LEONG KAH-KIT, S.C.

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG KWOK-HUNG

DR THE HONOURABLE KWOK KA-KI

DR THE HONOURABLE FERNANDO CHEUNG CHIU-HUNG

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG HOK-MING, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE RONNY TONG KA-WAH, S.C.

THE HONOURABLE CHIM PUI-CHUNG

PROF THE HONOURABLE PATRICK LAU SAU-SHING, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT JINGHAN CHENG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE KWONG CHI-KIN

THE HONOURABLE TAM HEUNG-MAN

MEMBERS ABSENT:

THE HONOURABLE LAU CHIN-SHEK, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ABRAHAM SHEK LAI-HIM, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JEFFREY LAM KIN-FUNG, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WONG TING-KWONG, B.B.S.

PUBLIC OFFICERS ATTENDING:

THE HONOURABLE HENRY TANG YING-YEN, G.B.S., J.P.
THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION

THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN LAM SUI-LUNG, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS

DR THE HONOURABLE YORK CHOW YAT-NGOK, S.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH

THE HONOURABLE TSANG TAK-SING, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS

THE HONOURABLE MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG, G.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE

THE HONOURABLE EVA CHENG, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING

CLERKS IN ATTENDANCE:

MR RICKY FUNG CHOI-CHEUNG, J.P., SECRETARY GENERAL

MS PAULINE NG MAN-WAH, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

MRS JUSTINA LAM CHENG BO-LING, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
GENERAL

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Clerk, will you please ring the bell to summon Members to the Chamber.

(After the summoning bell had been rung, a number of Members entered the Chamber)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): A quorum is now present. The meeting will now start.

TABLING OF PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table pursuant to Rule 21(2) of the Rules of Procedure:

Subsidiary Legislation/Instruments	<i>L.N. No.</i>
Medical Laboratory Technologists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) (Amendment) Regulation 2007	203/2007
Tax Reserve Certificates (Rate of Interest) (No. 5) Notice 2007	204/2007

Other Papers

- No. 25 — Hong Kong Productivity Council
Annual Report 2006-2007
- No. 26 — Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation
Annual Report 2006-2007

ADDRESSES

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Addresses. Ms Miriam LAU, Mr WONG Yung-kan and Mr SIN Chung-kai will separately address the Council on the

Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution) Regulation, which was subsidiary legislation laid on the table of the Council on 11 July 2007.

Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution) Regulation

MS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): Madam President, I speak in my capacity as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution) Regulation (the Subcommittee).

The Subcommittee in principle supports the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution) Regulation (the Regulation), for the implementation of Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution From Ships (MARPOL) in Hong Kong, whereby for specified ships, including Hong Kong ships and non-Hong Kong ships in Hong Kong waters, restrictions on the emissions of certain harmful substances by imposing control on the emissions of ozone depleting substances, nitrogen oxide (NO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and sulphur oxide (SO_x), as well as control on shipboard incineration and the quality of fuel oil used on board will be brought on par with international standard.

Since in general, ocean-going vessels can use fuel with sulphur content of below 4.5% m/m, and most local vessels are already using fuel with sulphur content of as low as 0.5% m/m, some members consider that the authorities should lower the 4.5% m/m sulphur content cap for fuel used on board vessels as contained in the Regulation to enhance improvement in air pollution in Hong Kong. In this connection, the authorities pointed out that if Hong Kong imposes emission standards higher than those of the International Maritime Organization on ocean-going vessels, such vessels may be discouraged from coming to Hong Kong, thereby adversely affecting the competitiveness of Hong Kong Port and Hong Kong's status as an international maritime centre. Hong Kong's cargo throughput and related trades will also be undermined. As regards members' enquiry on whether the authorities would explore the feasibility of imposing higher emission standards on local vessels under the Regulation, including ferries plying the harbour and those between Hong Kong and ports in the Pearl River Delta (PRD), the authorities pointed out that the Government hopes to enact the Regulation soon, to implement the most up-to-date MARPOL Annex VI. As regards the tightening of the emission standards

on SO_x for local vessels in the long run, the authorities advised that the Chief Executive has undertaken in his policy address 2007-2008 to study the feasibility of requiring all vessels plying the harbour to use high-quality fuel. The authorities assured members that measures in this regard would help reduce emissions from ships and that the authorities would take forward the study seriously. The Subcommittee considers that such matters on policy and measures which are related to the overall air quality of Hong Kong should be appropriately followed up by the Panel on Environmental Affairs.

As regards the regulation of NO_x, the Subcommittee understands that the local marine sector is concerned about the possible impact of the Regulation on existing marine diesel engines. The Subcommittee notes that the Marine Department (MD) has held meetings with the Joint Conference of Hong Kong Marine Sector (the Joint Conference). The MD has briefed the marine sector on the requirements and implementation details of the Regulation. In response to the marine sector's demand, the Regulation has specified that the relevant diesel engines installed on local vessels constructed before the commencement date of the Regulation and the engines that have not undergone a major conversion on or after that date are not subject to the emission standard of NO_x emission. The MD will also introduce a registration system for spare engines installed on local vessels. Registered spare engines could be used on board the vessels after the implementation of the Regulation. Members note that the authorities would continue to engage the Joint Conference and call on the authorities to implement the registration system with flexibility in meeting the sector's practices and operation as far as possible.

Regarding publicity on the Regulation, apart from issuing MD notices to ship agents and operators, as well as informing the marine authorities in the PRD Region of the requirements and implementation of the Regulation, the authorities have taken on board the Subcommittee's suggestion to enhance publicity on the Regulation, in particular to relevant parties outside Hong Kong, such as operators of mainland river trade vessels. The authorities will also consider sending notification to trade associations, shipowners associations and local shipping organizations.

On behalf of the Subcommittee, I so submit. Thank you, Madam President.

MR WONG YUNG-KAN (in Cantonese): Madam President, first of all, I would like to thank the President for allowing me to speak on the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution) Regulation (the Regulation). I will raise two points on the effect of the Regulation on local fishing vessels.

First, according to the Regulation, diesel engines which are constructed or which have undergone major conversion before its commencement will not be affected, but the usual practice of the sector is to provide fishing vessels with spare engines, that is, the shipowner of a fishing vessel may, due to operational need, own two or more diesel engines. The authorities now however only allow shipowners to register one spare diesel engine to be free from the impact of the Regulation. This fails to fully match the actual need of all fishermen. I urge the Government to take account of the actual need of fishermen and allow them to register more than one spare diesel engine.

Moreover, in order to register spare diesel engines with the Government, fishermen have to make purchases from the manufacturers or pay deposits, this will add gravely to their financial burden. I think the suitable approach is, if the fishermen are unable to make advance purchases, they should at least be given a quota after the commencement of the Regulation in the future to use one spare diesel engine.

Second, the Government had once implemented a one-off grant scheme to encourage early replacement of pre-Euro and Euro I diesel commercial vehicles by car owners. Fishermen organizations stated that the Government can employ the same method, by way of a one-off grant after the commencement of the Regulation to encourage shipowners to replace their diesel engines with those which comply with the new environmental standards within a specified period. I find this suggestion of the fishermen organizations reasonable and feasible, and I cannot see any reason for the Government to say that there is substantive difference between this and the move in encouraging car owners to replace their vehicles. I hereby again urge the Government to take the demand of the fishing industry seriously, by introducing a one-off grant after the commencement of the Regulation. I believe this is a win-win proposal, benefiting not only the industry but also society in general as this will help to expedite the improvement of air quality. I wish the Government will actively respond to my suggestion later.

Madam President, I so submit.

MR SIN CHUNG-KAI (in Cantonese): Madam President, thank you for allowing us to speak here.

Madam President, the purpose of enacting the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution) Regulation is to enable the Government to regulate the standards governing emissions from fuel used by all vessels entering Hong Kong waters, so that they comply with the requirements of Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution From Ships (MARPOL). The Democratic Party supports this. However, we hope that the Government can further co-operate with provinces and cities in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) Region waters to start regulating commercial vessels (mainly passenger vessels) plying Hong Kong and neighbouring waters by adopting more stringent emission standards.

MARPOL Annex VI requires that sulphur content of fuel should be capped at 4.5%, but according to investigations by the International Maritime Organization, at present, the average sulphur content of vessel fuel stands at 2.59%, and less than 1% of the vessels use fuel with sulphur content exceeding 4.5%. In other words, even without this Regulation, the vast majority of vessels entering Hong Kong waters can still meet the relevant standard.

The standard of MARPOL Annex VI was drawn up a decade ago. Currently, ferries plying the Hong Kong harbour are using fuel with sulphur content of about 0.3%. Although this figure is higher than that for fuel used by Hong Kong vehicles (sulphur content of ultra low sulphur diesel stands at 0.005%), it is far lower than the standard specified in MARPOL.

In fact, MARPOL Annex VI has another provision allowing contracting parties to establish sulphur emission control areas with more stringent control on sulphur emission. In the sulphur emission control areas, vessels are prohibited from using fuel with sulphur content exceeding 1.5%. At present, the Baltic Sea region of northern Europe has established such a control area.

Of course, we understand that it may be too harsh on the Government asking it to establish a sulphur emission control area promptly, but if we hastily impose restrictions in Hong Kong waters, ocean-going vessels will be forced to use other ports in the PRD. Therefore, the establishment of a sulphur emission control area is a long-term goal, and the Government has to co-operate

with the other regions in the PRD in declaring enormous waters, including Hong Kong, as a control area before the goal can be realized.

In the short term, we hope that the Government can regulate commercial vessels plying the Hong Kong and PRD waters, for example, passenger vessels and river trade vessels. Can the Government consider reaching an agreement with mainland provinces and municipalities, taking steps to first lay down more stringent standards to regulate the emission volume of these vessels? For example, is it possible to regulate the sulphur content of fuel used by these vessels, bringing it to below 3% in the short run, and even to 1.5% in the long run?

These vessels have to be licensed by the Marine Department before they can ply the Hong Kong waters. Therefore, the Government can include the required sulphur content of fuel and other emission standards in the licence conditions. We hope that the Government will not put together the ocean-going vessels and those we are asking it to regulate. We hope that the Government can start with vessels plying local and neighbouring waters and regulate the relevant vessels first.

Lastly, I would like to point out that according to data gathered at the monitoring stations of the Environmental Protection Department, sulphur dioxide produced from burning by vessels in the vicinity of the Kwai Chung Container Terminals accounts for 36% of sulphur dioxide in Hong Kong — Madam President, I live in Kwai Chung and thus can be said to bear the brunt — and vessels using fuel with high sulphur content are also a major source of some of the sulphur dioxide in the urban area. Therefore, I hope that the Government can regulate commercial vessels plying the Hong Kong and PRD waters and draw up a timetable for implementation. I so submit.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Questions. First question.

Genetically-modified Food Labelling Requirements

1. **MR FRED LI** (in Cantonese): *President, the Government has implemented a voluntary labelling system for genetically modified (GM) food*

since July 2006 and formulated the relevant guidelines, stating that members of the trade should actively adopt the guidelines which have been jointly developed by representatives of the trade, consumer bodies and government departments. Moreover, the guidelines also state that "negative labelling", which indicates that the food items or food ingredients are derived from non-GM sources, is not recommended for food without GM counterparts, as it would be misleading to consumers. However, I still find that "negative labelling" has been applied to many food items on sale in Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether:

- (a) it has assessed if members of the trade have actively adopted the above guidelines and applied positive labelling to the food items concerned voluntarily; if an assessment has been made, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (b) it has reviewed the prevalence of the application of "negative labelling", and whether it has proposals to improve the situation; if it does not have such proposals, of the reasons for that; and*
- (c) currently, it has plans to implement a mandatory labelling system for GM food; if so, of the legislative timetable; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): Madam President,

(a) and (b)

The Government implemented a voluntary labelling scheme for GM food and promulgated the Guidelines on Voluntary Labelling of GM Food (the Guidelines) in July 2006. Since then, the Government has launched a series of promotional activities, which included issuing the Guidelines to various trade associations, notifying consulates and the relevant mainland authorities and uploading the Guidelines to the webpage of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) for easy reference by the trade and members of the public. The CFS has also publicized the Guidelines and explained them to the trade through various channels such as its Trade

Consultation Forum, food safety seminars and GM food workshops. Leaflet on the voluntary labelling scheme for GM food was also produced for the information of the general public.

The CFS is conducting a market survey to evaluate the actual practices of the trade in applying the Guidelines and the practice of voluntary GM food labelling in the market. The key areas of the evaluation include the proportion of pre-packaged food with GM food labelling, the practice of positive and negative labelling and the format of the GM food labels. We expect to complete the evaluation by next year and to report the findings to the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene in mid-2008.

- (c) There is currently no international consensus on mandatory labelling of GM food. The issue of labelling system for GM food falls within the purview of the Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex). Owing to the diverse views among its major member states, it is unlikely that the Codex can reach a consensus on the issue of GM food labelling in the near future.

At present, GM food labelling schemes implemented by various countries and areas differ, but can be broadly classified into mandatory and voluntary and mandatory approaches. For the mandatory approach, it can be further divided into the "labelling of designated GM products only" and "pan-labelling" approaches.

The voluntary labelling approach only requires the labelling of GM food that is significantly different from its conventional counterpart, in terms of composition, nutritional value and allergenicity. The United States of America and Canada are examples of countries adopting this approach.

Under the mandatory labelling approach for designated GM products, labelling is only required if the food products contain designated GM materials such as soya bean and corn. Countries and areas like Mainland China, Japan and Taiwan are adopting this approach.

For the mandatory pan-labelling approach, it requires the labelling of any food that contains GM ingredients exceeding a threshold level. The European Union, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea have adopted this approach.

Furthermore, among the countries or areas with GM food labelling systems, whether voluntary or mandatory, the specified levels of GM materials mandating labelling may vary significantly from 0.9% to 5%, in addition to differences in the type of food covered and the scope of the systems.

The above information shows that the approaches adopted for GM food labelling vary to a great extent among different countries and areas. The main reason is that individual country or region formulates its policy and system based on its own situation. Apart from food safety and consumers' right to information, other factors are also taken into account, including protection of local agricultural market, economy and trade, conservation of ecological environment and beliefs of their citizens. Compared with other countries and areas, Hong Kong has been adopting a free trade policy and is not an important agriculture producing area. In drawing up food regulatory measures, we are primarily concerned with public health and food safety, with little regard to other factors, especially those economic-related ones. As such, our present priorities are to formulate the comprehensive Food Safety Bill, implement the Nutrition Labelling Scheme, review food safety standards, and so on. For measures which serve mainly to provide more product information to consumers, for example, GM food labelling system, we would monitor international development before deciding on the way forward.

If Hong Kong introduces a mandatory labelling system before international consensus has been reached on the standards for GM food labelling, it would be very difficult for Hong Kong, which relies heavily on imported food, to draw up the relevant scopes and standards. Moreover, according to the findings of the "Regulatory Impact Assessment on Labelling of GM Food" conducted earlier, there would be operational cost increases to the trade with a greater impact on the small and medium enterprises, if

a mandatory scheme is to be implemented. Therefore, when exploring the ways to formulate a regulatory regime for GM food labelling, we must take into consideration not only food safety issues and consumers' right to information, but also the regime's impact on the trade and the consumption modes of consumers, with a view to striking a balance between the provision of more product information to consumers, and the maintenance of the variety and stability of food supply. We will follow closely Codex's discussions on, and the latest development in, the labelling system for GM food, and will continue to communicate and discuss with the trade, consumer concern groups and other stakeholders. After completing the assessment of the effectiveness of the voluntary labelling scheme, we will further assess the urgency of implementing a GM food labelling system in Hong Kong, and formulate the way forward.

MR FRED LI (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary just said in the main reply that the CFS was conducting a survey to evaluate the practice of positive and negative labelling in the market. President, I have conducted some market surveys myself. I found that a particular brand of soy bean milk did not specify if the products were made from GM soy beans whereas another brand stated that the drink was derived from non-GM soy beans of Canada. In other words, the latter adopted negative labelling by stating that there is no GM content in its ingredient. Though I suspected that the particular brand mentioned above did contain GM ingredients, such content was not labelled. At present, as manufacturers of food products are not required to label such ingredient under the law, they only do it on a voluntary basis. While the Government encourages the trade to label GM foods, members of the trade only adopt a voluntary approach. President, I want to point out that the scheme has been implemented for a year or so, but it is a failure. It is ineffective for the Government to require the trade to label GM foods on a voluntary basis. Currently, 50 countries all over the world have adopted the mandatory labelling system. President, the reply given by the Secretary may be very thorough, yet I am still unable to see when the Government will move towards the mandatory approach. Is there a timetable? As long as the Government does not adopt the mandatory approach, the trade will not label GM food of their own accord.*

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): Madam President, as I just said, we are conducting an evaluation. The evaluation will be completed by the end of this year or in early 2008. After an analysis has been completed, we expect to report the findings to the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene for discussion in mid-2008. By then, we will also review our effort in this regard to decide on the way forward. We know that in terms of food safety, most of the existing GM foods have undertaken hygiene or safety evaluation before they are put on sale in the market. This can ensure that the food eaten by consumers is safe for consumption.

Nevertheless, I am aware that Hong Kong people are also concerned about the global impacts caused by GM foods, such as the balance of ecology and different food items. Such concerns of consumers have to be taken into account. However, if we are going to introduce any mandatory labelling system, we have to strike a balance between the sources of food supply and the price of food items. These are factors we have to consider. When we meet with the Panel next year, we will give a detailed account on our work in this area.

MR WONG YUNG-KAN (in Cantonese): *President, the Government conducted a public consultation exercise on GM food labelling in 2001, revealing that most of the respondents were in favour of introducing a labelling system. However, members of the trade were against the idea. Subsequently, the Government undertook a regulatory impact assessment and introduced the Guidelines for voluntary labelling of GM food by the industry to tie in with the current food safety assessment. The Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) supports this stance and approach as it would ensure the consumers' right to information. According to the main reply, some members of the trade fail to comply with the Guidelines and negative labelling is found in the market, may I ask the Government of the number of cases that were in breach of the existing labelling scheme? If there are indeed such cases, in what manner will the Government follow up?*

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): Madam President, as we are only conducting a survey, I am unable to inform Mr WONG of the exact number of cases as of today. However, our plan is to conduct a survey on 1 200 pre-packaged food items in the market. For this

purpose, instead of just going into any shop, we have adopted a random sampling method to obtain samples of those 1 200 food items. Firstly, we will examine the label and the so-called documentation of the products to see if they match. Secondly, we will test the product to examine if there is GM content. If we do find GM content, we have to ascertain the level of such content to decide if it has exceeded the threshold required for labelling. As the process is rather complicated, I hope we can decide on how we are going to adjust our existing policy or to establish a longer-term target after we have completed the analysis.

MR TOMMY CHEUNG (in Cantonese): *The Liberal Party strongly supports consumers' right to information. While we feel that it is very important for consumers to enjoy the right to information in respect of any food labelling and we very much support this, a balance must be struck between the consumers' right to choice and the survival of the trade. I agree with the greater part of the Secretary's reply. As for GM food labelling, I believe it is slightly different from nutrition labelling and allergen labelling. President, as the Government is conducting a survey, when they discuss with our Panel in the middle of next year As a matter of fact, for GM food labelling, I think the key lies in the Codex coming up with a set of standards. If it fails to do so, I am concerned that with the implementation of the labelling system, places as small as Hong Kong may not have many choices in terms of food items for import. In this regard, may I ask the Secretary if we can just act in accordance with the standards set down by the Codex?*

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): Madam President, a number of our policies on food safety have been drawn up with reference to the decision of the Codex

(A man in the Public Gallery shouted loudly)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please leave the Chamber.

(A security staff removed the man from the Chamber accordingly)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary, please continue.

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): Let me repeat. Most of our food safety policies are formulated with reference to standards spelt out by the Codex or policies agreed upon by member states. As I said in the main reply just now, in regard to GM food, it would be difficult for various countries, especially those major agricultural countries, to arrive at a consensus. As Hong Kong is not an agriculture producing area, we do not accord much importance to agricultural-related considerations. However, as far as food safety, consumers' right and their right to information are concerned, we have to bear in mind the global situation on top of the local one. If our food items may bring about impact on the entire human world, or even cause ecological changes, then I believe we are obliged to consider educating the public in this regard, so that they can make informed choices.

As to how to balance all these considerations, as I just said, we have to make reference to international developments. Also, as more and more GM food items have become available, what are the responsibilities of people or experts engaging in GM food production? Do food items have to pass tests and are proven to be safe without causing any impact on other ecologies before they are introduced to the market? We have to conduct a number of researches on these issues. In this regard, I feel that we have to balance conflicting interests. At the end, we hope that a consensus can be reached in the community at large.

It is not necessary for us to follow the practice any particular place because most of our food items are imported and we do not have the capabilities to produce enough food to be self-contained. For this reason, if our regulatory regime is too stringent or harsh, thus seriously affecting the sources of food supply, it would not be a pragmatic approach. We have to strike a balance among all areas. I hope Members will work with us together in formulating the regime.

MR TOMMY CHEUNG (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary has not answered my supplementary question. I am in fact asking him the food labelling system is really controversial, many areas I mean I agree with what he said, yet he did not say*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr CHEUNG, which part has he not replied? You only have to state that part.

MR TOMMY CHEUNG (in Cantonese): *..... if even the Codex cannot come up with a set of standards, then it would not be appropriate for us to implement the scheme. I agree with the Secretary that we should not follow the practice of a particular area as different areas*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): You do not have to say whether you agree or not, you just have to state the part that the Secretary has not replied. Is it the part you just mentioned?

MR TOMMY CHEUNG (in Cantonese): *The part he has not answered is: Since the Codex is unable to come up with a set of standards, then we should not implement a mandatory labelling system.*

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): Madam President, the Codex usually uses the consensual view agreed upon by all its member states as its standard. However, member states often make a footnote, saying that it is the minimum standard. For instance, apart from achieving a certain purpose, individual state may come up with other regulatory regime based on its own situation. Basically, it is a worldwide practice. If the Codex can ultimately arrive at a consensus, then we will look at the logic and rationale underlying the consensus. If it can meet the needs of Hong Kong, we are of course prepared to comply with it.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): We have spent more than 19 minutes on this question. Last supplementary question.

MR WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): *President, as a common saying goes, illness comes in via the mouth because of food. As the voluntary labelling scheme for GM food is voluntary in nature, the public's right to know and right to choose are thus very limited. It has been almost a year since the voluntary labelling scheme was implemented in July 2006. May I ask the Secretary, as the scheme has been implemented for more than a year, what the Government's view on the effectiveness of the scheme is? What is the percentage of food items that have adopted voluntary labelling?*

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): Madam President, I do not have such figure with me and I have yet come to a conclusion. As I just said, when the evaluation is completed by the end of this year or early next year, we should be able to announce the findings in this Council in the middle of next year. We will then conduct a review with the relevant panel.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr WONG, has your question not been answered?

MR WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): *Yes, President. The Secretary may not have the figure with him, but what is his initial view on the effectiveness? I mean the effectiveness of the scheme.*

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): Madam President, as I just explained, the analysis will involve a number of technical and complicated procedures. As to the number of food items making such declaration and labelling of their GM content, or the number of food items with such content failing to do so, I do not have data in this regard. In the absence of these figures, we cannot come to a conclusion.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Second question.

Salaries of Workers in Low-income Trades and Industries

2. **MS MARGARET NG** (in Cantonese): *President, the Government has repeatedly stressed that it is closely monitoring the problems of poverty and low income of the labour sector. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *whether it has data on the lowest and median monthly salaries of people working in various low-income trades (such as catering, cleansing, security services, retailing, and so on) in the past five years; if not, the reasons for that;*

- (b) *whether it has compared the income levels of such people and their living standards in the past five years; if not, the reasons for that; and*
- (c) *of the policies, apart from the mandatory wage requirement for government service contracts and the "Wage Protection Movement" (WPM), the Government had implemented in the past five years to improve the salary levels of such people; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President,

- (a) The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) conducts "Labour Earnings Survey" (LES) regularly and uses the data collected to compile the "Quarterly Report of Wage and Payroll Statistics", which is published in March, June, September and December each year. For the catering, cleansing, security services and retail industries, the average monthly salaries of workers with relatively low income in the past five years were as follows:
- (i) the salaries of "refreshment server" of Chinese restaurants in June 2002 and June 2007 were \$5,307 and \$5,514 respectively, which showed an increase of 3.9%;
 - (ii) the salaries of "general cleaner" were \$5,067 and \$5,213 in the same period, showing an increase of 2.9%;
 - (iii) the salary of "guard" also recorded a 2.0% increase in the same period, which stood at \$6,954 and \$7,094 respectively; and
 - (iv) the salary of "sales clerk/shop assistant" in the retail industry also increased from \$8,338 to \$8,468 in the past five years. The rate of increase was 1.6%.

Detailed information is at the Annex.

As the LES is conducted by collecting figures on the average salary of individual occupation from the business establishments, we do not have information on the lowest and median salaries.

- (b) As different people may have different definitions of living standard, it is very difficult for the Administration to define it subjectively. Besides, as the living standard of different people are affected by many factors, including family size, health condition and composition of families members (such as the ratio of the working people or dependants), and so on, we believe that there is no simple way to measure the changes in living standards for the low-income workers from the selected industries in the past five years.
- (c) The Administration has always been committed to promoting Hong Kong's sustainable economic development so that our citizens can share the fruit of our economic prosperity.

The Administration is also committed to assisting all citizens, including the low-income workers and their dependants, to meet basic living requirements. Let me quote a few examples, in the area of housing, we have a long established public housing policy which subsidizes low-income families who cannot afford private housing. The Administration also provides a wide range of highly subsidized public services covering areas essential to the enrichment and well-being of our people, such as medical services and other social services. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that low-income workers and their families can gain access to these services. Low-income employees who are not earning enough to support themselves and their families can receive income support under the "low earnings" category of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme. Besides, with the provision of allowances and deductions in our salaries tax system, only around one third of our working population pays salaries tax.

Training and employment assistance are important measures to assist low-income workers to upgrade themselves and seek jobs. Apart from promoting the mandatory wage requirement for government service contracts and the WPM, we have launched in

June this year the pilot "Transport Support Scheme", which was recommended by the Commission on Poverty. This scheme aims at encouraging job-seekers and low-income workers living in selected remote districts and with financial difficulties to find jobs and work across districts.

In addition, the Administration is committed to allocating considerable resources to promote education and training so as to ensure education and training opportunities for our citizens, and facilitate their upward mobility. The Employees Retraining Board is also committed to providing retraining and employment services to low-income employees so as to assist them to acquire new skills or improve their occupational skills.

Annex

Nominal average monthly salaries of selected occupations (2002 to 2007)

<i>Industry/Occupation</i>	<i>June 2002 (\$)</i>	<i>June 2003 (\$)</i>	<i>June 2004 (\$)</i>	<i>June 2005 (\$)</i>	<i>June 2006 (\$)</i>	<i>June 2007 (\$)</i>
Chinese restaurants Refreshment server	5,307	5,473	5,287	5,388	5,381	5,514
Sanitary and similar services General cleaner	5,067	4,986	5,126	4,976	5,042	5,213
Security and detective services Guard	6,954	7,013	6,814	6,514	6,796	7,094
(three-shift guard#)	-	-	-	(5,817)	(6,358)	(6,407)
(two-shift guard*)	-	-	-	-	-	(6,797)
Retail Sales clerk/shop assistant	8,338	8,289	8,103	8,406	8,879	8,468

Notes : # Wage statistics of three-shift security guard have been published since the September 2004 issue of the Quarterly Report of Wage and Payroll Statistics.

* Wage statistics of two-shift security guard have been published since the September 2006 issue of the Quarterly Report of Wage and Payroll Statistics.

MS MARGARET NG (in Cantonese): *President, in fact, the three parts of the Secretary's main reply fail to deliver any substantial answer. However, I would just concentrate on following up one point, and that is, the minimum*

wage actually received by workers. In other words, how many hours does he have to work and whether the wages received are sufficient to maintain his living? These are the data most fundamental to the poverty alleviation policy. Why are these data always unavailable from the Government? Does it intend to collect these data now? If not, how can it assess whether the existing poverty alleviation policy is the right remedy to the problem?

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, we do not have a yardstick to clearly measure how much money is needed to maintain the most basic living. However, you also know that we are now carrying out the WPM, which especially targets two trades, namely cleansing and security services. We hope, through the WPM, to arouse the concern of employers and the business sector for this, with a view to providing employees with a so-called market average wage, such that workers can receive reasonable treatment.

MS MARGARET NG (in Cantonese): *President, my follow-up question is about minimum wage, but the Secretary always mentions average wage in his reply. President, can you ask the Secretary to answer my question direct?*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary, do you have anything to add?

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, I have nothing to add.

Minimum wage is another issue. However, we are now talking about the WPM. Ms NG, if you have noticed, the stance of the Government is very clear. We have already stated that in the following year, we will continue to put more efforts in promoting this WPM. Nevertheless, if we find that this WPM is really not effective by October next year, the Government will propose a bill as soon as possible in order to introduce minimum wage to the two trades, namely security services and cleansing. Then, we will have a minimum wage level. During this year, we will conduct the so-called advance work study or discussion. We will definitely have a so-called level by then. But at the present stage, we do not have such a level.

MS LI FUNG-YING (in Cantonese): *Part (c) of Ms NG's main question asked the Secretary what policies the Government had implemented in the past five years to improve the salary levels of these low-income workers.*

Although the Secretary has mentioned lots of measures, in terms of effectiveness, as we can see in the Annex, what was the salary of a two-shift security guard in June 2007? It was \$6,797. For a two-shift security guard, he has to work for 12 hours daily. But his hourly wage is less than \$22. I have this question for the Secretary: Before you sort of legislate on a wage and while carrying out the WPM, do you have other new policies to improve such a low wage level?

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, the market average wage is used as the index in the existing WPM and we encourage employers to follow it. However, as I just said, after the WPM is finished, we will conduct a review. As regards the way forward, if the WPM is really unsuccessful and when necessary, the Government will then propose a wage level. But what can we do in the interim? We will continue to encourage the employers, in the hope that they can provide reasonable wages to the employees. And that is what we can do.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): There are still nine Members waiting to ask supplementaries. Will Members who have the chance to ask questions be as concise as possible, so that more Members may ask questions.

MISS CHAN YUEN-HAN (in Cantonese): *To this group of low-income people, some areas clearly show that the Government has long been indifferent to them. For instance, in part (a) of Ms Margaret NG's main question, the Secretary simply answered with the average salaries. However, what is the actual situation in the trades? Do you have statistics on their lowest monthly salaries? When answering Ms Margaret NG, the Government said that they did not have such statistics. I think that if we see*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Miss CHAN, please put your question directly.

MISS CHAN YUEN-HAN (in Cantonese): *Yes, President, I was coming to my supplementary.*

According to the main reply of the Government, I think it is very obvious that on this issue, the Government is lagging badly behind the working situation of some working poor. Secretary, in regard to Ms Margaret NG's question, you have to deal with it at a technical level. If this WPM fails or when you work on the advance work for legislation, you need to work out the median figures in this respect or the number of people earning the lowest income. Policy-wise, this is how the Government can solve the problem.

I have this question for the Secretary: At this stage today, will the Government prepare to collect these figures or ask other departments to provide these figures to you? Otherwise, how are you going to prepare for the advance legislative work on minimum wage?

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, I thank Miss CHAN for her supplementary. I want to emphasize that we are very concerned about the income situation of grass-roots workers. Therefore, we can see that the Government is actually doing a lot of work. Apart from the WPM, we also encourage employers through many other channels, in the hope that they can provide their employees with reasonable wages and share the fruits of economic prosperity with employees.

Why are we unable to provide the figures as Ms NG requested? Because what she mentioned are very specific job categories and what she asked for are very detailed statistics. Throughout all these years, the C&SD has been making enquiries with the companies through the LES mentioned in the main reply to obtain the average figures. However, if we have to calculate a specific figure for a certain job category, say the lowest or the median figure, there will be some difficulty. We have also had a number of meetings with the C&SD. The statistics from the General Household Survey conducted by the C&SD are more general or macroscopic. For instance, if the number of non-skilled workers in retail industry is required, we will have such figures. However, if you are asking for very detailed statistics, they will have certain difficulty, as the samples need to be handled very carefully.

Nevertheless, Miss CHAN, I agree with your view, as we need to do some pragmatic advance work for the future. In regard to the security services

and cleansing industries, if we really have to do something, I will study with the C&SD again to see how we can obtain some more detailed and accurate information to facilitate our verification and assessment. We will further follow this up.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): *President, I am disappointed with the Government's reply. I think that he is just playing the lute to the cow, as the message is not getting through.*

In the main reply, the Secretary said that the WPM could provide protection, but it actually is not effective. The Government only targets the security guards and cleaners. However, in part (a) of the main reply, the Secretary also mentioned that the monthly salaries of refreshment servers of Chinese restaurants are also very low and shameful, being only \$5,307 and \$5,514 in 2002 and 2007 respectively. May I ask the Government what measures are in place for these low-income people other than security guards and general cleaners, so that they can also be accorded due protection?

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, it is undeniable that our WPM is focused on two job categories, and this has already been made clear in the first place. However, why did we hold such a concept at that time? Because when we sat down for discussion with some leaders of trade unions, we found that sub-contracting was especially prevalent in these two job categories, and it had aroused much concern. Therefore, in 2003-2004, the Government took the lead in setting a good example in its own outsourcing contracts. We have thus taken the first step.

Outsourcing does lead to certain exploitation and undesirable situations. However, in trades such as retailing and catering, outsourcing is not so serious. We all know that employees are directly employed in these trades. We are also concerned about this situation, not totally oblivious to it. Nonetheless, we think we should focus on this target and properly carry out this WPM before we deal with the problems of other job categories. In other words, at the present stage, we will focus our attention on this WPM and do something for these job categories.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary has not answered my question. Does he mean that the Government totally ignores such people, including refreshment servers, apart from those in the two trades? No matter how straitened their circumstances are, will they still be unable to warrant the Government's attention?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, I just made it very clear and hope that Members will not be confused. We are now talking about the WPM. The focus of the Government now is the protection of these two job categories. A consensus has already been reached in the community in this regard and this is the focus of our movement. Therefore, I think that at present, we should focus our efforts and attention on this WPM for these two job categories.

MR RONNY TONG (in Cantonese): *President, does the Secretary actually know that in the past 10 years, the number of workers with salaries below the median has markedly increased by 87.9%, while the number of poor families has increased from 830 000 to 1.16 million, and the number of workers in the service industry with salaries below \$5,000 has drastically increased from 61.4% to 77.4%? May I ask the Secretary when the Government will be determined to comprehensively review the labour policy and legislation, including legislation on minimum wage and standard working hours? Why does the Government only target on two trades instead of conducting a general review?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, as I already said earlier, we are also very much concerned about the figures quoted by Mr TONG. As a matter of fact, precisely because of the gap between the rich and the poor, it was a subject covered in the Chief Executive's policy address, as we can notice. Therefore, we have been offering assistance at many levels.

I have to emphasize that we should not abruptly ask for a comprehensive law on minimum wage. We have to proceed gradually, and to properly carry out the WPM is the first step. Since we have now finished the mid-term review, and we can see the relevant statistics, our next step will be some

pragmatic work. On the one hand, we have to promote the WPM with more efforts, in the hope that more employers will support and the WPM thus has a better chance to succeed. On the other hand, we also have to prepare for the worse. If the WPM is proved not successful by next year, we will immediately propose a bill for Members' discussion. For the time being, we just focus our attention on these two job categories and getting the job done properly.

MR RONNY TONG (in Cantonese): *President, the statistics show that the plight of workers is getting worse, which is a general situation instead of affecting merely two trades. My question is: When will the Government comprehensively review the labour policy and legislation? When will that be done?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): In regard to the review of labour legislation and policy, this has been ongoing. We will not start the review after waiting for a period of time.

Concerning the labour policy, the major premise basically or the principle of the Government is to tie in with the overall pace of economic development of Hong Kong so as to improve our labour rights. However, in the course of improvement, we have to strike a balance between the sustainability and interests of employees and those of employers. This is very important, and the point is to be impartial. However, we need to stride forward at the same time.

Members can see that in terms of wage protection, with the WPM, we have actually taken an important step forward. Looking back at a few years ago, nothing had been done by the Government in this aspect. We can see that a consensus has now been reached and we are moving in this direction. A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. President, I think we have already moved our first step.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *In my opinion, the Secretary's reply today has given us an impression that apart from security guards and cleaners, it was not necessary to care for the life and death of other people in low-income trades.*

Is such a reply becoming of the thinking of a responsible government? The Secretary mentioned focusing the efforts, but I have already said that this WPM is a failure. If you only focus on two trades while ignoring other trades, is that unfair to workers in other trades? Besides, I think that the biggest problem with the Secretary is that even a study is absent. Let us look at part (a) of the main reply. The Secretary mentioned catering, cleansing, security services and retailing. However, there are a lot more low-income trades, such as courier services. In the catering industry, apart from refreshment servers, those in fast-food

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Lee, have you put your supplementary?

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *I now put my supplementary. Why did the Secretary not even conduct a study on all the low-income trades? What are those trades? For instance, retailing and fast-food restaurants including the staff of McDonald's fast-food restaurants have not been mentioned. This question is not only about a few trades, but all low-income trades. Why did the Secretary not collect such information? Even when conducting a study, does he also have to discriminate against the workers other than those in the cleansing and security services industries?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, first of all, I would like to clarify two points.

Firstly, we only mentioned a few job categories in the main reply. However, if Members want to have information on other job categories, we can also provide such information. We have a lot of data, but I do not want my main reply to be too complicated. Since Ms NG's question cited a few trades as examples, we thus only provide information on a few trades of lower income.

Secondly, in the WPM, while studying two job categories, namely cleansing and security services on the one hand, we also conduct some advance work on the other. Members all know that we are engaging in such work. In this process, we definitely will study the impact of minimum wage on Hong

Kong. The study concerned has already commenced. We surely will discuss them together in due course. However, Members must understand that we have to be fair. Since the WPM is focused on the two trades of cleansing and security services, we should first of all have this job done properly. In my opinion, if we talk about comprehensive legislation from the outset, we might delay the timetable. We should work on it step by step. There is always a process, Mr LEE.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary has not answered my supplementary. Concerning the question whether he has conducted a study on all low-income trades, he seemed to have said yes. But he has not provided any information. May I ask the Secretary to provide a written reply on the average wages of workers in all low-income trades?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, I can provide the information. I will provide a written reply after the meeting so that Members may have more data for reference. (Appendix I)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): This Council has spent more than 19 minutes on this question. We will now proceed to the third question.

Opinion Surveys Relating to Legislative Council By-election

3. **MR JAMES TO** (in Cantonese): *President, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *whether it has conducted any public opinion survey on the support for candidates running for the Legislative Council by-election for the Hong Kong Island geographical constituency to be held on 2 December this year; if it has, of the government department responsible for conducting the survey, as well as the number of surveys that have been and will be conducted on the by-election;*
- (b) *apart from the above by-election, whether the Government has conducted similar surveys on Legislative Council general elections*

or by-elections since 2000; if it has, of a breakdown of the survey subjects concerned and the expenses incurred; and

- (c) *whether it has disclosed the results of the surveys referred to in (a) and (b) to weekly magazines or newspapers; if it has, of the purpose of such disclosure; if not, whether it will conduct investigation into weekly magazines or newspapers reporting on the survey results?*

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, on parts (a) and (b) of the question raised by the Mr James TO, the Central Policy Unit (CPU) commissions academic and commercial research institutes regularly to conduct opinion polls on different public policy issues, including political, economic, social, quality of life issues, and so on. The findings are for the Government's internal reference. We generally will not make public information relating to these polls.

As for part (c) of the question, we generally will not comment in detail and publicly on speculative reports.

However, we would like to reiterate that the CPU will not disclose to any weekly magazines or newspapers findings of opinion polls that are intended for internal reference.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): *President, the incident is quite suspicious because the main reply is also very technical. So, I have to follow up with this supplementary question. In my main question, I asked the Government whether it would inform this Council of parts (a), (b) and (c). However, in parts (a), (b) and (c) of the main reply, or Secretary LAM's reply, he said that "we generally will not", or the Government generally will not. But in the last paragraph, he said, "we would like to reiterate that the CPU will not". Does the Government's reply mean that the CPU will not disclose to any weekly magazines or newspapers, but the Government or other high-ranking officials or the Chief Executive or even other people will do so? If the answer is in the negative, will it in part (c) of my main question, I asked whether an investigation would be conducted. If no disclosure will be made, why is the situation so suspicious?*

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, the findings of opinion polls for internal reference are only for internal reference. As we said that it will not be disclosed, it will not be disclosed. But the media in Hong Kong are so capable that they can have their own way of writing the newspaper reports. And the media in Hong Kong have a very important principle and that is, they will not disclose the source of information. So, we respect their editorial freedom and freedom of the press. The approach adopted in their reports is a matter of their own and information for the Government's internal reference is only for our internal reference.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): *President, the part of my question which Secretary LAM has not answered clearly is that in the last part of his main reply, he said that the CPU will not disclose the findings. Does he mean that the Government will not disclose them or the CPU will not disclose them? It seems that he has not answered this part of the question, President. Besides, the investigation I mentioned is internal investigation and I did not mean pressing the reporters for information. I did not mean that. I hope the Secretary will not misunderstand it.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary, do you have anything to add?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, I believe Mr James TO, just like the Government, respects editorial autonomy and freedom of the press. So, I also welcome that there is no transgression of this line. Regarding the opinion polls for our internal reference, they are for our internal reference only. As we said that we generally will not disclose them, they will generally not be disclosed.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): *When he said that generally no disclosure would be made, he referred to the reply to part (b). But in part (c), he reiterated that the CPU would not disclose to any weekly magazines or newspapers. President, the Secretary actually has not answered my question which asked whether or not the Government would disclose to weekly magazines*

or newspapers. Because there is a very specific difference between "generally will not" and "do not", President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary, do you have anything to add?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, why did we specifically mention the CPU in part (c)? Because opinion polls on political issues and policies which are related to society and people's livelihood are arranged by colleagues of the CPU. After completion of the opinion polls, the findings will certainly be provided for the internal reference of relevant bureaux and departments. As we said that the CPU will not disclose to the public, it will not disclose to the public.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): *President, the CPU conducts researches and surveys regularly. But it is extremely abnormal and extremely unusual to conduct an opinion poll on an election. Are such a practice and the use of such information for internal reference conducive to the formulation of policies and strategies by the Government so as to help candidates favoured by the Government and deal a blow to candidates in disfavour with the Government? Are the opinion polls used for such purpose and such intention?*

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, first of all, I have to reiterate that we will not comment in detail and publicly on speculative reports. However, as Mr CHAN mentioned elections, I may reiterate to Mr CHAN and all Members that the SAR Government is absolutely determined to make arrangement for fair, open and honest elections in accordance with our electoral laws. In this connection, apart from the protection in legislation, we will also rely on the freedom in three aspects. First, universities and think-tanks can conduct such opinion polls according to academic freedom; second, media can make widespread reports according to the freedom of the press, including the reports on such opinion polls; and third, the people can absolutely have the freedom of choice when casting their votes. With these three kinds of freedom, in

addition to the protection in law, we can ensure that this election is conducted in a fair, open and honest manner.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary has not responded to my criticism just now. Although the authorities have frequently conducted surveys on other policies, it is extremely unusual and extremely abnormal to conduct opinion polls on an election.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): It is not a question, but your opinion.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): *..... in other words, the Secretary has tacitly admitted that, President. Thank you, President.*

MR ALBERT HO (in Cantonese): *President, in fact, the main reply has totally evaded parts (a) and (b) of the main question, which asked whether the Government had conducted internal opinion polls on some elections. As the Government has evaded it, can I presume that: first, the Government has in fact conducted such opinion polls on each election, including by-elections. I hope the Secretary can confirm "yes" or "no" and do not evade this question. Second, what is the purpose of such opinion polls? I want to know the purpose of the Government. Does it intend to exert influence on an election?*

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, as elections in Hong Kong are conducted in a fair, open and honest manner, and people can make a free choice, no one can exert influence on them. Of course, the candidates concerned and the organizations and parties supporting them will pay home visits to the people and canvass for votes every day. In addition, they will also disseminate their policy insights and political ideas through the media to the people and their voters. In a free society like Hong Kong, such interactive activities happen every day. As I have indicated that the SAR Government generally will not comment in detail and publicly on speculative reports, I will not give any further interpretation. Mr Albert HO should not make any presumption on whether or not opinion polls have been conducted by us.

MR ALBERT HO (in Cantonese): *President, sorry, my supplementary question is very simple. I just ask whether or not opinion polls have been conducted. If not, the Secretary should say "no". Why did he utter such a bunch of bull in such a sneaking way, trying to give us an ambiguous reply? As what the Government has spent is public money, it should tell us whether or not opinion polls have been conducted. It is as simple as that. I do not want to hear such irrelevance again.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary, do you have anything to add?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, in my main reply, I have already told Members on which areas the CPU will conduct opinion polls. In the main answer and my replies to supplementary questions just now, I have indicated clearly that we will not comment in detail and publicly on speculative reports.

MR ALBERT HO (in Cantonese): *President, does the Secretary mean that opinion polls have been conducted or not? I still cannot catch his meaning. Have opinion polls been conducted or not on elections?*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary, do you have anything to add?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, I have answered Mr HO's question time and again. But I would like to reiterate that the people have the freedom to choose in order to ensure that the election is fair, open and honest.

MR CHIM PUI-CHUNG (in Cantonese): *President, in response, the Secretary admitted that some academic research institutes had conducted opinion polls for the internal reference of the Government. Can the Secretary confirm that in the past or future elections, the Government will absolutely not make use of such information to interfere with the elections of any constituency? As the Secretary always emphasizes that elections are fair, open and honest, it means*

that the Government has not done the suspected act. If the Government has done so, should it be subject to criminal prosecution or reprimand?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, the Government is law-abiding and our responsibility is to ensure that elections are conducted in a fair, open and honest manner in accordance with the Laws of Hong Kong.

DR YEUNG SUM (in Cantonese): *Madam President, it is mentioned in the main reply that the CPU conducts opinion polls on different public policy issues, including political, economic, social and quality of life issues. However, the support for the two candidates of the Legislative Council by-election of Hong Kong Island is totally irrelevant to such public policy issues. Is it a waste of public money if opinion polls have really been conducted?*

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, the CPU and relevant bureaux and departments will certainly make assessment on each issue and consider such opinion polls and researches helpful to us in understanding the people's wishes and the pulse of society. Also, through the tracking of public views for a relatively long period of time, it will help our policy formulation. So this is the reason why we have co-ordinated with the CPU in conducting opinion polls and research. When carrying out such work, we will be prudent in using public money and do work which is only proven.

MR RONNY TONG (in Cantonese): *President, I can hardly understand why we should sit here. President, part (b) of the main question covers a wide range of areas including the survey subjects and the expenses incurred. President, why can such information not be provided? In the main reply, the Secretary only stressed that the information would not be leaked or disclosed to the public. Then let us not talk about the information. No matter it is Mrs CHAN, Mrs LEE or Mrs CHEUNG, has the Government conducted any opinion polls and how much public money has been spent? President, as Legislative*

Council Members, we are duty-bound to monitor the Government in using public money. Why is the Government unable to tell us how much public money has been spent on conducting opinion polls?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, I have confirmed that the CPU has conducted opinion polls on economic, people's livelihood and political policy issues. The amount of expenditure to be incurred by the CPU in the next year will be examined by Members. So, all departments of the SAR Government, including the CPU, will have to give an account to the Legislative Council in due course.

MR RONNY TONG (in Cantonese): *President, it seems that the Secretary is trying to muddle through. My supplementary question is very simple. Can the Secretary tell us how much money has been spent on the opinion polls? Why is such information barred from disclosure?*

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, I have answered the question in the main reply. I have nothing to add.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *President, I think the Secretary today is acting shamelessly. He has refused to answer any supplementary question. In my opinion, it is the Administration's responsibility to answer questions of the Legislative Council and it is also its responsibility to disclose information to the public. Our supplementary questions are very basic and very simple. The CPU has spent public money on surveys. But we do not want to know the findings. We only ask the Secretary whether or not surveys have been conducted. But the Secretary is not willing to answer such a simple question. Regarding the issues mentioned in the main reply, he is not willing to answer on which issues surveys have been conducted. Is this not going over board?*

I can remember that when asking which consultancies had been commissioned by the Government in our written questions, the Government had also given us replies. It also gave us replies to our questions on what surveys

had been conducted by the CPU. Why is the Government reluctant this time around to answer what surveys have been conducted? I would like to give the Secretary the last chance to answer clearly a very simple question, a question in which the public are also interested, and that is: Has the Government conducted any surveys on universal suffrage by-election — (Laughter) Yes, I always remember universal suffrage. (Laughter) Has any survey been conducted on the Legislative Council by-election?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, I have in fact answered the question. The CPU has conducted opinion polls on different public policy issues, including political, economic, social and quality of life issues. But Members' concern today originated from a newspaper report, a speculative report, and our fundamental position is that we will not comment in detail and publicly on speculative reports. So, our position on this issue is crystal clear.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *President, such a response by the Secretary is equivalent to giving no reply at all. May I ask the Secretary to provide a written reply on all the issues which have been surveyed by the CPU?*

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, I have answered the question and have nothing to add.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): We have spent 16 minutes on this question. Last supplementary question.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): *The Secretary has really gone over board. From the beginning to the end, he has evaded all the questions. Other colleagues and I have heard it clearly that the Government has in fact conducted opinion polls and has not denied that information has been passed to the media. But since the media have made a pledge to the Government, they cannot disclose that the information is provided by the Secretary. I think such*

a government my supplementary question is not about these things, this is simply a waste of energy.

President, my supplementary question is: Does the Government have an established policy under which public money will be spent on opinion polls in order to help candidates of the Legislative Council election favoured by the Government?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, our established policy is to conduct opinion polls on issues concerning political, economic, social and people's livelihood issues for the purpose of helping the Government to determine policy directions instead of the purpose speculated by Dr KWOK Ka-ki.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): I would like to seek a clear answer. The issues may be related to people's livelihood or public policies. But in fact, such information may also be used for helping candidates who are preferred or favoured by the Government, am I right?

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary, do you have anything to add?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, it is the responsibility of the electioneering teams to help the candidates concerned. It is not the responsibility of any government departments.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Fourth question.

Child Care Service

4. **MS MIRIAM LAU** (in Cantonese): *President, it is learnt that it is common for parents to leave their young children at home alone for reasons such as going to work, resulting in some of these parents being prosecuted, and*

accidents involving children left unattended at home being reported from time to time. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the number of children who had been left at home alone encountering accidents, and the number of parents or guardians who were prosecuted for leaving children at home alone, in the past three years;*
- (b) in respect of each District Council (DC) district at present, of the number of child care centres, their average usage rate, the number of persons waiting for such services, the respective numbers of day foster care places and places in mutual help child care centres (MHCCCs), as well as the details of the extended hours of service; whether it has made detailed assessments to see if the child care services in various districts meet the demands there; if it has, of the results; if it has not, the reasons for that, and how it will address the demands in individual districts; and*
- (c) whether it will increase the flexibility of subvented child care services so that occasional childminding services are available to parents on an ad hoc basis or outside regular hours; if so, of the details of the flexible arrangements; if not, how it will cater for the different needs of parents?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President,

- (a) It is the responsibility of parents to take care of their young children. Parents who are unable to do so temporarily for reasons such as work or other appointments should arrange for their relatives, neighbours or child minders to assist, or make use of the various child care services available. The Government and service organizations will endeavour to assist families in need, including providing them with fee assistance.

In all circumstances, it is extremely dangerous to leave young children at home alone. There is always the danger of causing

children harm or death and putting neighbours at risk. Parents and carers may also face criminal liability arising from negligence in care.

According to information provided by the police, between 2005 and September 2007, the police handled a total of 36 child neglect cases involving children being left unattended at home, of which eight children neglected by their parents or carers had accidents and sustained physical injuries. Of the 19 cases that were dealt with by the Court after police investigation, the offenders in 12 cases were prosecuted whilst the rest were given bind-over orders.

- (b) The Government subsidizes non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide a wide range of day child care services.

Standalone child care centres subvented by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) provide full-day care for children under the age of three. Currently, there are 12 standalone child care centres across the territory. The overall utilization rate in 2006-2007 was 91%.

Some kindergartens under the purview of the Education Bureau operate child care centres on the same premises. In September 2007, there were altogether 453 such centres. The utilization rate in 2006-2007 was 62%.

To support parents who are unable to take care of their children because of long working hours and unforeseen circumstances, and so on, the SWD subsidizes the child care centres mentioned above to operate extended hours service and occasional child care service. Extension of service is usually from 6 pm to 7 pm or 8 pm from Mondays to Fridays; and from 1 pm to 3 pm or 8 pm on Saturdays. Operators may adjust the service hours flexibly to meet the needs of parents. Currently, a total of 1 244 places of extended-hours service (including 306 free places) and 495 places of occasional child care service are available throughout the territory.

The SWD also encourages the development of community-based MHCCCs that capitalize on community resources. At present, NGOs operate 305 MHCCC places across the territory. The day foster care service that has commenced operation since this October provides 40 places.

The number of standalone child care centres subvented by the SWD and number of places in MHCCCs operated by NGOs, extended hours service and occasional child care service by district are at Annex 1. The number of child care centres co-located with kindergartens by district are at Annex 2. As day foster care service is territory-wide in nature, there is no breakdown by district.

The SWD does not maintain statistics on the number of applicants on the waiting lists of various types of child care services. In planning its services, the SWD assesses the service needs of individual districts on the basis of their characteristics, such as their transient population, the age profile of residents and the availability of related services. District Social Welfare Offices of the SWD also consult district organizations, Members of DCs and residents on the needs for various services in the districts.

- (c) The authorities are aware that because of the need to work shifts and other reasons, some parents are unable to take care of their children outside the regular opening hours of the various child care services. To address their needs, we will step up efforts in promoting more responsive neighbourhood mutual help child care services. In addition to providing financial incentives to MHCCCs to enhance their services in the evenings, at weekends and on holidays, the SWD has also been subsidizing foster homes to provide non-residential day care service since October 2007. Within 2007-2008, some small group homes will start offering day care places.

The Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF), which promotes mutual help in the neighbourhood, also provides seed

money to assist members of the community in developing mutual help networks. These networks seek to support needy families by providing services such as after-school care. Over the past five years, the CIIF has provided over \$110 million to fund more than 140 projects. About one third of the projects have a child care or after-school care element.

Annex 1

Number of standalone child care centres subvented by the SWD and number of places in MHCCCs operated by NGOs, extended-hours service and occasional child care service by district

<i>Administrative District of the SWD</i>	<i>Number of standalone child care centres subvented by the SWD</i>	<i>Number of places in MHCCCs</i>	<i>Number of places of extended-hours service</i>	<i>Number of places of occasional child care service</i>
Eastern and Wan Chai	2	0	152	36
Central, Western, Southern and Islands	1	67	124	46
Kwun Tong	0	56	122	47
Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung	0	14	140	54
Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong	2	14	124	57
Sham Shui Po	1	42	76	33
Sha Tin	1	0	82	35
Tai Po and North	1	14	124	49
Yuen Long	1	42	84	34
Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing	2	28	138	65
Tuen Mun	1	28	78	39
Total	12	305	1 244	495

Annex 2

Number of child care centres co-located with kindergartens by district

<i>DC district</i>	<i>Number of child care centres co-located with kindergartens</i>
Central and Western	25
Wan Chai	15
Eastern	50
Southern	24
Yau Tsim Mong	18
Sham Shui Po	17
Kowloon City	42
Wong Tai Sin	21
Kwun Tong	36
Sai Kung	20
Sha Tin	36
Tai Po	15
North	14
Yuen Long	31
Tuen Mun	30
Tsuen Wan	19
Kwai Tsing	30
Islands	10
Total	453

MS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): *President, some parents have pointed out that occasional child care service now provided is subject to a two-hour minimum charge, which means parents using the service for less than two hours will still be charged for two hours. For parents who need to use this type of services regularly, say during their visit to the market or taking children to schools, it may impose a heavy burden on them, particularly for low-income families. Will the Secretary inform us whether the Government will review the relevant arrangement and service charges to ensure that services with greater flexibility and of lower charges can be provided?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, definitely, for parents facing financial difficulties and in need of assistance, the SWD will provide the assistance, for we will consider individual cases with special needs. Besides, the existing charges are quite inexpensive indeed, but we will review them from time to time. Also, in the coming review, I will reflect the views expressed by Members and examine what can be done to make the services more convenient to those parents.

MRS SELINA CHOW (in Cantonese): *President, concerning child care services, we heard that most parents demand greater flexibility in such services. I believe the Secretary is also aware that some mothers, particularly those living in remote areas, may have to work far away. However, at present, child care services provided by many organizations end at 7 pm, and even if voluntary agencies deploy their own resources to extend services, the services can at most be extended to 8 pm and not further because of the lack of resources. Will the Secretary consider the need of these mothers, particularly those living in remote areas? But I notice from Annex 1 provided by the Secretary that the number of places of extended-hours service offered by organizations in remote areas is smaller on the contrary. Will the authorities review the situation in a serious manner? For the situation in different districts sometimes varies, whereas parents living in remote areas may only pick up their children later in the evening. Will the Secretary be willing to review the situation positively to cope with the needs of individual districts and abandon the rigid approach of requiring all organizations concerned to close at 7 pm?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, regarding the Member's question, the incident that occurred recently in Tin Shui Wai has already drawn the attention of us all I think, among other issues, the provision of child care services is very important, and I thus agree entirely with the views of the Member. I will examine the issue comprehensively, when appropriate, to identify an approach with greater adaptability and flexibility. Particularly for new districts, if parents want to go out to work, who can take care of their children? If services provided are extended to the night-time but the quota of places is limited, what should be done?

As I have pointed out in the main reply, we are now approaching the issue from the neighbourhood front by encouraging them to help each other and promoting mutual-help child care services. The nature of the service is similar

to that of Mutual Aid Committees. To kick-start the project, we will provide seed money for refurbishment and facilities procurement, and so on, as an incentive.

I have also mentioned another aspect earlier. There are some very successful programmes under the Fund, one of the successful example most frequently quoted being the Joyful Home Laugh With Tolerance of Fu Cheong Estate in Sham Shui Po. Many pamphlets have been distributed to the public for reference. Under this programme, assistance rendered by single mothers and volunteers has been fully capitalized while we provide the environment and facilities required. How can such programmes be kick-started? We do not simply focus on providing child care services, we also aim to reinforce the mutual help network in the neighbourhood. Therefore, work in this respect will be reviewed continuously overall with a view to achieving better results.

MR LAU WONG-FAT (in Cantonese): *Madam President, I believe one of the reasons for young children being left at home alone is that many parents, particularly the new arrivals, do not know clearly that leaving their children at home alone is against the law, nor do they understand that this will cause great danger to their children. Will the Government inform us whether or not the authorities have plans to review the present situation and step up their efforts in promotion and education to raise by all means the awareness of parents of the seriousness of the problem?*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary, before answering the supplementary question, will you please put on your microphone so that Members can hear you clearly?

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, I am sorry. I have to thank Mr LAU for his question. Definitely, we accord high priority to promotion and education. Perhaps Members may notice that announcements are now broadcast on radio from time to time. Messages are also disseminated at the district level continuously, such as via the District Councils. Parents are reminded not to leave their children at home alone and informed of the services available in the neighbourhood, as well as the channels to seek assistance when necessary. We have disseminated the relevant messages. Madam President, I agree entirely that we should step up our efforts in education and promotion.

MS AUDREY EU (in Cantonese): *President, may I ask the Secretary, whether or not he has examined the possible connection between the problem of leaving children at home alone and the low wages and long working hours now prevail in Hong Kong society? Is the situation in Hong Kong obviously more serious than other places, and whether or not the problem I mentioned earlier has a bearing on it? In formulating policies, such as those on flexible working hours, minimum wage or standard working hours, will the Secretary also take into consideration factors leading to the problem of children being left at home alone?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, Ms EU's supplementary question is rather board and covers a lot of issues. First of all, we have not made any comparison with the overseas situation. But I believe the figures of Hong Kong may not necessarily be on the high side; I do not believe this will be the case. However, we should be vigilant and keep a watch on the situation, for we consider the occurrence of one single incident is already too many. It is very dangerous to leave children at home alone.

In the aftermath of these incidents, case analyses were done. It was discovered that some parents only left their children alone for a while. In some cases, it might be a problem of handover, for instance, the mother left home for work when the father was not yet back from work, and the child was left at home alone during this gap. There were cases where parents left their children at home to deal with their commitments on the Mainland. No matter how, we do not want to see these incidents happening.

Therefore, in this respect, first, as I mentioned in my reply to Mr LAU earlier, we will step up our efforts in education, promotion and the dissemination of messages. Second, for parents who need to go out for a couple of hours for unforeseeable reasons, it is important that we provide the relevant facilities, but mutual help in the neighbourhood is equally important for the well-being of children. If children can be taken care of temporarily by their neighbours, the problems of these parents can be solved at once. Since these parents have to leave home for emergency, they may not have the time to take their children to child care centres nearby, if available, not to mention when these centres are unavailable in the vicinity. Actually, a survey was conducted earlier on the reasons for the low utilization rate of services in

certain districts. In the districts concerned, services are provided, but parents do not use the services because they consider them inconvenient, either because of the opening hours or the locations. We will work on this.

Regarding the Member's question on working hours, that is, whether or not we will encourage employers to introduce greater flexibility in working hours, one of the tasks that the Labour Department will focus on this year is the promotion of family-friendly measures, which aims to advocate a more family-friendly approach in employment matters. For instance, if an employee has to leave the office for a while for emergency, will the employer allow him to do so? If the employer allows the employee to leave, the problem can be tackled at source. I wish to step up the education and promotion efforts in this respect to alleviate the problem.

MR TAM YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary mentioned the problem in Tin Shui Wai in his earlier reply. Since it is quite a long way to return to Tin Shui Wai, parents have to spend more time to return home. Regarding the child care service catering for the need of these parents, will the Secretary consider making use of the podium or vacant flats on lower floors in public housing blocks to provide such services? The Secretary mentioned earlier that funds would be offered to provide services in estates not too far away or even in the same housing estates or the same block, which would make it more convenient for parents to pick up their children and could capitalize on the community resources in the provision of child care services. Will a more flexible and adaptable approach be employed in this respect?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, I have to thank Mr TAM for his suggestion. This is indeed a very good and constructive suggestion. I emphasize, we will surely examine all possibilities from different perspectives and seize every single opportunity. When it comes to promoting employment, particularly the employment of female workers, support measures are of the utmost importance. Many women want to work but cannot do so because they have to look after their children.

Regarding the suggestion made by the Member earlier, that is, using the vacant flats on lower floors of public housing blocks to provide service, it is

subject to the Housing Department to decide whether the suggestion is feasible. Certainly, we will further examine the feasibility of the suggestion with the Secretary — the Secretary just happens to sit beside me. If it is really feasible, it will be an all-win situation. Why? For in that case, children do not have to move about but only stay in the building they live, while job opportunities will be created at the same time. One of the measures we are now thinking about is the community child minder services. Earlier on, during a discussion with certain women organizations, they asked me why the community child minder scheme had not been promoted. The concept in question can exactly achieve this function, but the availability of a base is the prerequisite. It is most important that a base where children can do their homework and being taken care of is made available. Mr TAM, we will examine the series of work and will not let go any single opportunity.

MISS CHAN YUEN-HAN (in Cantonese): *Madam President, the Secretary is most conversant with the situation, so no matter what we ask, he can give us an answer. However, I think he must have the power to push through policies, for the question raised by Mr TAM Yiu-chung's earlier is exactly a crucial factor.*

About a month ago, I visited Tin Shui Wai and the women organizations of the district brought up the concept of community child minders. But the crux of the issue is policy change, that is, whether vacant public housing flats can be used for this purpose. Yesterday, when I met with the Secretary, I cited the example of Shun Tin Estate where some \$900,000 had been allocated but owing to the unavailability of space, nothing could be done.

Therefore, to address the child care problem in Hong Kong, the Government should — indeed, this issue has been discussed since the 1980s, but more often than not, the Government would say that it would do something about it, just like what it said in the policy address this year Madam President, please let me go on for a few more sentences. In the policy address this year, it is said that the number of non-residential occasional child care places will be increased by 40 places, I welcome this measure. However, with a mere increase of 40 places, how many people in the territory can really benefit? I think, more often than not, the Government can identify the problem, but it is inept in changing the policies. Therefore, I support the reply given by the Secretary to Mr TAM Yiu-chung earlier, but

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): What is your supplementary question?

MISS CHAN YUEN-HAN (in Cantonese): *Yes, I am coming to it. How much time does the Secretary need to change this policy? We have been discussing this issue since the 1980s, does it mean that we have to wait for another decade? This is my question. The Secretary knows that this is an all-win proposal. If he can provide the hardware required for handling these problems, I believe many organizations will be willing to take up the task. This proposal will not only solve the employment problem, but also help the families and children concerned. So, why does the Government not pursue this proposal? The point is how long the Government has to wait before it decides to change this policy.*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, I will do my level best to discuss the issue with the Secretaries concerned from time to time — the Secretary overseeing housing matters, Secretary Eva CHENG is sitting right beside me now. Actually, after the incidents in Tin Shui Wai, we have attached great importance to support measures. Therefore, an opportunity has indeed arisen. We wish to seize this opportunity to capitalize on the impetus so gathered by pulling various parties together to address the issue properly. Not only the Government has its part to play, the wisdom and efforts of the community and Members should be pooled together to deal with the issue properly.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Has your supplementary question not been answered?

MISS CHAN YUEN-HAN (in Cantonese): *The Secretary has not answered the time required for doing so. Opinions have been put forth by various parties in the community now, and the concept is well developed*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): In a nutshell, you are asking the Secretary about a timetable.

MISS CHAN YUEN-HAN (in Cantonese): *Yes, thank you.*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): We will make an all-out effort to work on the issue expeditiously, and we hope we can.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Fifth question.

Crackdown on Red Light Jumping

5. **MRS SELINA CHOW** (in Cantonese): *The Finance Committee of this Council approved a provision in 2005 for increasing the number of red-light cameras from 28 to 96, and the works concerned were completed last year. In July this year, the Finance Committee approved again a provision for further increasing the number of such cameras to 155, and the works will be fully completed by 2010. Moreover, the penalty and driving-offence points for red-light jumping have been raised since the New Year's Day of 2006. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *of the number of red-light jumping black spots at present and, among them, the numbers of those black spots where red-light cameras have been installed, as well as those where such cameras have not been but will be installed;*
- (b) *whether it has plans to install more red-light cameras upon completion of the above works; and*
- (c) *whether there are other new measures to deter red-light jumping?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Cantonese): Madam President, there are currently 96 cameras operating at 131 camera housings on a rotational basis. In July this year, we sought the approval for funding of \$86.34 million by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council to implement Phase 3 expansion of the Red-light Camera System (RLCS). Upon completion of the project in 2010, there will be 59 additional cameras, increasing the total number of cameras from 96 to 155 (+61%). Also, 24 more housings will be added, increasing the total number of housings from 131

to 155 (+18%). By then, all camera housings will be installed with a camera, so that we can more effectively deter drivers from and prosecute them for red-light jumping.

My reply to the three parts of the main question is as follows:

- (a) We do not have a specific categorization for "red-light jumping black spot". Nevertheless, if site conditions permit, junctions with more than one traffic accident involving red-light jumping recorded within a year; and those junctions where the police have detected more prevalent red-light jumping activities during their daily duties, will normally be included for camera installation. With the 131 housings already in place and the 24 additional housings to be included in the Phase 3 Expansion Project, locations with more traffic accidents involving red-light jumping will mostly be covered.
- (b) It has been less than a year since the completion of the Expansion Project approved by the Finance Committee in 2005, and a further Expansion Project approved in July this year will commence next year. We will continue to monitor traffic accidents and prosecution trends closely, and will examine whether and how to further expand the RLCS in the light of its overall effectiveness upon the completion of the Expansion Project in 2010.
- (c) We attach great importance to road safety. Apart from strengthening enforcement, we are committed to combating red-light jumping and other inappropriate driving behaviour through various means, including legislation, as well as publicity and education.

In the past three years, the police instituted an average of 41 300 prosecutions against red-light jumping per year. Because of the substantial increase in the number of cameras since the end of last year, the number of prosecutions has increased in the current year. In the first nine months of this year, the number of prosecutions instituted was 56 064, which was about double that of the same period last year. The percentage of offences detected by red-light cameras is 91%.

On legislation, with effect from 1 January 2006, we have raised the driving-offence points (DOPs) for red-light jumping from three to five, and the fixed penalty from \$450 to \$600, to strengthen the deterrent effect. Under current legislation, if red-light jumping activities have contributed to traffic accidents, the police may, depending on the circumstances of the case, charge the driver with the offence of careless driving, dangerous driving or even causing death by dangerous driving. Upon conviction, the drivers are liable to incurring DOPs, fines, suspension of driving licence and imprisonment. To impose heavier penalties on drivers who endanger other people's lives because of their inappropriate driving behaviour and to enhance the deterrent effect, we plan to introduce legislative amendment to increase the term of imprisonment for the offence of causing death by dangerous driving. We also plan to make it a legislative requirement for drivers who have committed serious traffic offences (including drink driving, illegal motor racing and dangerous driving, and so on) and for repeat traffic offenders who have incurred 10 or more DOPs to attend driving improvement courses with a view to improving their driving attitude through education. The relevant bill will be submitted to the Legislative Council within the current Legislative Session.

On publicity and education, we have been working with the Road Safety Council to enhance road safety by publicity and education, instilling into drivers the concept of "smart driving with courtesy", as well as promoting a courteous and considerate driving attitude. We have also stepped up our publicity efforts against red-light jumping. We have been publicizing the message of complying with traffic signals through Announcement of Public Interests on television and radio and leaflets. Tunnel billboards and bus body advertisements are also mounted. We have also organized talks, seminars, thematic training courses and road safety workshops particularly for the transport trades to promote compliance with traffic signals and promote a responsible driving culture. Our publicity and education efforts will continue.

Finally, I must emphasize that we will continue to closely monitor traffic accidents and prosecutions in relation to red-light jumping and will review the effectiveness of our measures regularly. We will take further measures to combat red-light jumping as and when necessary.

MRS SELINA CHOW (in Cantonese): *The Secretary pointed out in part (c) of the main reply that the number of prosecutions instituted in the first nine months of this year was about double that of the same period last year, 91% of which was detected by red-light cameras. This is indeed a piece of good news. However, the Secretary stated right at the beginning of the main reply that the number of camera housings would increase from the present 131 to 155 for the installation of cameras. However, given the large number of road junctions throughout Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories, such an increase is only very small in proportion and is utterly inadequate. Furthermore, part (b) of the main reply seems to hint that a review would not be conducted by the Administration until 2010.*

The Secretary stated in part (a) of the main reply that for junctions with more than one traffic accident involving red-light jumping recorded within a year, and where the police have detected more prevalent red-light jumping activities President, I can see drivers jumping red-lights every day. May I ask the Secretary if she would consider expeditiously expanding the plan to cover junctions where there are exceptionally large numbers of crossroads junctions or vehicles jumping red-lights at very high speed?

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Cantonese): Madam President, perhaps I should give an account on how certain locations would be included in the project to install red-light cameras and camera housings. Firstly, just as Mrs Selina CHOW has said, we will consider the traffic accident situation so that junctions involving more than one traffic accident will be included in the project by all means. Secondly, as evident in some special junctions or multiple junctions with a number of traffic lights standing in a row, drivers approaching a traffic light showing green may attempt to quickly drive past it, hence making them accustomed to red-light jumping. Thirdly, we will also consider if the camera housings and red-light cameras are evenly distributed. Fourthly, depending on the site condition of certain locations, sometimes space is not available for any installation. Apart from these factors, we must also consider the actual situation.

As to the question raised by the Member just now concerning the expansion of the project, a further review will be conducted. If Members have any special queries or consider it necessary to install camera housings and red-light cameras at certain locations, they can simply relay their views to us through the relevant District Councils. We will be happy to consider their views. However, I do not consider this a cost-effective approach as there are over 1 700 signalized junctions territory-wide. For junctions having alternate directions, for instance, a crossroads junction where traffic travels in alternate directions, there may be as many as over 6 800 traffic light systems. Therefore, it would be impossible to install a red-light camera at each traffic light system. What is the best distribution then? I believe it would be best for us to continue reviewing the locations for installing red-light cameras having regard to the factors mentioned by me earlier and the views relayed to us through Honourable Members or the District Councils.

MR ANDREW CHENG (in Cantonese): *President, I agree that it will be too late to conduct the review in 2010. However, given that provision has been approved for the procurement of red-light cameras, so the Government may have to revisit the matter should an additional provision is requested. Nonetheless, I would like to inform the Secretary that 45 camera housings were vacant without any red-light camera, which can be called a bogus device. Such a bogus device is pretty useful in deterring drivers, and the installation cost of camera housings, I believe, will not be too high. May I ask the Secretary: First, what is the approximate cost of a camera housing? Second, although it may be difficult to make another bulk purchase of red-light cameras before 2010, but will the Secretary consider installing camera housings at 20% (about 300-odd) of the 1 700 major junctions mentioned earlier and equip them with the 155 red-light cameras on a rotational basis in future? I believe this is not only cost-effective, but will certainly achieve good progress in enhancing road safety. This is not to speak of the fact that we have done this before. President, this is the question which I wish to put to the Secretary.*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Cantonese): Madam President, I believe we have previously talked about this matter. Why are we installing the 155 camera housings in phases? Some opined that the drivers might begin to trust to luck if too many camera housings were installed, thinking that some of them are probably empty without any cameras, so the

deterrent effect will be undermined. After discussion, we have therefore decided to install the 155 camera housings at major locations and a review will surely be conducted.

In response to Mr CHENG's remark that our progress has been too slow, I wish to highlight the merits of installation by batches and in phases. During Phase 1 of the project, wet-film cameras were used, which are now replaced by digital ones. Even the cameras installed in Phase 2, the resolution is not as good as that of Phase 3. In other words, the implementation of the project in phases enables us to procure in the market cameras with the most advanced technology. For instance, while the old cameras were only able to monitor three lanes at a time, the newly procured ones can monitor at least four lanes at a time. For this reason, consideration should be given to cost-effectiveness as well.

Furthermore, I would like to mention one point. As the installation of housings will cause disturbances to traffic, engineering works will be carried out at 75 locations before new camera housings can be installed, during which one of the lanes will be closed for most of the time, if traffic conditions permit. In some busy areas, the necessary works may only be undertaken during holidays or non-peak hours, and cannot be implemented in a broadbrush manner territory-wide as the traffic will otherwise be affected. After weighing the pros and cons, we consider the present progress and approach desirable, and will surely continue with the review.

MR HOWARD YOUNG (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary advised in part (a) of the main reply that there is no specific categorization for "red-light jumping black spot". However, she later pointed out in part (c) that the number of prosecutions relating to red-light jumping has increased a lot. This may be attributable to the fact that the Secretary only considered locations where accidents have occurred as traffic black spots. May I ask the Secretary if the number of prosecutions was particularly high at locations installed with camera housings? Can the Administration categorize these locations as black spots and step up enforcement? Is this a feasible approach?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Cantonese): I am sure that the prosecution details will be carefully examined in conjunction with

the police. In fact, the police will also keep an eye on the so-called "traffic black spots" while on patrol. Although we do not have a specific categorization for "red-light jumping black spot", decisions on the location of red-light cameras will be made in consideration of where traffic accidents had occurred and the observations of the police.

Mr Howard YOUNG asked earlier if the police would be requested to heighten their attention on basis of actual experience. In this connection, I will make the request.

MR CHEUNG HOK-MING (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary pointed out clearly in part (c) of the main reply that the police had instituted an average of 40 000-odd prosecutions against red-light jumping in each of the past three years, whereas the number of prosecutions instituted in the first nine months of this year reached some 50 000. This shows that there has been an increase in the number of prosecutions. May I ask the Secretary how many among these 50 000-odd cases recorded in the past nine months involve careless driving, dangerous driving or dangerous driving causing death? How heavy was the penalty imposed by the Court in cases with casualties?*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary, you probably do not have such information at this moment, right?

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Cantonese): Yes. Madam President, can we give a reply to Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming's supplementary question in writing? (Appendix II)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Fine.

MS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): *Madam President, prevention is always better than cure. However, part (a) of the Secretary's main reply gives me an impression that only junctions with more than one traffic accident involving red-light jumping recorded within a year can be regarded as traffic black spots or locations warranting attention, and should therefore be installed with camera*

housings. I believe if we look at it from a wider perspective, the installation of more red-light cameras at certain signalized or crossroads junctions will actually enhance road safety overall. In fact, the percentage of road junctions where red-light cameras have been installed in Hong Kong is much lower than that of the neighbouring Shenzhen; in other words, the number of red-light cameras in Shenzhen far outnumbers that of Hong Kong. In that case, will the Secretary consider the suggestion made by a colleague earlier to either install red-light cameras at locations where traffic accident has never occurred or appropriately increase the number of camera housings, with a view to enhancing road safety?

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Cantonese): Madam President, our priority now is to complete the project for which provision has just been approved by the Legislative Council. The project will be put to tender in January 2008 for a period of about six months, under which the newly approved camera housings and cameras will be installed in phases within two years. As to the question of whether additional camera housings and cameras are required, we wish to conduct a review upon completion of the project. Certainly, we shall be able to tell from the number of prosecutions and opinions given by the police should the situation worsen.

However, I also wish to mention another point. Due to our stringent prosecution procedures and requirements, we have to grasp the latest technologies (for instance, cameras with high definition and resolution) from the market and lay down clear procedures as what we obtained may be used for prosecutions and admitted as evidence in Court. In relation to the requirements, the manufacturers concerned will carry out a series of tests and provide the relevant reports. So, I do not think that we can directly compare Hong Kong with any other place.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): We have spent more than 16 minutes on this question. Last supplementary question.

MR ANDREW CHENG (in Cantonese): *I wish to follow up the Secretary's reply to my supplementary question earlier regarding the understanding of the phrase "trust to luck". May I ask the Secretary if there is a concrete policy to*

look into the driving behaviour? For instance, as a driver, I had discussed with many other drivers I am not suggesting that the authorities should not equip the housings with cameras. Only that the installation should be made on a rotational basis so that drivers cannot tell when a camera has been installed. Furthermore, the Secretary has stated very clearly in part (c) of the main reply that the red-light jumping activities detected by cameras were about double. Apparently, these past practices do have merits as drivers will actually slow down on approaching certain locations, and they also realize that red-light jumping endangers their lives. In relation to these considerations, may I ask the Secretary to answer one question: Has the Administration conducted any concrete study on the "trust to luck"? If not, I genuinely consider that — which our colleagues have pursued earlier on — the so-called bogus devices certainly do more good than harm, and have a reasonable cost that is not at all high.

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Cantonese): Madam President, I believe the increase in the number of prosecutions is related to the substantial increase in the number of red-light cameras to 96. Of course, insofar as the empty camera housings are concerned, the proposed installation of housings with cameras on a rotational basis should achieve some deterrent effect. However, we have heard some people say that, subject to the availability of resources, we had better equip all housings with cameras. This is why provision has been approved by the Legislative Council for the installation of a total of 155 camera housings and 155 cameras, such that each camera housing will be equipped with a camera.

Our review of whether the number of camera housings should be further increased will continue, but I consider that equal importance should also be attached to publicity and education. For this reason, we will step up our effort as it is imperative for drivers to develop a responsible attitude in driving.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Last oral question.

Occupational Deafness Compensation

6. **MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG** (in Cantonese): *The retained surpluses of the Occupational Deafness Compensation Board (the Board) amounted to as*

much as \$396 million and \$368 million respectively in the past two financial years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) given that for an applicant to be eligible for compensation of occupational deafness, he should be suffering from sensorineural hearing loss of at least 40 decibels in each ear, whether it will relax the requirement to one ear;*
- (b) for those workers who had received compensation in previous years of amounts less than those calculated in accordance with the present provisions, whether it will make retrospective payments to them to make up for the differences; and*
- (c) whether it will consider raising the maximum amount of subsidy for hearing aids to allow recipients to purchase digital hearing aids, which are of higher quality but more expensive; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President,

- (a) According to the Occupational Deafness (Compensation) Ordinance (the Ordinance), the Board is responsible for providing compensation and other benefits, including the reimbursement of expenses for hearing assistive devices, to persons who have been exposed to noise in their working environment and have suffered noise-induced deafness. The Board also arranges a series of educational and publicity activities to enhance the awareness and alertness of employers and employees towards occupational deafness, and renders rehabilitation services to persons with occupational deafness.

In the light of views expressed by persons with occupational deafness and different quarters of the community, I am glad to point out here that the Labour Department has conducted a review of the scope of protection of the Ordinance and come up with an improvement proposal to extend the Ordinance to cover persons

who suffer from monaural hearing loss due to exposure to noise at work.

- (b) In the past, the Government reviewed and improved the scope of protection of the Occupational Deafness Compensation (ODC) Scheme on several occasions. Like other improvements to employees' rights and benefits, the revised compensation levels did not have any retrospective effect. We will adhere to this well-tried practice.
- (c) In accordance with the Ordinance, the Board will reimburse the expenses relating to hearing assistive devices incurred by persons with occupational deafness. The maximum amount of expenses to be reimbursed to an applicant shall not exceed \$18,000 in aggregate, while the amount of expenses to be reimbursed for the first time in respect of an application in relation to the acquisition and fitting of a hearing assistive device shall not exceed \$9,000. To ensure that a hearing assistive device meets the need of the applicant and the amount involved is reasonable, all applications for reimbursement will be scrutinized by the Occupational Deafness Medical Committee (Medical Committee) which comprises medical doctors and audiologists. Of the applications handled in recent years, the hearing assistive devices approved by the Medical Committee were usually of the digital type. In the light of the operational experience of the ODC Scheme, the Labour Department has also conducted a review of the ceiling of reimbursement of expenses in relation to hearing assistive devices. I am glad to inform Members that the Labour Department proposed to double the maximum amount of reimbursable expenses per applicant to \$36,000. We shall consult the Board on the improvement proposal by the end of this year and the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) thereafter.

MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): *President, it is indeed a long history of lobbying for compensation for workers with monaural hearing loss. If my memory serves me correctly, it has been 10 years. However, I am very happy to finally hear today the Secretary say that workers with monaural hearing loss are also eligible for compensation. This is, after all, better than a perpetual wait.*

However, President, the Secretary pointed out in the main reply that it is only a proposal that has yet to be finalized. According to the normal procedure, the proposal has to go through the Board, the LAB and thereafter the Legislative Council before it can be formally implemented. This will probably take at least the better part of a year if not the full. Although this is a piece of good news to these workers, they are a little upset as there is no reward in substance. Thus, may I ask the Secretary, first, whether the procedure can be speeded up so that they can obtain the compensation sooner? Moreover, given that in the past 10 years, many workers have already applied for compensation in respect of their monaural hearing loss, if this proposal is implemented, whether workers who have already applied for compensation can be included in the scope of protection so as not to exclude them?

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): You have asked two questions, which one do you wish the Secretary to answer?

MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): *President, the two questions are cogent. I hope the authorities can expeditiously offer protection to workers and to those who have already applied for compensation. I mainly wish to ask the Secretary: When will the proposal be implemented and how large is the scope of protection?*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): You may rephrase it as whether workers currently with monaural hearing loss are eligible to apply if the proposal can be speeded up?

MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): *Yes. If it can, more people will be able to obtain compensation.*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, I am equally concerned about these employees as Mr LEUNG is and hope that they can be better compensated sooner and their rights and benefits better covered. We will thus seize the time tightly, hoping to submit the proposal to the Board by end of this year and to the LAB thereafter. As this

policy involves legislative amendment, it has to go through a series of framework such as the Executive Council. We have to proceed according to the roadmap. In terms of time, we will seize the time and implement the proposal as soon as possible.

Mr LEUNG's second supplementary question is about the authorities' arrangement for those applicants whose applications for compensation were unsuccessful in the past. Certainly there will not be a retrospective effect because labour ordinances in general do not carry retrospective effect. However, to show our concern over this matter and our will to truly help the workers, we have forged ahead in doing what is right by allowing those several hundreds workers to be eligible for the revised benefits. This is our arrangement.

MS EMILY LAU (in Cantonese): *I am glad to hear the Secretary say that they have forged ahead with what is right. This is very important. May I ask why the Board has accumulated so much money? I thought it has obtained \$900-odd billion from Joseph YAM. The Board has accumulated \$300-odd million within two years. How come it has so much money? And how many people are currently waiting? As the Board has so much money, can it treat them better?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, thank Ms LAU for her supplementary question. It is, in fact, a good sign to have more money. Why? Because it indicates that the situation of occupational deafness is not only under control, but also improving. The ODC Fund in Hong Kong was set up about 10 years ago. Because of economic restructuring, many noisy industries have faded out. Our awareness has also heightened. All noisy industries have to be assessed and workers have to use ear plugs to protect their hearing. Education, publicity, enforcement and overall support have worked in a concerted manner. Thus, only about 2 300 people applied for compensation in the past 10 years. At present, there is only a score or more applications on average, which is not a large number. This is a good sign. Why? The smaller the number of applications indicates the better the situation is under control. Given the present robust and healthy financial status, we hold that the requirements can be relaxed a little to provide more benefits to workers.

MR TAM YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): *President, the Government amended the Ordinance in 2002 to designate four new noisy occupations for inclusion in the scope of protection. May I ask, from 2002 to present, whether the Government has further reviewed whether any new noisy occupation has surfaced and considered placing it within the scope of protection? It has been reported recently that the noise of animals in pet shops or music in fashion boutiques or CD shops is very high. Has the Secretary considered these aspects?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, I thank Mr TAM for his concern over the matter. We hold an open attitude to it and we will review the Ordinance from time to time. Members may well remember that in 2003, in relation to the eligible applicants, we added people whose main duty is playing mahjong inside a mahjong parlour, those controlling lighting or broadcasting recorded music in a discotheque, and those who are employed in an abattoir as eligible applicants. Over the past few years, only two applications involving abattoir workers were successfully granted compensations. There were also a few applications involving mahjong parlour employees; however, due to their hearing loss did not meet the required level, we could not process their applications. We will monitor the situation. For instance, as long as the noise at work of pet shops or any other new businesses reaches a dangerous level, we will consider adding those occupations, but the noise at work has to reach a certain level, that is, causing an impact of 85 decibels, and then we will take action. We will certainly do our job.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *As there is \$300-odd million in surplus or reserve, why is it not used for revising the compensation? It was stated in part (b) of the main reply that revisions were made in the past few years but they will not be used for making up for the differences in compensation levels of applicants in the past. However, hearing loss is permanent. It is all because of the fact that they lost their hearing at an earlier time that the authorities refused to make up for the difference in their compensation levels. Now, if the compensation level is revised, new applicants will be given more compensation, but previous applicants will be given less. Can the authorities make reference to the approach adopted in the revision of Civil Service entry salary points which also allowed incumbent civil servants to have salary increases, and make up for the difference in compensation levels of*

past applicants? As the Board has money, why can it not treat them better? After all, hearing loss is a matter affecting their whole life.

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, Mr LEE has looked at this matter from exactly the same angle as ours. As he only asked whether compensation would also be given to applicants with monaural hearing loss, my reply only focused on the situation of monaural hearing loss. In fact, other than compensation for monaural hearing loss, we also have a complementary measure. That is, in addition to compensation covering monaural hearing loss, subsidy is provided for hearing assistive devices which is proposed to be increased from \$18,000 to \$36,000. An additional point, which proves that we truly care about the workers, is that if a worker who is employed by a noisy industry has been compensated in the past, and he has to remain in that industry to make a living, we will invite him back for compensation again. Depending on whether his level of hearing loss has worsened, we will grant him the compensation he deserves. If he continues to work in that industry, we will invite him back; but if he has already left that industry Members may well understand that ODC is one-off and not granted on a monthly basis. We will thus invite him back for assessment if he is still employed in that industry. If his condition of hearing loss is found worsened, we will grant the compensation in accordance with the relevant standard.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *President, my question is, in fact, about whether applicants who were already given compensation in the past would be given additional compensation. I was not asking about workers who were still working in the industries concerned. Will the Secretary please provide a clear answer to this point?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, please pardon our difficulty in covering those employees because, be it the labour regulations or our general practice, Member may understand that it will give rise to considerable difficulties once a precedent is set.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): *Madam President, I am very happy to hear that the Government has finally improved the compensation under the*

Ordinance. In part (c) of the main reply, it was suggested to raise the ceiling of expenses to \$36,000. Since many hearing-impaired workers now have already bought the new digital hearing assistive devices, may I ask the Secretary to clarify whether he meant, as he has said just now, that people who have been using digital hearing assistive devices for medical need in this past period of time will be reimbursed for the expenses incurred? The Secretary said that consultation will be carried out on the proposal with the Board by the end of this year. It will be a long time until it is approved. May I know whether these people will be reimbursed the difference in expenses?

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, Dr KWOK is correct. People who have already been reimbursed \$18,000 will be given a top-up. In other words, they will be granted additional compensation until it reaches \$36,000 in aggregate. All in all, we will give the maximum reimbursement to each applicant who comes to us.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Oral questions end here.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Inventory of Hong Kong's Intangible Cultural Heritage and a "Hong Kong Memory" Central Database

7. **MS AUDREY EU** (in Chinese): *President, in the 2006-2007 policy agenda, the Government stated that it would compile a comprehensive inventory of Hong Kong's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and set up a central web-based "Hong Kong Memory" database. At the same time, some cities in the Pearl River Delta Region such as Foshan have been working actively in recent years on preserving ICH, including Lingnan culture, Cantonese operatic songs and story-singing, and so on. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *of the progress of work in compiling the above inventory, and the number of items that have been confirmed to be ICH hitherto;*
- (b) *of the details in setting up the above web-based database; and*

- (c) *whether it has exchanged views and co-operated with mainland provinces and cities regarding joint preservation of ICH; if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS (in Chinese): President,

- (a) To comply with Article 12 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which formally entered into force on 20 April 2006, Hong Kong is required to compile an inventory of ICH. Having considered that inventory-making of ICH is new to most countries in the world, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department commissioned The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) in October 2006 to conduct a pilot study before compiling a comprehensive ICH inventory. By making reference to the 78 items of ICH inscribed on the first provincial list of ICH of Guangdong promulgated by the Guangdong Government in 2006, the pilot study is intended to identify if there are relevant ICH items in Hong Kong and to highlight the important issues and give recommendations for conducting a territory-wide survey. HKUST submitted the pilot study report to the Government in mid-October 2007. According to the report findings, 34 out of the 78 items listed by Guangdong have existed and developed in Hong Kong. The Government is examining the report and will consider commissioning an agency to conduct a territory-wide survey and compile a comprehensive inventory with a view to enhancing the preservation and promotion of ICH in the territory.
- (b) In response to the UNESCO's "Memory of the World" Programme, the Government and The Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) have jointly launched the "Hong Kong Memory" Project for the preservation of Hong Kong's historical records through digitization. Through the establishment of a multimedia website, the Project will provide one-stop access, free and open to the general public, to digital collections and records covering a wide range of subjects on Hong Kong's history. With a funding of \$80 million from HKJC, the Centre of Asian Studies of the University

of Hong Kong has been commissioned to develop the contents and system infrastructure of the "Hong Kong Memory" platform. The Working Group on the Project has been liaising with libraries, museums, archives, and so on, for the collection, preservation and presentation of relevant documentaries in digitized format. The web-based platform will be implemented in phases and the first test version will be available at the soonest in 2010.

- (c) Preservation of ICH is one of the discussion items at the Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Co-operation, a forum organized annually by Guangdong Province, Hong Kong and Macao. The three places are actively working together to prepare for the submission to the UNESCO to apply for the inscription of Cantonese opera on the "Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity". The three places also join hands to promote ICH related studies, such as holding a five-day international symposium on Cantonese opera in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum in September 2007. We will continue to strengthen collaboration with the other two places on the study and preservation of ICH through the Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Co-operation Summit.

Continuing Education Fund

8. **MR JAMES TO** (in Chinese): *President, the English Language College closed down suddenly on 21 September this year. Some affected students have approached me for assistance regarding matters about the recovery of tuition fees, subsidies under the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) and their failure to complete the courses concerned. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *apart from publishing on the related websites information on recognized courses and course providers, whether the authorities have increased the channels for releasing such information to facilitate easier public access to the latest information;*
- (b) *apart from the improvement measures proposed at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Manpower on 17 May this year,*

whether the authorities will consider implementing other measures to enhance the strictness of the vetting process for the CEF-recognized courses, particularly over the monitoring of the financial situation of the relevant providers and quality assurance of the courses; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

- (c) *apart from issuing written warnings to providers which operate the CEF courses in inappropriate ways and de-registering the courses concerned from the list of "reimbursable courses", whether the authorities will consider examining, in conjunction with relevant government departments, the formulation of other penalties with deterrent effect against such malpractices?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Chinese): President,

- (a) To safeguard the interest of learners and to facilitate their selection of courses registered under the CEF (CEF courses) that suit their needs, the Office of CEF (OCEF) has all along uploaded onto the CEF website detailed information about the CEF courses, as well as courses which have been de-registered from the CEF. Such information is also updated on a regular basis. The CEF applicants are encouraged to visit the CEF website for the latest information, or ring up the OCEF for any enquires before enrolling into any of the CEF courses.

To facilitate more expeditious dissemination of information on courses which have been de-registered due to non-compliance with the conditions of approval, the Administration will further strengthen the mechanism for releasing such information. In future, we will make known publicly our decision to de-register any CEF course through the issue of press release, in addition to updating the CEF website in the first instance, to remind the public of the need to be careful in their selection of the CEF courses.

We have since early November this year launched a new series of publicity programme, including Announcement of Public Interest on television, mini-documentaries, and so on, to remind the public

that they should find out more about individual CEF courses and make more comparison before they enrol into any particular courses.

- (b) The Administration has maintained the quality of the CEF courses and safeguarded learners' interest through the established assessment and quality assurance mechanism. Course providers wishing to apply for registration of their courses under the CEF are required to submit their applications to the Hong Kong Council of Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) for assessment. The HKCAAVQ will examine as to whether a course fall within the specified domains¹ and look into such areas as course content, the instructor's qualifications, teaching methodology, quality assurance policy, procedures, and so on, having regard to the competency requirements and other guidelines as suggested by industry representatives. The HKCAAVQ will then make a recommendation to the Administration as to whether an application for course registration under the CEF should be approved.

Given that the nature of the above assessment is different from accreditation², the existing process that focuses primarily on the content and delivery of individual courses may not have accorded sufficient emphasis to examining the overarching governance of and quality assurance mechanism adopted by the course providers. Against this background, the Administration has, following the latest review on the CEF completed in May 2007, proposed an improvement through the introduction of the Qualifications Framework and new courses to be registered under the CEF henceforth will have to undergo a formal accreditation procedure.

As a matter of fact, the Administration has also been monitoring the CEF courses closely to ensure that they are operating in compliance with the approval conditions. The CEF courses are

¹ As present, the eight specified domains under the CEF are business services, financial services, logistics, tourism, creative industry, design, language and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills for the workplace.

² Accreditation is a quality assurance process whereby the academic or vocational standard of the course and other aspects including the governance and management structure of the provider, the quality assurance mechanism, teaching, supporting facilities, and so on, will be thoroughly examined.

subject to regular audit inspections, including surprise inspections, by the HKCAAVQ to see to it that they are operating up to the quality and standards required. Besides, a "risk-based approach" has also been adopted in conducting inspections so as to further enhance their effectiveness.

- (c) The Administration actively follows up suspected cases of non-compliance with the CEF approval conditions or other problematic cases. A course provider who has not operated its CEF course(s) in compliance with the CEF approval conditions is first issued with a warning. Thereafter, the Administration will continue to follow up the case and monitor the situation closely. If the non-compliance continues, we will consider de-registering the relevant courses. In the event that a course provider is found to be involved in illegal operations such as conspiracy to default, bribery, and so on, the OCEF will refer the case to the police or the Independent Commission Against Corruption for necessary follow-up action.

Green Lunch

9. **MISS CHOY SO-YUK** (in Chinese): *President, regarding the promotion of "green lunch" in schools, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *whether the authorities have, when promoting "green lunch" arrangements to school sponsors, principals and teachers responsible for catering arrangements, helped them understand how to choose reliable green lunch box suppliers, so as to prevent them from being deceived by unscrupulous suppliers who abuse the term "green"; if they have, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (b) *whether it will draw up mandatory measures to require schools to use reusable food containers and cutlery or adopt the practice of centralized lunch distribution when supplying lunch; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*

- (c) *whether it will review the existing licensing regime for lunch box suppliers to include the provision of genuinely "green" lunch as one of the licensing conditions;*
- (d) *whether it will review the effectiveness of the authorities' work in promoting "green lunch" in primary schools; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (e) *whether it will draw up specific work targets and timetable for promoting "green lunch" (including the adoption of the practices of centralized lunch distribution and washing containers on site by more than 70% of schools in the 2008-2009 school year, and the implementation of such practices across the board in the 2009-2010 school year), in order to achieve the target of "zero waste" for school lunch; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and*
- (f) *given that the authorities have put in an enormous amount of resources to publicize healthy eating and drawn up guidelines to request the reduction of the sale of "junk food" in schools, whether the authorities have assessed if the complementary measures for promoting "green lunch" are adequate; if they are not adequate, whether the authorities have assessed if they have adopted a double standard in performing these two tasks; if an assessment has been made, of the results?*

SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT (in the absence of Secretary for the Environment) (in Chinese): President,

- (a) The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has been working closely with the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) and the Education Bureau to promote green lunch to schools and parents. Efforts have also been made to promote and disseminate the green lunch message by formulating guidelines, holding talks, distributing promotional leaflets and video. The EPD estimates that the number of primary schools using disposable lunch boxes in the territory dropped from 75% in 2004 to about 42% in 2006, a sign that our efforts are yielding results.

Given the possibility that some lunch box suppliers may deliver "green" lunch services in name only, the EPD conducted a survey in mid-2007 by issuing questionnaires to all lunch box suppliers in the territory. Based on the findings of the survey, the EPD updated the list of green lunch suppliers. Suppliers on the list can provide catering service to schools including centralized lunch distribution and provision of lunch packed in reusable containers. Suppliers who use polypropylene containers, commonly known as "green" containers, have to make specific arrangements to recycle the lunch boxes.

The EPD, ECC and Education Bureau have jointly produced a new promotion video, which was distributed in early September to all kindergartens as well as primary and secondary schools in the territory. The video provides comprehensive information on green lunch including experience sharing by schools which have successfully adopted green lunch practice. The video can help other schools understand the definition, requirements, implementation methods as well as the environmental and other benefits of green lunch. Such promotional and educational initiatives can reduce the chance of schools being misled by unscrupulous lunch box suppliers.

- (b) The Government will continue to provide schools with appropriate guidelines in order to encourage schools to adopt a more environmentally-friendly lunch practice.

In light of the experience and information gathered in recent years, especially the results of the above mid-2007 survey, the EPD replaced the existing guideline with the "Guideline for Schools to Implement Green Lunch" in October this year. The new guideline sets a clearer direction and provides detailed suggestions on implementing green lunch. It also provides schools with more comprehensive information to prevent them from being misled by unscrupulous lunch box suppliers. Newly compiled lists of green lunch suppliers and disposable lunch box recyclers are appended to the guideline for schools' reference. Such information will be updated from time to time. The EPD hopes that the formulation of guidelines will facilitate schools to further implement green lunch.

- (c) The EPD will maintain close liaison with lunch box suppliers with a view to promoting green lunch. To enable schools to make informed choices, the EPD will continue to help schools understand more about green lunch practice and identify genuine green lunch suppliers through drawing up guidelines and launching related publicity and education campaigns.
- (d) The EPD will continue to gather information from schools, lunch box suppliers and disposable lunch box recyclers in order to review the effectiveness of these initiatives on an ongoing basis.
- (e) To achieve the waste reduction target, the EPD will continue to collaborate with the Education Bureau to further implement green lunch in schools through publicity and education. As schools and parents know more about this issue, and the lunch box suppliers are taking steps to meet the demand, it is expected that the number of schools adopting green lunch practice will continue to increase.
- (f) Relevant government departments have actively encouraged schools to promote healthy and green lunch. They help schools to make the right choice through guidelines, education and publicity. Such efforts have proven to be effective as seen from the declining trend in the use of disposable lunch boxes in schools in the past few years.

Medical and Dental Benefits for Senior Civil Servants

10. **PROF PATRICK LAU:** *President, will the Government inform this Council of the number of senior civil servants who were provided, in each of the past five years, with free medical and dental benefits by the Government and the relevant average cost per person?*

SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE: President, medical and dental benefits are provided to civil service eligible persons (that is, civil servants/pensioners and their eligible dependants, and other eligible persons) through the facilities managed by the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Department of Health (DH). Civil servants, irrespective of grades and ranks,

pensioners and all other eligible persons are entitled to the same level of medical and dental benefits.

The total strength of the Civil Service and the costs relevant to the provision of civil service medical and dental benefits for the past five years are set out below:

	2002- 2003	2003- 2004	2004- 2005	2005- 2006	2006- 2007
Strength of the Civil Service ¹	173 029	169 100	163 039	157 300	155 019
Cost of services provided by the HA (\$M) ²	Not available	1,885.0	1,828.0	1,859.0	1,999.0
Cost of services provided by the DH (\$M) ²	576.9	469.9 ³	437.8	455.0	484.4
Revenue foregone for services provided by the HA (\$M) ⁴	168.1	248.8	270.7	295.4	301.2

- 1 There are no readily available statistics on the number of other eligible persons (namely eligible dependants of civil servants, pensioners and their eligible dependants, and other eligible persons).
- 2 The overall cost of services (estimated cash expenditure) provided by the HA/DH to all civil service eligible persons.
- 3 General out-patient clinics were transferred from the DH to the HA with effect from July 2003.
- 4 The overall revenue foregone for services provided by the HA to all civil service eligible persons.

Dental Grants for Recipients of CSSA

11. **DR KWOK KA-KI** (in Chinese): *President, under the current Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme, recipients who are old, disabled or medically certified to be in ill health are given a special grant for dental treatment (dental grant) to cover the actual expenses of the relevant treatment. They are required to approach dental clinics designated by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) for an estimate of cost and then submit the estimate to the SWD Social Security Field Unit in their own districts to apply for the grant. Some elderly, dentists and front-line social workers have relayed to*

me that the SWD staff did not inform the above recipients that, upon receiving approval of the dental grants, they could choose to turn to registered dentists of non-designated clinics for the same treatment service, thus causing great inconvenience to the recipients. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) in each of the past five years, of the number of CSSA recipients who chose non-designated dental clinics for treatment upon receiving approval of dental grants and the amount of grants involved;*
- (b) whether it will consider enhancing public education or revising internal guidelines, to let the recipients know that they may choose non-designated dental clinics for the same treatment;*
- (c) whether it will consider working with professional bodies such as the Hong Kong Dental Association Limited to examine ways to improve the existing mechanism, including ensuring the estimates of dental costs to be reasonable and accepting the estimates provided by registered dentists of non-designated clinics, so as to facilitate recipients to seek treatment from registered dentists in their neighbourhood for treatment; and*
- (d) whether currently it has plans to give dental grants to other types of CSSA recipients such as children?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Chinese): President, the CSSA Scheme provides a safety net to meet the basic needs of those who cannot support themselves financially. It is non-contributory but means-tested. Under the CSSA Scheme, the dental grant for eligible recipients aims to cover the actual expenses or the ceiling amount of the dental treatment items (dentures, crowns, bridges, scaling, fillings and root canal treatment) set by the SWD in consultation with the Department of Health (DH).

My replies to the specific questions are set out below:

- (a) The SWD does not maintain statistics on the provision of dental treatment services for CSSA recipients by non-designated clinics.

- (b) At present, in accordance with internal guidelines of the SWD and "A Guide to Comprehensive Social Security Assistance" published for CSSA recipients, both have clearly specified that a CSSA recipient is free to call on a registered dentist of a non-designated clinic for the same service after he/she has received an estimate of cost from a SWD-designated clinic (designated clinic).

In general, should the recipients choose to approach the non-designated clinic for the service, the maximum grant payable by the SWD would be the cost of estimate provided by the designated clinic.

The SWD staff will brief CSSA recipients on the above arrangements when processing their applications for the dental grant. Moreover, the SWD will keep in close contact with the designated clinics to ensure that the staff of these clinics are well aware that a CSSA recipient is free to call on a registered dentist of a non-designated clinic for the same service upon receiving approval of the dental grant from the department.

- (c) Designated clinics are all operated by voluntary agencies on a non-profit-making basis. Dental treatment services are provided to CSSA recipients at a reasonable charge. At present, the ceiling amount of the dental grant and the adjustment mechanism are set by the SWD in consultation with the DH. Survey on dental fees is regularly conducted to ensure that the cost of estimate provided as well as the dental fees charged by the designated dental clinics are maintained at a reasonable level.
- (d) Under the CSSA Scheme, CSSA recipients who are old, disabled or medically certified to be in ill health are eligible for dental grant. As for able-bodied CSSA recipients (including able-bodied children), the SWD may consider, depending on the merit of individual cases, a discretionary payment of dental grant to cover the expenses. In addition, the Government provides free emergency dental services to the public. The School Dental Care Service administered by the DH also provides preventive dental services to, and promote good oral hygiene among, all primary school children in Hong Kong.

Supply of Secondary School Places in Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung

12. **MR ALBERT CHAN** (in Chinese): *President, recently, many residents in Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung have reflected to me that because of insufficient secondary school places in these districts, quite a number of secondary students need to travel long distance to attend schools in other districts. Such students have to spend long hours in travelling every day, and the travel expenses concerned impose a heavy burden on their parents. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *of the respective numbers of secondary students in Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung who attended schools in other districts in each of the past three school years;*
- (b) *of the respective numbers of vacant classrooms in secondary schools in Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung in each of the past three years; and*
- (c) *whether it will consider utilizing the vacant classrooms in the districts concerned to operate more classes, so as to ameliorate the situation of secondary students from these districts attending schools in other districts; if so, of the details; if not, of the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Chinese): President, the number of students who attend schools in other districts cannot serve as an indicator of whether the provision of school places in a certain district is sufficient. This is because for secondary school places allocation, whether under or outside the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System, parents may, at their own discretion, make arrangements for their children to study outside their place of residence. Some students have to travel to another district to attend schools because their families, due to various reasons, may have moved away from the district where their primary schools are located. For students newly moved to developing areas (including Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung), we have been assisting them to enrol at schools with vacancies in the district taking into account their actual circumstances.

From the planning perspective, we can make reference to the Government's school places allocation mechanism to assess whether the supply of secondary school places can largely meet the demand. Under the SSPA System, the whole territory is divided into 18 school nets. Tin Shui Wai is in the Yuen Long school net, while Tung Chung is in the Islands school net. The school net to which a participating Primary Six (P6) student belongs is determined by the physical location of the primary school the student attends. If the demand for school places exceeds the supply in a school net, school places will be borrowed from the neighbouring school nets with surplus places to meet the demand. Therefore, each school net not only includes all secondary schools physically located in that district but also some schools in its neighbouring districts.

- (a) In the past three school years, the number of P6 students studying in the Yuen Long school net (including Tin Shui Wai) and the Islands school net (including Tung Chung) but allocated subsidized Secondary One (S1) places in other districts through the SSPA System is generally small. The other districts involved are also mainly in the vicinity of the school nets concerned. The relevant figures are shown in the table below:

<i>District where primary schools of P6 students located</i> ^{Note 1}	<i>School year for S1 entry</i>	<i>No. of students allocated subsidized S1 places</i> ^{Note 2} <i>in other districts at central allocation (% of such students in the total number of participating students)</i>	<i>Other districts involved in general</i>
Yuen Long (including Tin Shui Wai)	2004-2005	880 (10%)	Tuen Mun
	2005-2006	480 (6%)	Tuen Mun
	2006-2007	580 (7%)	Tuen Mun
Islands (including Tung Chung)	2004-2005	60 (5%)	Hong Kong region
	2005-2006	50 (4%)	Hong Kong region
	2006-2007	40 (3%)	Hong Kong region

Note 1: The above figures are calculated on a school net basis. We do not have statistics on a town basis (such as Tin Shui Wai, Tung Chung).

Note 2: It includes S1 places provided by public sector schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools taking part in the SSPA.

- (b) The situation of vacant classrooms in secondary schools in Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung in the past three years is as follows:

<i>School Year</i>	<i>Tin Shui Wai</i>		<i>Tung Chung</i>	
	<i>No. of Vacant Classrooms</i>	<i>No. of Schools Involved</i> ^{Note 3}	<i>No. of Vacant Classrooms</i>	<i>No. of Schools Involved</i> ^{Note 3}
2004-2005	11	3	49	5
2005-2006	27	2	32	5
2006-2007	18	2	19	5

Note 3: Schools involved are developing schools, the class structures of which are not complete.

- (c) The Government has all along been concerned about the supply and demand of school places. In the past, we did approve additional classes to accommodate the actual demand of school places in various districts. In the 2007-2008 school year, we approved 16 and one additional classes for secondary schools in Yuen Long and Islands Districts respectively to meet the demand of school places. We would continue to explore the possibility of operating additional classes to improve the situation. At present, there are not many vacant classrooms in Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung. To decide whether to operate additional classes using the existing vacant classrooms, we have to consider various factors, including the need to reserve sufficient number of classrooms in developing schools for accommodating students who progress from the junior levels to senior levels. Furthermore, to facilitate the implementation of the New Senior Secondary academic structure, these schools may have to adjust the number of their classes at the senior levels. We have to reserve classrooms to enable students to complete their secondary education in the same school as far as possible.

Making Government Forms Available Electronically

13. **DR DAVID LI:** *President, regarding the government forms used by businesses and the general public, the Government reported to the Panel on*

Information Technology and Broadcasting of this Council in July this year that a total of 2 509 out of 2 588 government forms were available through the Internet. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the number of government forms that have been adapted to take advantage of the electronic delivery channel, and among them, the respective numbers of those adapted for electronic form-filling alone and those adapted for both electronic form-filling and electronic submission;*
- (b) of the target number of government forms that it intends to make available for both electronic form-filling and electronic submission and the timetable for achieving such target;*
- (c) whether it has formulated a strategy to maintain forms that are submitted electronically in the electronic form instead of in a paper-base mode; if not, of the reasons for that; and*
- (d) the expected savings, resulting from the reduction in paper consumption and improvement in operational efficiency, that could be achieved by meeting the target in (b) and adopting e-solutions for processing and maintaining the forms concerned?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in the absence of Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development): President, regarding the question raised by Dr the Honourable David LI, my reply is as follows:

- (a) Out of the over 2 500 government forms which are available online, more than 1 200 can be submitted electronically via online services or as attachments to e-mails. We do not have statistics on the number of forms which only cater for electronic form-filling.
- (b) Over 95% of all government forms are available online. Only a small percentage of forms is not currently accessible through the Internet. They mainly include those that are issued by departments to specific applicants/companies for operational

reasons, mostly with pre-filled personal/company data; saleable forms that are not normally used by the general public; and forms related to statutory declarations.

Some online government forms are not currently provided with electronic submission option mainly due to legal or procedural requirement or low usage. For example, some forms have to be submitted in person for statutory declaration and others are required to be submitted together with original copy of supporting documents.

We encourage bureaux/departments to make forms available online and to provide an electronic submission option wherever feasible. We will continue to liaise with the concerned bureaux/departments to review the feasibility of overcoming existing legal, procedural or business related problems so as to further improve beyond the 95% rate. It should nevertheless be recognized that there would always be a small proportion of forms which may not be available through the Internet for good reasons.

- (c) Forms submitted electronically are normally kept in the electronic databases of individual bureaux/departments. Whether hard copy print-outs are required is dependant on the business process and operational procedures of the bureau/department concerned. If the forms are required to be kept as evidence of the business transaction, bureaux/departments are required to comply with the record keeping requirements by printing and filing a hard copy. The Government is in the process of formulating a new strategy and relevant policies on using electronic means to manage information and records.
- (d) We have no statistics on the amount of savings in terms of paper consumption and efficiency gains in respect of the currently available online forms. Since each form is underpinned by specific business processes with different degree of potentials for automation and efficiency gain, the benefits in adopting e-solutions for the processing and maintenance of forms will have to be assessed on case-by-case basis.

Review of Deposit Protection Scheme

14. **MR FREDERICK FUNG** (in Chinese): *President, as the Deposit Protection Scheme (DPS) has been implemented for more than one year, will the Government inform this Council whether it has reviewed the various aspects of the Scheme, including the level of public awareness, the impact on the way in which deposits are placed, whether public confidence in depositing money in small and medium banks has grown, whether the total amount of deposits placed in small and medium banks has increased as a result, the situation of banks passing on to depositors the costs of the contributions to the Deposit Protection Scheme Fund (DPS Fund), and the areas in need of improvement (for example, whether the compensation limit of \$100,000 per depositor should be increased, introducing a mechanism whereby the compensation limit will be adjusted in line with inflation and changes in the relevant exchange rates, and whether the coverage of the Scheme should be extended, and so on)?*

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Chinese): President, the DPS currently in place in Hong Kong is established under the Deposit Protection Scheme Ordinance (Cap. 581). It seeks to contribute to the stability of the banking system through the provision of a measure of protection to depositors. Since its inception on 25 September 2006, the DPS has been operating smoothly. The DPS Fund amounted to \$374 million as at end March this year and is expected to reach the target amount of \$1.3 billion as scheduled three years later. The DPS is administered by the Hong Kong Deposit Protection Board (DPB) which performs its functions through the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. According to the existing DPS, in case of failure of a member bank, the DPS will pay compensation up to a maximum of \$100,000 to each eligible depositor.

Since establishment, the DPB has been closely monitoring the effectiveness of the DPS through various means, including meetings, simulation tests and opinion surveys. The DPB has commissioned the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong to conduct two territory-wide opinion surveys. The findings of the latest survey conducted in June 2007 show that of the 1 000 respondents:

- 67% were aware of the implementation of the DPS, with 76% of those knew that the maximum protection limit for each eligible depositor is \$100,000;

- about 50% considered that bank deposits had become more secure after introduction of the DPS;
- 65% indicated that they had greater confidence in placing deposits with small and medium banks; and
- 29% who had deposits of over \$100,000 at a single bank indicated that they had plans to split their deposits into different banks.

It can be seen from the findings that the public has general awareness of the DPS. The DPS has not only enhanced public confidence in placing deposits with small and medium banks, it may also affect the way some people place their deposits.

Since variation in the amount of deposits placed with small and medium banks may be caused by many different factors, including socio-economic condition and performance of individual banks, and the DPB and small and medium banks have not conducted any survey on the reasons for depositors to place their deposits, the DPB is unable to assess the impact of the DPS on the deposits placed with small and medium banks.

Owing to intense competition in the local banking industry, we believe that banks will take full account of the impacts to be brought about by passing cost onto depositors. Up till now, the DPB has not received any comment on or complaint about banks passing cost of the DPS onto depositors.

The DPS has been operating effectively for more than a year since its launch on 25 September 2006. The maximum protection limit under the existing DPS, that is, \$100,000 for each eligible depositor, has been determined after extensive consultation. With this protection limit, the DPS is expected to provide full protection to more than 80% of depositors. This ratio is in line with international standard. According to the results of the recent simulation tests conducted by the DPB and a number of member banks from the retail sector, more than 80% of depositors are fully covered by the DPS as at present. The DPB therefore considers there no need to adjust the DPS for the time being. The DPB will continue to closely monitor the effectiveness of the DPS. It will review and adjust the relevant arrangements under the scheme, including the limit and scope of protection, according to the need of the community at an appropriate time.

Income from Stamp Duty on Stock Sales and Purchases

15. **MR SIN CHUNG-KAI** (in Chinese): *President, will the Government inform this Council of the estimated and actual income from stamp duty on stock sales and purchases in each of the past five tax years?*

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Chinese): *President, the Administration's estimated and actual receipts from stamp duty on stock transactions in the past five financial years are listed below:*

	<i>Original Estimate (\$m)</i>	<i>Revised Estimate (\$m)</i>	<i>Actual Collection (\$m)</i>
2006-2007	7,350.0	13,600.0	15,027.1
2005-2006	6,550.0	7,050.0	8,129.4
2004-2005	6,100.0	6,200.0	6,388.0
2003-2004	3,350.0	5,550.0	6,018.9
2002-2003	5,205.0	3,000.0	3,088.2

Monitoring Contents of Advertisements in Electronic Media

16. **MR LAU KONG-WAH** (in Chinese): *President, regarding complaints about the contents of advertisements, will the Government inform this Council whether it knows:*

- (a) *the number of complaints about the contents of advertisements received last year by the relevant authorities and, among such complaints, the number of those involving advertisements in the electronic media;*
- (b) *the time normally taken by the relevant authorities to handle the complaints, and whether they will advise the electronic media organizations concerned to discontinue the broadcast of advertisements with misleading or misrepresented information; if so, how long it usually takes to issue advice after a complaint is received; and*

- (c) *whether advertisements in the electronic media are regularly monitored; if not, whether it is only upon receipt of complaints or reports from the public that the relevant authorities will take enforcement actions?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in the absence of Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development) (in Chinese): President, complaints lodged by members of the public about contents of advertisements are mainly dealt with by the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA) and the Consumer Council. The former is mainly responsible for advertisements in the electronic media and film-related advertisements, whereas the latter focuses on advertisements on newspapers, magazines, promotional posters, leaflets and those on the Internet and refers the advertisements concerned to the corresponding organizations. If the advertisements involve misleading or misrepresented information, the Consumer Council will recommend the concerned organization to take appropriate action. Nonetheless, depending on the content and nature of the advertisements, other government departments and public bodies may also handle complaints from the public direct.

My reply to the question is as follows:

- (a) In the past year (that is, from 1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007), the TELA handled a total of 231 complaints about the contents of advertisements, of which 151 (65%) involved advertisements in the electronic media, whereas the Consumer Council received a total of 62 complaints about the contents of advertisements, of which nine (15%) involved advertisements in the electronic media.
- (b) As the executive arm of the Broadcasting Authority (BA), the TELA will conduct an investigation upon receipt of a complaint about broadcasting matters. If the complaint does not involve complicated processes of investigation and collection of evidence, the TELA will inform the complainant of the results within three to eight weeks. For cases suspected of contravening the relevant Codes of Practice, including cases of misleading or misrepresented content of the advertisements, they will be referred to the BA and

its Complaints Committee according to the Broadcasting Authority Ordinance. The licensee concerned should be allowed to make representations while expert opinion will be sought as necessary. In order to verify whether the advertisement contains misleading or misrepresented information, such cases may require longer processing time, usually four months.

Before the complaint is substantiated, the BA does not have the authority to direct or advise a licensee to discontinue the broadcast of the advertisement concerned. Nevertheless, the BA will reach the determination and inform the licensee of its decision once the advertisements are verified to contain misleading or misrepresented information and have breached the Television and Radio Codes of Practice. Upon receipt of the notice of the BA's decision in relation to its non-compliant advertisement, the licensee will make rectification or discontinue the broadcast on its own immediately.

- (c) The editorial responsibility lies with television and radio licensees. They should ensure their programmes and advertisements abide by the Code of Practice issued by the BA. At present, some 350 channels, mostly broadcasting around the clock, are offered by the television and radio broadcasting licensees in Hong Kong. In view of this, the BA and TELA have adopted a complaint-driven regulatory approach in regulating the broadcasting standards of the licensees. From time to time, the BA will publicize on the various complaint avenues available to arouse public awareness.

Post-2008 Regulatory Arrangements for Electricity Market

17. **MR FREDERICK FUNG** (in Chinese): *President, the Government is discussing with the two power companies the post-2008 regulatory arrangements. It has been reported that the progress of the negotiations has been slow because of the substantial differences in stance between the Government and the two power companies over such matters as the term of the agreement, the rate of permitted return and the linking of the rate of return to emission caps. When attending a meeting of this Council's Panel on Economic Development last month, the Secretary for the Environment indicated for the first time that should no agreement be reached with the two power companies by*

the end of this year, the Government would regulate, by legislative means, matters relating to the electricity supply by the two power companies. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the latest progress of the discussions with the two power companies on the post-2008 regulatory arrangements, including the consensus reached so far on such matters as the regulatory framework, the rate of permitted return, the mechanism for setting electricity tariff, emission reduction targets, the introduction of competitors and the use of renewable energy to generate electricity, and how they compare with the recommendations in the consultation paper on Future Development of the Electricity Market in Hong Kong (Stage II Consultation);*
- (b) of the details of regulation by legislative means, including the legislative timetable and the areas to be covered by the legislation; whether the preliminary legislative work has started; if not, how it ensures that the legislative process can be completed before the expiry of the existing Scheme of Control Agreements (SCAs) at the end of next year, so as to deal with the scenario in which no agreement on the new regulatory arrangements can be reached; and*
- (c) apart from regulation by legislative means, what other contingency measures are in place to deal with the scenario in which no agreement can be reached?*

SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT (in the absence of Secretary for the Environment) (in Chinese): President,

- (a) The Government and the power companies have already discussed in detail the new post-2008 SCAs. However, up to this point in time, the two power companies have yet to accept the core terms put forth by the Government for the new SCAs, that is, shortening the duration of the SCAs from the existing 15 years to 10 years, with an option for the Government to extend for five years after review; lowering the permitted rate of return of the two power companies from the existing 13.5% to 15% on Average Net Fixed

Assets to an average of below 10%; and linking the permitted rate of return of the power companies to their achievement of the emissions caps imposed by the Environmental Protection Department under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance. As the negotiation is still ongoing, it is not appropriate for the Government to disclose further details.

- (b) The Government will continue to work hard towards reaching an agreement with the two power companies on the new SCAs before the end of this year. In parallel, we are preparing a piece of legislation to ensure that the public will continue to enjoy reliable, safe and efficient electricity supply at reasonable prices after the expiry of the existing SCAs. Should we fail to reach an agreement with the two power companies before the end of the year, the Government will introduce a bill into the Legislative Council early next year to regulate the power companies through a licensing mechanism.
- (c) Should the Government and the two power companies fail to reach an agreement on the new SCAs before the end of the year, we will introduce into the Legislative Council a bill to regulate the two power companies early next year. We will spare no effort in assisting the Council's scrutiny of the bill, in order that the legislative process can be completed within the 2007-2008 legislative year. This is to ensure that the public can continue to enjoy reliable, safe and efficient electricity supply at reasonable prices after the expiry of the existing SCAs.

Foreign Domestic Helpers with Criminal Records

18. **MR LAU KONG-WAH** (in Chinese): *President, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *of the number of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) prosecuted in Hong Kong during the past two years and, among them, the number and percentage of those convicted;*

- (b) *whether it has statistics on the number of FDHs currently employed in Hong Kong with a history of being prosecuted or convicted in the territory; and*
- (c) *whether it will consider providing prospective employers with local criminal and prosecution records of FDHs; if not, of the reasons for that, and whether it has evaluated if prospective employers are deprived of their right to know?*

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY (in Chinese): President,

- (a) According to information provided by the police and the Immigration Department, for prosecution cases and conviction cases involving FDHs in the past two years, the number of offences involved is as follows:

	2005	2006	2007 (January to September)
Number of offences prosecuted	862	1 035	713
Number of offences convicted	799	983	727

Note: The same FDH may be involved in more than one offence. As the prosecution figures and the conviction figures are counted on the basis of the actual year of prosecution and conviction respectively, we are unable to calculate the percentage of offences prosecuted over offences convicted in the same year for the respective years.

- (b) The Administration has not kept statistics on the number of FDHs currently employed in Hong Kong who has been prosecuted or convicted previously in Hong Kong.
- (c) An individual's criminal record is personal data as defined under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. Such information generally cannot be disclosed without the consent of the data subject.

Revitalizing Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme

19. **MR BERNARD CHAN** (in Chinese): *President, the Government will implement the Revitalizing Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme and invite non-profit-making organizations to run social enterprises in selected government-owned historic buildings. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *of the details of the following financial support: where justified, financial support will be provided including one-off grant to cover the cost for major renovation of the buildings, in part or in full; nominal rental for the buildings; and one-off grant to meet the starting costs and operating deficits (if any) of the social enterprises for a maximum of the first two years of operation on the prerequisite that the social enterprise proposal is projected to become self-sustainable after this initial period;*
- (b) *apart from the financial support referred to in (a), whether it will provide other incentives to encourage non-profit-making organizations to take part in the above Scheme;*
- (c) *of the criteria to be adopted for selecting organizations to participate in the Scheme; and*
- (d) *how it will assist the organizations concerned in maintaining historic buildings in view of their high maintenance costs?*

SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT (in Chinese): *President,*

- (a) Regarding details of the financial support, we would like to provide the following supplementary information:
 - One-off grant to cover the cost for major renovation to the building — Historic buildings were built many years ago. As the construction standards at that time may not meet those nowadays, renovation and alteration works befitting the usage proposed by successful applicants are required. The

high costs incurred, however, are not generally affordable to non-profit-making organizations. The Government will therefore pay for the renovation and alteration works to the building, in part or in full. We have earmarked \$1 billion in the Capital Works Reserve Fund for this purpose and will seek approval for the allocation in accordance with the established procedures for capital works.

- Nominal rental for the buildings — To ensure sustainable development of the adaptive re-use projects, successful non-profit-making organizations will only be charged a nominal rental, usually at HK\$1. This is also one of the incentives to encourage non-profit-making organizations to take part in the Scheme.

- One-off grant to meet the starting costs and operating deficits of the social enterprises for a maximum of the first two years of operation — Non-profit-making organizations have a lot of innovative and feasible ideas for operating social enterprises. However, they are very often not able to run the social enterprises on a self-sustainable basis in the first two years. The one-off grant from the Government can help them to materialize their ideas. The prerequisite, however, is that the proposed social enterprises are sustainable, that is, projected to become self-sustainable after the first two years of operation. This arrangement more or less resembles the "Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme" under which social enterprises are supported by the Home Affairs Department.

The Revitalizing Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme is at its preparatory stage, implementation details of which are being worked out. A briefing session for eligible applicants has been scheduled for early November 2007 to, among other things, seek their views on details of the Scheme. We expect that we would finalize the Scheme and start receiving applications in early 2008.

- (b) Apart from the above financial support, we will provide one-stop service for successful applicants to take forward their proposals in the areas of heritage conservation, land use and planning, building architecture, and compliance with Buildings Ordinance. We believe this is one of the important incentives to encourage organizations to take part in the Scheme.

- (c) The Revitalizing Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme aims to achieve the dual objectives that historic buildings be preserved and at the same time made available for use in the best interest of the community. In particular, we hope to promote active public participation in the preservation and innovative use of historic buildings. Applicants under the Scheme should be non-profit-making organizations with charitable status under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112). We will take the following factors into account when vetting the applications:
 - (i) how best the proposals could help preserve the historic buildings;
 - (ii) in the process of adaptive re-use, how the historic significance of the buildings would be brought out effectively;
 - (iii) what are the social benefits of the proposed social enterprise and how would it benefit the community at district level, for example, job opportunities to be provided for the community, and so on; and
 - (iv) how the social enterprise would operate in terms of financial viability.

- (d) The Government, being the owner of those historic buildings, will continue to be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the structural parts therein after they have been leased to the successful applicants.

Subsidies for Pre-primary Education

20. **MS AUDREY EU** (in Chinese): *President, regarding the subsidies provided by the Government for pre-primary education, will the Government inform this Council of:*

- (a) *the respective numbers of places offered by kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres (hereafter collectively referred to as "KGs") which have participated in the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) in the 2007-2008 school year and those which have not;*
- (b) *the actual expenses incurred to date for implementing the above Scheme in the 2007-2008 school year;*
- (c) *the additional expenses required each year for extending the above Scheme to all KGs; and*
- (d) *the respective amounts of special grants provided by the Government in the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years to school children of families receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) to cover KG fees?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Chinese): *President, my reply to the four questions, in *seriatim*, is as follows:*

- (a) The actual number of places in the kindergartens concerned in this school year will only be available at a later stage. Based on extrapolation from data last year, the number of places in the operating classes of kindergartens joining the PEVS and those not joining are estimated to be 171 000 and 26 000 respectively.
- (b) The PEVS has been up and running starting from the 2007-2008 school year. The actual expenses of the vouchers incurred for the four months from August up to November 2007 is around \$360 million.

- (c) The additional expenses for extending the PEVS to all kindergartens is estimated to be around \$200 million each year upon full implementation, based on projection made earlier.
- (d) The amount of special grants provided by the Government to school children of families receiving CSSA to cover KG fees is \$159 million in the 2006-2007 school year and \$14 million in the 2007-2008 school year (up to September 2007).

MOTIONS

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Motion. Proposed resolution under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance to approve the Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulation 2007 and the Poisons List (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulation 2007.

I now call upon the Secretary for Food and Health to speak and move his motion.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION UNDER THE PHARMACY AND POISONS ORDINANCE

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): Madam President, I move that the motion under my name, as printed on the Agenda, be passed.

Currently, we regulate the sale and supply of pharmaceutical products through a registration and monitoring system set up in accordance with the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance. The Ordinance maintains a Poisons List under the Poisons List Regulations and several Schedules under the Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations. Pharmaceutical products put on different parts of the Poisons List and different Schedules are subject to different levels of control in regard to the conditions of sale and keeping of records.

For the protection of public health, some pharmaceutical products can only be sold in pharmacies under the supervision of registered pharmacists and in their presence. For certain pharmaceutical products, proper records of the

particulars of the sale must be kept, including the date of sale, the name and address of the purchaser, the name and quantity of the medicine and the purpose for which it is required. The sale of some pharmaceutical products must be authorized by prescription from a registered medical practitioner, dentist or a veterinary surgeon.

Arising from five applications for registration of pharmaceutical products, the Pharmacy and Poisons Board proposes to add five substances to Part I of the Poisons List and the First and Third Schedules to the Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations. Pharmaceutical products containing any of these substances must then be sold in pharmacies under the supervision of registered pharmacists and in their presence, with the support of prescriptions.

In addition, the Pharmacy and Poisons Board proposes to relax the control of tranexamic acid when it is contained in toothpaste at 0.05% by weight. At present, tranexamic acid is classified in Part I of the Poisons List and in the First and Third Schedules to the Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations. That is to say, among other controls, they must be kept in a locked receptacle and sold on prescription in pharmacies in the presence and under the supervision of a registered pharmacist. Toothpaste containing tranexamic acid is used for the relief of gum bleeding caused by gingivitis. As gum bleeding is self-limiting, treatment with this toothpaste does not require the immediate attention of a dentist. We therefore propose reclassifying tranexamic acid when contained in toothpaste at 0.05% by weight as Part I poison, so that it can be sold without prescription. The control of other products containing tranexamic acid remains unchanged.

Besides, the Pharmacy and Poisons Board also proposes to relax the control of loratadine and its salts when contained in pharmaceutical products labelled for the relief of the symptoms of allergic rhinitis. Loratadine and its salts are currently classified as Part I poisons, and can only be sold in pharmacies in the presence and under the supervision of a registered pharmacist. As allergic rhinitis is transient and can be self-diagnosed by patients, we propose reclassifying pharmaceutical products containing loratadine and its salts and labelled for the relief of the symptoms of allergic rhinitis only as Part II poisons, so that they can be sold by pharmacies as well as medicine companies, and their sale would not be required to be conducted in the presence and under the supervision of registered pharmacists.

We propose that these Amendment Regulations take immediate effect upon gazettal on 9 November 2007 to allow early control and sale of the relevant medicines.

The two Amendment Regulations are made by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board, which is a statutory authority established under the Ordinance to regulate pharmaceutical products. The Board comprises members engaged in the pharmacy, medical and academic professions. The Board considers the proposed amendments necessary in view of the potency, toxicity and potential side effects of the medicines concerned.

With these remarks, Madam President, I move the motion.

The Secretary for Food and Health moved the following motion:

"RESOLVED that the following Regulations, made by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board on 17 October 2007, be approved –

- (a) the Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulation 2007; and
- (b) the Poisons List (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulation 2007."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by the Secretary for Food and Health be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any Member wish to speak?

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you as stated. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority of the Members present. I declare the motion passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Proposed resolution under the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance to amend the Building Management (Third Party Risks Insurance) Regulation.

I now call upon the Secretary for Home Affairs to speak and move his motion.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION UNDER THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE

SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, I rise to move the motion, as set out under my name, to amend the Building Management (Third Party Risks Insurance) Regulation (the Regulation). The proposed amendments have been set out on the agenda distributed to Members.

The main purpose of the Regulation is to set out the detailed requirements on the mandatory procurement of third party risks insurance by owners' corporations (OCs). The Subcommittee concerned held several meetings to scrutinize the Regulation and provided many valuable comments on the Regulation. Having considered the suggestions of the Subcommittee, we propose the following amendments.

The resolution proposes to repeal section 6(3) and (4) of the Regulation. With the repeal of these sections, if the OC has not exercised reasonable diligence to keep the building in good condition and maintenance, ensure compliance with the deed of mutual covenant in relation to the use of the building or comply with any statutory instrument in relation to the building, and thus incur the prescribed liability, the insurance company has to pay compensation in accordance with the insurance policy first and then recover the

sum from the OC concerned. We will make technical amendments to other subsections of section 6 accordingly.

The resolution also proposes to amend section 5(7) of the Regulation, so as to lower the level of fine imposed on the members of the management committee for contravention of the requirement of displaying the notice of insurance from "level 2" to "level 1".

We also propose to make technical amendments to section 5(4) and the definition of "statutory instrument" under section 2 of the Regulation.

The above proposed amendments have the support of the Subcommittee. I appeal to Members for support of the motion.

Thank you, Madam President.

The Secretary for Home Affairs moved the following motion:

"RESOLVED that the Building Management (Third Party Risks Insurance) Regulation, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 146 of 2007 and laid on the table of the Legislative Council on 11 July 2007, be amended –

(a) in section 2, by repealing the definition of "statutory instrument" and substituting –

"statutory instrument" (法定文書), in relation to a building, means –

(a) an order, notice or direction issued under an Ordinance requiring –

(i) any maintenance, improvement, alteration, repair or demolition work to be carried out in relation to the building;

(ii) any fire safety installation or improvement work to be carried out in relation to the building; or

- (iii) any relevant person to be appointed to carry out investigation in relation to the building; or
- (b) a notice or direction issued under an Ordinance specifying that the notice or direction will be registered in the Land Registry if any maintenance, improvement, alteration, repair or demolition work, or any fire safety installation or improvement work, is not carried out in relation to the building before a particular date;"
- (b) in section 5(4), by repealing "issued to it";
- (c) in section 5(7), by repealing "level 2" and substituting "level 1";
- (d) in section 6(1), by repealing "Subject to subsection (3), so" and substituting "So";
- (e) by repealing section 6(3) and (4);
- (f) by renumbering section 6(5), (6), (7) and (8) as section 6(3), (4), (5) and (6) respectively;
- (g) in section 6(6), by repealing "(7)" and substituting "(5)"."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by the Secretary for Home Affairs be passed.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): President, I speak in my capacity as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Building Management (Third Party Risks Insurance) Regulation. The Subcommittee has held a total of four meetings and met with the representatives of the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers and the Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies Limited. At the Subcommittee's invitation, many property management-related bodies have also made submissions in writing. Members discussed matters such as the statutory minimum amount of insurance coverage, the insurance coverage of

unauthorized building works, obligation to procure insurance, anti-avoidance provision, and penalties for failure to display a notice of insurance, and so on, about which recommendations were made and concerns expressed.

Pursuant to the original section 6(3) and (4), if the owners' corporation (OC) fails to exercise reasonable diligence to keep the building concerned in good condition and maintenance, to ensure compliance with the deed of mutual covenant or any statutory instrument in relation to the use of that building and thus gives rise to legal liabilities specified, the insurance company may refuse to pay compensation to third parties. Members are concerned that the interpretation of the phrase "to exercise reasonable diligence" would be subject to argument and legal disputes would arise. As a result, there would be delay for third parties to receive judgement compensation.

The Administration has agreed to repeal section 6(3) and (4) of the Regulation. With the repeal of the provisions concerned, an insurance company should settle the judgement compensation to the injured third party under all circumstances up to the policy amount and may recover the amount so paid from the OC afterwards in the case where the OC has not exercised reasonable diligence.

In addition, according to the existing requirements, if the OC of a building fails to display as soon as practicable a notice of insurance in a prominent place in the building concerned, every member of the Management Committee (MC) is liable on conviction to a fine at level 2 (\$5,000). A member is of the view that this penalty is too severe for a new mandatory requirement compared to other statutory requirements such as the display of the certificate of registration of the OC which carries a lighter penalty. The Government has agreed to lower the level of fine to level 1, that is, \$2,000.

To allay members' apprehension, the Administration has agreed to further amend the definition of "statutory instrument" to clarify its intention that such warning notices issued by the Buildings Department under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) should be considered as a statutory instrument. This will give greater protection to the OC.

President, the Subcommittee supports the amendments proposed by the Administration and in the course of deliberations, members also raised other issues of concern.

The Regulation specifies that the statutory minimum amount of insurance coverage of the mandatory procurement of third party risks insurance by OCs is \$10 million. The Hong Kong Federation of Insurers has advised the Subcommittee that, by rough estimation, the insurance premium may take some \$5,000 to over \$10,000 for an insured amount of \$10 million in respect of a building of 10 storeys and 20 flats in good maintenance conditions. Members expressed concern that the insurance premium would pose a heavy financial burden on owners of old buildings who may have a very low income. We are also aware of the fact that at present 12% of the OCs have not taken out third party risks insurance. Members think that in considering whether or not this mandatory requirement should be implemented across the board, the authorities should undertake a comprehensive survey on why these OCs have not taken out third party risks insurance as well as the conditions of these buildings concerned.

The Administration has advised this Council that it plans to implement the new requirement on 1 January 2009. The Administration has stated that it could consider deferring the implementation date if it is anticipated that owners of these buildings have great difficulties in complying with the mandatory requirement. When the Council deliberates on the public notice of the effective date concerned, there is a possibility that this matter would be discussed again in the light of the circumstances at that time.

Members have diverse views on the insurance coverage of unauthorized building works (UBWs). Some members have expressed concern that some OCs may not be able to take out insurance on account of UBWs in the building. Some members also expressed concern that an insurance company may refuse to pay compensation to third parties on the ground that an OC has failed to disclose a material fact. They consider that an OC may not know or is not certain about the existence of any UBW and so after an accident has occurred, the insurance company can act on section 9(5) of the Regulation to nullify the insurance policy and refuse to pay any compensation.

The Administration has explained that as it is not a mandatory requirement that the policy should cover the liabilities incurred by an UBW, therefore even if there is an UBW in the building concerned, it does not necessarily prevent an OC from taking out insurance. The Federation also informed the Subcommittee that as a general rule, terms would be stipulated in a policy to expressly rule out liabilities that may be incurred by an UBW.

Hence an OC should not have any difficulty in taking out a third party risks insurance policy.

The Administration has also explained that if an OC is uncertain about whether there are UBWs in the building, it should inform the insurance company that it does not know or is unsure about whether there are UBWs in the building. The OC must never fill out any information which it does not know or is unsure of. Such a statement does not amount to non-disclosure or misrepresentation of facts.

President, I so report. The Subcommittee will agree to the amendments proposed earlier by the Secretary concerned.

MR WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): Madam President, at present, there are about 400 000 private buildings in the territory, and it is estimated that over 60% of these private buildings have not taken out third party risks insurance. In other words, a majority of private buildings are not covered by the protection of third part risks insurance.

Actually, the third party risks insurance of private buildings is of the utmost importance. For whenever a third party suffers personal injury in an accident occurred in the common parts of the building, the owners and owners' corporation (OC) are liable to compensation payment. The cases of Sun Hing Building and Albert House and the series of incidents that followed illustrate that if insurance or adequate insurance coverage has not been procured for a building, the owners and the OCs will be liable to great compensation payment which are likely unaffordable.

According to the proposal put forth by the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers (HKFI) to the Government, the statutory minimum insurance coverage under the Regulation should be \$10 million. The proposal is based on the fact that among the average of 6 500 public liability claims received in each of the year between 2002 and 2004, no single claim involved compensation payment exceeding \$10 million.

We certainly hope that the statutory minimum insurance coverage can be set at a level adequate to cover the third party claims. However, if the statutory insurance coverage is set at a high level, it will impose an unnecessary

burden on owners. According to the information provided by the HKFI, for a building of 10 storeys and 20 flats in good maintenance condition, the insurance premium may range from some \$5,000 to over \$10,000 for an insured amount of \$10 million, and the maximum insurance premium for each flat will be \$500. Though \$500 is not a large sum, to certain poor tenants, say the elderly in poverty who have to live on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, the "fruit grant" or their meagre savings, their plight will be exacerbated if they are required to pay the insurance premium. For older buildings in unsatisfactory maintenance condition, a higher insurance premium will be charged.

I proposed at a meeting in the past the setting up of a tiered structure based on the numbers of flats. Unfortunately, the HKFI, looking at the issue from a commercial perspective, said that even if the insured amount was lowered to \$5 million or below, the insurance premium could only be lowered by 10% to 30%. As such, I hope the HKFI will further examine the possibility of allowing buildings with a small number of flats to procure insurance as a group, which may alleviate the burden of these owners in paying insurance premium. I also hope that the Government will keep a close eye on the future premium level to ensure that insurance premium will not place a heavy burden on owners.

Concerning the procurement of third party insurance, the assistance now available to owners includes the subsidy scheme introduced by the Urban Renewal Authority and the Hong Kong Housing Society. For buildings which renovation works in the common parts have been completed, the OCs concerned will receive a subsidy for insurance premium of up to \$6,000 per annum for a period of three years. The \$6,000 subsidy may be adequate for the annual insurance premium payment, but since the subsidization period only lasts for three years, after that, owners will have to pay the premium out of their own pockets. Thus, this is in no way a remedy to the affordability problem faced by tenants in hardship. Therefore, I hope the Government will continue to pay attention to this issue after the enactment of the legislation.

The Subcommittee has spent much time discussing whether UBWs should be covered by the mandatory insurance. I disagree to the inclusion of UBWs in mandatory third party risks insurance. As UBWs are structures constructed by owners for private use, it will be unfair if all the owners of the building

concerned are required to share the third party risks insurance premium of these UBWs. Besides, it is unjustified for the Legislative Council to enact legislation to provide protection to UBWs.

Moreover, UBWs are illegal building structures which should be removed as soon as possible. The Buildings Department should review its existing practice and procedures with a view to removing UBWs expeditiously. The OCs should also act proactively to advise owners of UBWs who have violated the law to remove those structures. If any owner refuses to cooperate, the OC may consider applying to the Lands Tribunal for enforcement of provisions included in the Deed of Mutual Covenant, so that the Court will issue an injunction against the existence of UBWs and order the defendant, the owner who violates the Deed of Mutual Covenant, to pay the litigation fees concerned. However, to achieve this, the OC must make strenuous efforts and spend a lot of time, which is no easy task for every OC. Therefore, it is most desirable that the Government can increase its enforcement effort to remove threats posed by UBWs.

Under the original Regulation, it is stipulated that any OC failing to display the notice of insurance will be liable to a fine of \$5,000. However, this penalty is too severe, for even if an OC displays the notice, the notice may be crossed out or torn off deliberately and maliciously, and the OC may not be able to make remedy promptly. If each member of the OC really has to pay a fine of \$5,000 because of this, the Regulation may be too draconian indeed. Having accepted our opinions, the Government has lowered the fine from \$5,000 to \$2,000. Though this is acceptable, I wish to take this opportunity to urge the Government to examine the actual situation in the course of enforcement. The Government should examine whether the OC has truly fulfilled its obligation of displaying the notice and avoid initiating prosecution arbitrarily against OCs which have already done so.

With these remarks, Madam President, I support the Regulation.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any other Member wish to speak?

MISS CHOY SO-YUK (in Cantonese): President, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) supports the amendment to the Building Management Ordinance to make it a mandatory requirement for all owners' corporations (OCs) to procure third party risks insurance with an insurance coverage of \$10 million. We consider the amount suitable, for it is only a minimum insurance coverage. However, some colleagues have raised two concerns. One of them is that the insurance premium for the \$10 million insurance coverage may place a relatively heavy burden on the owners of some small-scale buildings, particularly some elderly owners. We definitely agree that this may be a cause of concern, but we do not think that the \$10 million coverage should be lowered for this reason. For if a brick falls, several people may be injured, and the compensation claimed may exceed \$5 million as Members now proposed, and may even exceed \$10 million. Therefore, I think it will be more appropriate to stick to the original proposal of \$10 million.

Some Members raised the possibility of allowing several blocks of buildings to group together to take out third party risks insurance, we hope that the Government will consider this proposal. Actually, a lot of problems still exist in the regulation on building management in Chapter 344 of the Laws of Hong Kong, and I hope the Government will respond more proactively in proposing amendments shortly.

Concerning the UBWs of buildings, in the Subcommittee, many colleagues raised the concern of whether UBWs should be included in third party risks insurance. The Government now proposed that it should not be included. We think this is appropriate. If owners of the building are required to pay higher insurance premium just because certain owners of UBWs refuse to remove such structures, it will be unfair. On the other hand, this may give owners of UBWs an excuse for refusing to remove such structures. In that case, the Government will encounter more obstacles in promoting the removal of UBWs. Therefore, I think it is appropriate to exclude UBWs from mandatory third party risks insurance.

However, grey areas are still found in some cases, and I hope the Government will consider how assistance can be rendered to owners. Take one building in North Point as an example. In the layout plan submitted by the developer, a balcony was outside a room but not the living room. However, on the completion of the building, a balcony was provided outside the living

room but not the other room. Owners were required by the Buildings Department (BD) to demolish the balcony, for the BD noticed that a balcony was not provided outside the living room according to the layout plan submitted. Certainly, having heeded the explanation given, the BD subsequently agreed that the developer might have made a mistake when the layout plan was submitted, for on the first day the owners took possession of the flats, there was a balcony outside the living room but not the other room. Under this circumstance, when those owners take out insurance, insurance companies will not provide coverage for the balcony. Since insurance companies will not offer insurance coverage for this balcony, those owners will have to carry this "bomb", the risk that no insurance protection can be secured for any problems arising from the balcony. I think the Government should give serious thoughts to the issue, that is, for some special situation like this or problems caused not by the fault of owners, in what way should the Government help those owners to solve the problem.

Moreover, President, regarding Chapter 344 of the Laws of Hong Kong, a lot of problems related to the Deed of Mutual Covenant can still be found. One of our subcommittees has discussed the amendments made last time for a number of times. However, so far, no action has been seen taken by the Government to prepare itself to address the limitations found in the Deed of Mutual Covenant, nor has it proposed any corresponding amendments to address the various problems of building management. I hope the Secretary will accord priority to these issues and examine them seriously, for in our work at the district level, we often receive complaints about nuisances caused by problems in building management and the Deed of Mutual Covenant, where no solution can be found owing to the limitations imposed by existing legislation. Moreover, many problems, which the Government intends to address, remain outstanding because of the limitations of existing legislation. I hope the Secretary will really redouble efforts and expeditiously make amendments to certain limitations in the Deed of Mutual Covenant.

President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any other Member wish to speak?

(Mr James TO raised his hand)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr James TO.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): I wish to speak in my personal capacity.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): You have my permission to speak again.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): I am speaking in my personal capacity.

President, I would like to express some personal views. In fact, this Regulation deals with buildings where owners' corporations (OCs) have been formed that is, imposing a mandatory requirement on them to procure third party risks insurance. In other words, there is one exception where this Regulation cannot be enforced — when there is no OC. Why should this requirement be mandatory? Surely, there is an underlying spirit in this Regulation, that is, in case anything happens, it can protect any third party and save the owners from feeling embarrassed and the need to run around or take too much trouble. In fact, we must also gain some understanding of buildings with no OCs. There are two possibilities for not having an OC. For instance, Tai Koo Shing, it is believed that given its good management under a professional management company, insurance should have been procured even though it does not have an OC.

However, another case concerns buildings where both OC and good management are absent. I think that the Government should also take them into consideration in future. The Subcommittee — No, I should say in my own opinion — why should the present proposal be endorsed? Because this is at least one step forward. But the point is, with the absence of OCs and good management, buildings may have a greater need for our care as they are "two nays", having neither OCs nor good management, and are also subject to greater risks. For this reason, it would be best for the Government to gain a good grasp of the relevant statistics or actual situation to see how many buildings do not have OCs or good management, and what should be done in the next stage.

Another possibility is that certain buildings (I hope that the number is not large) may, for some reasons (which is unknown to me) simply dissolve their

OCs so as to evade the requirement of procuring third party risks insurance should the present Regulation be passed. Of course, I believe there will not be plenty of such cases. My only concern is that small buildings where comparatively higher cost will be borne by each flat may evade the necessary requirement in this way. Of course, the owners concerned will have to suffer the many inconveniences and demerits resulted from this.

Secondly, insofar as UBWs are concerned, I consider that, as a matter of principle, insurance must also be taken out to protect the third party. This is simply for the sake of the third party, but not in the hope of retaining these UBWs forever. In fact, they already exist. As long as these 700 000-odd UBWs are not removed, the third party (either the person who was killed by falling objects or his family) may still have to be protected.

After carrying out some practical studies, however, I have come to the view that there are probably practical difficulties in mandatorily requiring the procurement of insurance for the UBWs of certain buildings. This is not just a question of whether or not the principle is good, but the existence of practical difficulties. In some cases, it is downright impossible for us to do so. Therefore, in my opinion, we can only accept the Regulation as it is.

Thirdly, I wish to call on all buildings, regardless of whether insurance has been procured or OCs have been formed, to determine the insured amount on their own and in the light of their actual needs, but not to procure insurance at the minimum insured amount of, say, \$10 million, as required by the Government. This is because if the insured amount is too low, the protection will be inadequate. As far as I understand it, for the sake of protecting our own interests, even if the insured amount is higher, the premium is not too high. I am not promoting insurance products for the insurance sector represented by Mr Bernard CHAN, only that given the large number of flats, particularly those of large size and even with dangerous facilities, it is worth procuring insurance at a higher insured amount. For this reason, it is hoped that the owners can decide on the insured amount on their own, instead of the amount prescribed by the Government now.

Lastly, I would like to call on the individual owners to note that, since the OCs will only procure insurance for the common parts of buildings, individual owners sometimes suffer as a result of the procurement (or non-

procurement) of insurance for the common areas, or the presence (or absence) of UBWs — Of course, there may be cases where the owners of a building were affected by the UBWs of an individual owner. As such, owners should primarily assess their own risks as sometimes, an individual owner's UBWs may have a nail hammered into his neighbour's flat. When it collapses, the victim could pursue the matter with the owner concerned. Despite that an individual owner may pursue responsibility with his neighbour, but if his neighbour has gone bankrupt due to the negative asset problem, the owner concerned will obtain nothing from him. For this reason, individual owner should not subject the building and all his wealth to high risk, but to assess if protection has to be secured for the risk borne for their own interest.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any other Member wish to speak?

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): If no other Member wishes to speak, I now call upon the Secretary for Home Affairs to speak.

SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, just now, three Members mentioned the issue of UBWs in their speeches. The issue has been discussed in detail by Members in the Bills Committee and the Subcommittee to examine the Building Management (Third Party Risks Insurance) Regulation (the Regulation). I would like to take this opportunity to explain the position of the Government again.

We think we should not legislate on the mandatory procurement of third party risks insurance policy by owners' corporations (OCs) to cover liabilities arising out of UBWs, for UBWs are illegal structures constructed in violation of the Buildings Ordinance. It is the policy of the Government that those illegal structures should be removed or demolished to protect public safety. If it is stipulated in the Regulation that the insurance policy must cover liabilities arising out of UBWs, it will imply that the Government condones the existence of these illegal structures, which is inconsistent with the policy of the Government.

The Hong Kong Federation of Insurers (HKFI) also said that it did not support stipulating in the Regulation that the third party risks insurance procured by OCs should cover UBWs. Moreover, since UBWs are illegal structures, if the insurance policies concerned must cover UBWs, all buildings and not only buildings with UBWs will be subject to higher insurance premium. This means owners of properly maintained buildings will have to subsidize owners of poorly maintained buildings, which is unfair to the former.

Moreover, if it is stipulated by legislation that OCs must procure insurance for UBWs, UBWs will be *de facto* protected by insurance policies. By doing so, it will indirectly encourage the continual existence of UBWs, while owners will lack the incentive to take active action against UBWs.

We understand full well the concern of Members about UBWs. In this respect, the Buildings Department (BD) has already adopted a three-pronged approach, which includes taking immediate enforcement action against UBWs that are newly built or posing an imminent danger to life or property, phasing out existing UBWs and raising public awareness of the issue through education and promotion.

Moreover, the Hong Kong Housing Society (HS) and the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) have introduced a number of loan and subsidy schemes to provide assistance for OCs to carry out renovation works for their buildings. In addition to monetary assistance, eligible OCs will also receive free professional and technical support under these schemes. The Government and organizations concerned will maintain close co-operation to solve the problem of UBWs.

Concerning the amount of insurance coverage, section 4 of the Regulation prescribes that the minimum amount of insurance of each insurance policy should not be less than \$10 million in one event. During the discussion of the Regulation at the Subcommittee, Members held different views on the amount proposed, and some Members considered it too high while some considered it too low. Actually, buildings in Hong Kong are in different conditions and the needs of OCs vary, it is thus difficult to set an insurance coverage amount which is suitable for all the buildings in Hong Kong. We consider it a suitable approach to set the minimum amount of insurance coverage at \$10 million as proposed by the HKFI, and on this basis, individual

OCs, taking into account the actual condition of their buildings, can fix the insurance coverage with insurance companies at an amount tailored to the need of their buildings.

With regard to the tiered structure of insurance coverage as proposed by Mr WONG Kwok-hing, under which different amounts of insurance coverage are set on the basis of the types or numbers of flats of buildings, as we pointed out in the discussion at the Subcommittee, the proposal will make the mechanism too complicated and difficult to implement.

Regarding the difficulties faced by OCs in procuring third party risks insurance, Members have raised their concern earlier in their speeches over the difficulties faced by OCs in paying the insurance premium for third party risks insurance, particularly for some old buildings or single buildings with a smaller number of flats. To encourage the OCs of these buildings to step up the management and renovation works of the common parts of their buildings and procure third party risks insurance, the HS and the URA now offer special loan and subsidy schemes for the OCs concerned. The purpose of these schemes is to assist the OCs concerned to carry out maintenance and renovation works for the common parts of the buildings. For OCs which have completed the renovation works of the common parts of the buildings, they will receive subsidy for half of the third party risks insurance premium paid of up to \$6,000 per annum for three years. These subsidy schemes may alleviate the financial burden of OCs and encourage OCs to procure third party risks insurance as soon as possible. As for the situation after the first three years of subsidy as mentioned by Mr WONG Kwok-hing, we will pay attention to it.

Actually, in recent years, with our continued promotion on the importance of procuring third party risks insurance, many owners have come to realize that third party risks insurance can provide better protection to both the owners and the third party. According to our information, at present, 88% of buildings with OCs have procured third party risks insurance. We believe that with the enactment of the Regulation, the public will understand more the importance of third party risks insurance and more OCs will be willing to procure third party risks insurance.

We now hope that the relevant requirement will be implemented on 1 January 2009, and the actual date of commencement will be fixed at the time according to the actual situation.

Earlier on, some Members mentioned that the requirement on procuring third party risks insurance, which was only applicable to OCs, was inadequate. Indeed, as we pointed out during discussions in the Subcommittee, the relevant requirement is included in the principal ordinance and has been amended according to the Building Management (Amendment) Ordinance 2007 passed in this April. Though according to the existing Ordinance, only OCs are required to procure insurance, all along, the Government has actively encouraged owners to procure third party risks insurance which can reduce the risk of owners in the event of accidents. We will continue to encourage the relevant owners to procure insurance.

As for amendment to the Deed of Mutual Covenant mentioned by Miss CHOY So-yuk, the issue has been discussed in the context of the Building Management (Amendment) Ordinance 2007. We will surely make continuous efforts to follow up the issue.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Subcommittee led by Mr James TO for their valuable opinions. In response to these opinions, the amendments proposed today will make the Ordinance more comprehensive. I hope the Regulation will help raise the awareness of owners of proper building management and renovation and prompt OCs to procure third party risks insurance as soon as possible, thus providing better protection to owners and the public. Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by the Secretary for Home Affairs be passed. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority of the Members present. I declare the motion passed.

MEMBERS' MOTIONS

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Members' motions. Two motions with no legislative effect. First motion: Enhancing co-operation with Macao in developing the tourism industry.

I now call upon Mr James TIEN to speak and move his motion.

ENHANCING CO-OPERATION WITH MACAO IN DEVELOPING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

MR JAMES TIEN (in Cantonese): President, I move that the motion, as printed on the Agenda, be passed. President, I proposed this motion today in view of the rapid development of the tourism industry in Hong Kong in recent years which indicates that there is immense room for co-operation between Hong Kong and Macao.

President, I think in Hong Kong, the development of the tourism industry is a policy which can benefit all sectors of the community. As many people will agree, large-scale corporations in the tourism industry, such as the airlines, involve huge investment, while travel agencies or tour guide service in the industry are small and medium enterprises. It follows that the operation of the tourism industry as a whole will require the employment of a large pool of workers.

President, I have noticed that given the economic recovery in recent years, the financial service sector has been particularly thriving and many people have made gains from it. But while many members of the general public have made a lot of money from investing in newly-listed stocks, such as Alibaba which was listed just yesterday and the hike in its price has benefited many people, this is, after all, not a viable policy in the long term.

The Liberal Party is of the view that enhancing the development of the tourism industry can provide job opportunities to many grass-roots workers. While they may not be directly linked to tourism, the operation of catering establishments, retail business and even the small-scale business of selling souvenirs at tourist spots can still enable them to make a living.

President, I noticed that we will discuss Tin Shui Wai in the next motion debate. Some people said that there is a gross shortage of employment opportunities in Tin Shui Wai. Certainly, in order to provide more local job opportunities, consideration can be given to promoting tourism in places such as Tin Shui Wai where the unemployment rate is particularly high, and if there are more tourist attractions in the vicinity, tourists will be attracted and they will bring along new spending to the district. The economic gains to be generated will certainly surpass that of the operation of social enterprises now in Tin Shui Wai. As the residents in the district are not very well-off, business operation is difficult in all trades and industries and so, it is also difficult for them to create more job opportunities.

(THE PRESIDENT'S DEPUTY, MS MIRIAM LAU, took the Chair)

On this issue, Deputy President, I visited Macao on 22 October in my capacity as Chairman of the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) and met with government officials in Macao to discuss the possibility of furthering co-operation between the two places. Nowadays, insofar as tourism is concerned, when we talk about one journey with multi-destinations, should Hong Kong and Macao be considered as two destinations in the same journey? The Macao Government Tourist Office is also of the view that as it takes only 45 minutes to travel from Hong Kong to Macao by ferry or some 10 minutes by helicopter, this is a question worthy of consideration. In many foreign cities, if the journey time between two places is less than an hour, the two places primarily will not be considered as two destinations. For instance, it takes some 40 minutes to go from New York to New Jersey or from Monte Carlo to Nice or Cannes, and tourists will think that since they have already arrived at one place, they may as well visit the other place nearby and so, the two places are primarily considered as one place.

Therefore, I think good co-operation between Hong Kong and Macao may lead to a win-win situation. It is particularly so when tourists visit Macao mainly because of their gaming and entertainment industry, including casinos and the UNESCO heritage and monuments which are very attractive. On the contrary, Hong Kong certainly has its own strengths, as most tourists who come to Hong Kong consider that shopping, food and sightseeing are the highlights of Hong Kong, and we have such tourist attractions as the Peak, Repulse Bay,

Disneyland and Ocean Park and so, we can be a destination with a diverse portfolio of tourist attractions. We think that with sound co-operation between the two places, we certainly can attract more visitors from the long-haul markets to Hong Kong.

The specific proposals that I have made in my motion bear no direct relevance to what I have just said, for they target mainly tourists from the Mainland. Recently, as we can see from the mainland tourists, especially the 13.6 million tourists visiting Hong Kong under the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS), that 2 million have come to Hong Kong and subsequently visited Macao. Of the 12 million mainland tourists visiting Macao, Deputy President, and I am talking about the number of last year, only 380 000 of them came to Hong Kong afterwards. During the Question Time of the Legislative Council a few weeks ago I asked the Secretary for Security whether it was because of security reasons in Hong Kong that only this number of visitors had come to Hong Kong. Secretary Ambrose LEE said in response that from the security perspective of Hong Kong, there is no problem for these visitors to come to Hong Kong. Then, I raised this issue on 22 October when I met with Macao officials and the Chief Executive of Macao, Mr Edmond HO, in Macao. Their reply was that from the perspective of Macao, there is no problem either.

In this regard, I think the first point in my motion of "appealing to the Central Government for the issuance of a single exit endorsement for visiting Hong Kong and Macao under the IVS" can make it more convenient for mainland tourists to visit Hong Kong or Macao, for they do not have to apply for two different endorsements. They need only apply for one endorsement for visiting both places. This can increase the flow of visitors in the two places and hence create a win-win situation.

Certainly, we also noted the concern about whether mainland tourists who stay an average of 3.6 nights in Hong Kong may shorten their stay in Hong Kong if it would be too convenient for them to visit Macao. I think this is absolutely possible, but if we look at it the other way round, since there are so many people visiting Macao and only some 300 000 of them visited Hong Kong afterwards, if the application for endorsement is easy, these tourists may as well come to Hong Kong after their visit to Macao and they may stay here for a night or two. So, generally speaking, I think while we may not be sure of the number of tourists, their number may not necessarily drop.

Second, I also noticed when I visited Macao on 22 October that the immigration clearance counters were very busy in Macao. It is perhaps because of the opening of several new entertainment establishments (including the new Venetian Macao Resort Hotel) and the fact that the ferry trip from Hong Kong to Macao takes only 45 minutes. But when we queued up for immigration clearance, we had to wait an average of 30 minutes and sometimes even more than an hour.

I think insofar as this point is concerned — I have also raised this point with the Macao Government — I wonder if it is possible to use an automated clearance system to particularly shorten the immigration clearance time in Macao for visitors from Hong Kong. Because if this can be done and as some six million of the 22 million visitors to Macao come from Hong Kong every year, expediting the process of immigration clearance for Hong Kong people can certainly spare more time for processing immigration clearance for other visitors. At present, the clearance system currently adopted in Hong Kong of using the smart identity card and matching the fingerprints has greatly expedited the process of immigration clearance, but there has yet been such installation in Macao for immigration clearance. Certainly, this will depend on whether or not Macao is prepared to accept direct entry of Hong Kong identity card holders to Macao. But even though both places are a special administrative region, we still have our own considerations in respect of immigration control. I wonder if Macao can consider other methods and as long as they are user-friendly and viable, they do not necessarily have to be similar to the e-Channel in Hong Kong. Macao officials, including the Chief Executive of Macao, Mr Edmond HO, said that they would consider this.

If this point can be addressed, it would provide greater convenience to the many Hong Kong people visiting Macao every day. Many people now work in Macao and if this problem can be resolved, it would also be more convenient to them, for this would spare them from spending a long time queuing. To tourists, especially those from foreign countries, it would be more convenient to them when using their foreign passports for immigration clearance, as they would not have to wait in the same queues of Hong Kong residents. I think it would be a good thing if these arrangements could be made.

Deputy President, the last point that I wish to make may, I think, arouse some controversies. It is about collaborating with the relevant authorities in

Macao and Guangdong Province in training middle and senior management professionals for the hotel and tourism sectors, and I wish to particularly stress that I am referring to middle and senior management professionals. In recent years I have seen a continuous brain drain in the hotel industry in Hong Kong, as many people have taken up employment in Macao. Besides, many new hotels have been completed in the territory and they will also require talents in this field. We have noticed that the unemployment rate in Hong Kong has continued to drop and in order for the 4% of the workers currently out of job to secure employment, more hotels must be developed in Hong Kong, and it is only after sufficient management talents have been recruited that junior staff can be taken care of. What I am referring to is absolutely not cleaning workers or security guards in a hotel. Generally speaking, insofar as housekeeping is concerned, one cleaning worker may be employed for every 10 rooms in a five-star hotel, and in a three- or four-star hotel, one cleaning worker may be employed for every 15 to 16 rooms.

In any case, if, in the next few years, the number of hotel rooms in Hong Kong will increase by 10 000 to 20 000 (the Government also has this figure), and if we use one cleaning worker for every 10 rooms as the basis for calculation, over 1 000 workers would be required and this could certainly help the Secretary resolve the problem of creating jobs for cleaning workers and security guards, the two types of jobs in the Wage Protection Movement about which the Secretary is very concerned now, because a large number of cleaning workers and security guards will be employed in all hotels. From the supply-and-demand perspective, as long as more employers will employ these two types of workers, their wages will naturally go up and the Secretary's Wage Protection Movement will naturally become more successful.

We have noticed that management professionals are considered to be lacking both in Hong Kong and Macao and so, we propose that more management professionals be trained in Guangdong Province. But even though management professionals have been trained, it does not mean that they can come to Hong Kong as they wish. These professionals will be allowed to come to Hong Kong only through the existing admission scheme for talents and professionals and when they are proven to be up to a professional standard with expertise which is difficult to find in Hong Kong. It is not the case that room attendants, cleaning workers or watchmen will be allowed to work here. This proposal is also considered as viable by the Macao authorities. I am suggesting this proposal here and I hope that Members will support our view.

Lastly, on the question of a task force on training, I think we must cast our eyes farther. Certainly, this is related to the Employees Retraining Board, but a number of local universities have also provided hotel training programmes and if these programmes can be organized jointly with universities in the Mainland, such as those in the Pearl River Delta, our proposal would achieve greater success. If more local hotels can successfully recruit management professionals, they can then proceed to taking on the more junior staff.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I beg to move.

Mr James TIEN moved the following motion: (Translation)

"That, in view of the rapid development of the tourism industry in Hong Kong and Macao in recent years, indicating that there is immense room for co-operation between the two places, this Council urges the Government to expeditiously adopt measures to enhance the co-operation with Macao on the tourism front, with a view to fostering the long-term development of Hong Kong's tourism industry and achieving a win-win situation with Macao; such measures should include:

- (a) appealing to the Central Government for the issuance of a single exit endorsement for visiting Hong Kong and Macao under the Individual Visit Scheme, so as to facilitate mainland travellers in visiting the two places on the same trip;
- (b) using an automated clearance system to shorten the immigration clearance time for Hong Kong people at the Macao control point, so as to make available more space to facilitate immigration clearance of other travellers; and
- (c) collaborating with the relevant authorities in Macao and Guangdong Province in training middle and senior management professionals for the hotel and tourism sectors.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mr James TIEN be passed.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Two Members will move amendments to this motion. The motion and the two amendments will now be debated together in a joint debate.

I will call upon Mr WONG Kwok-hing to speak first, to be followed by Mr SIN Chung-kai; but no amendments are to be moved at this stage.

MR WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): Deputy President, in recent years, rapid economic development and implementation of the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) in the Mainland have caused the tourism industries in Hong Kong and Macao to develop while at the same time competing with each other. Being the "Gourmet's Paradise" and the "Shopper's Paradise" used to be the strengths of Hong Kong but since the completion and opening of the first phase of the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel, the mega gaming and entertainment landmark in Macao, tourism development in Hong Kong has suddenly been brought to face a huge challenge because apart from providing hotel, casino and shopping facilities, this multi-purpose integrated resort complex even provides convention and exhibition venues measuring 1.2 million sq ft, which doubles the area of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, seriously threatening the convention and exhibition industry as well as the tourism and hotel industries in Hong Kong.

Although statistics show a significant growth of the tourism industry in both Hong Kong and Macao, the momentum of growth in Macao has gradually surpassed that in Hong Kong. The number of tourists visiting Hong Kong in September this year was 2.12 million, representing an increase of 16% over the same period last year, but the number in Macao was 2.26 million, of whom 1.22 million were mainland visitors, which also surpassed the 1.13 million in Hong Kong. What is the overall situation? Although visitor arrivals in Hong Kong hit 20 million in the first nine months this year, representing a 10% increase over the same period last year, Macao recorded a total of 19 million visitors in the first nine months of this year, showing an increase of 23%. Deputy President, whether from the rate of increase, the pace of growth and the proportion in population capacity, Hong Kong is obviously the hare as in the story of *The hare and the tortoise*, for our complacency has caused us to lag behind. Such being the case, while competing with Macao, we must think about what we need to learn from Macao, in order to foster co-operation and learn from their strengths to make up for our shortcomings, thereby increasing our own strengths. This does warrant our deep thoughts.

The objective of my amendment is to present through the amendment a fuller picture of the challenges and opportunities now faced by the tourism industry in Hong Kong, in the hope that the Government can identify the problems early and provide co-ordination and support in terms of policies and resources, with a view to maintaining the competitive edge of Hong Kong. But regrettably, I do not know why the responsible Director of Bureau is not in this Council today, and only Secretary Matthew CHEUNG is here to stand in for him. Item (c) of the original motion mentions that co-operation with Macao and Guangdong Province should be enhanced in training talents for the hotel and tourism sectors. I think co-operation can be further stepped up among the three places by sharing and exchanging advanced management expertise of the tourism sector as well as the experience of success, in order that the three places can draw on each other's strengths to make up for their own inadequacies. The purpose is to enable talents in the three places to develop at the same pace, and the talents nurtured by a place should first be tapped to meet the needs of tourism service in that place to facilitate the development of the local tourism industry. I think forward-looking entrepreneurs and a responsible government will not bring in foreign management professionals and workers at cheaper costs to replace the labour protection policy of giving priority to local management talents and workers in employment. On the other hand, the training of talents cannot focus merely on training middle and senior management professionals because insofar as tourism service is concerned, collaborative efforts of staff in various posts at various levels are required in order for an enterprise to make a profit. If the training of the entire team of employees is neglected, it will ultimately turn out that there are only generals but not soldiers, which is not helpful to Hong Kong in competition.

Deputy President, at present many educational institutions and training institutes in Hong Kong are providing training for the tourism industry, including the Travel Industry Council, the Vocational Training Council, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and The Chinese University of Hong Kong, which have provided tourism-related training programmes. In view of the further development of the tourism industry, the authorities should have plans to improve the scope of training and increase the number of training places while conducting a review on a regular basis, with a view to equipping the tourism sector with talents as soon as possible to enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong.

On the other hand, Deputy President, the Hotels, Food and Beverage Employees Association under the Federation of Trade Unions has in recent months made public a submission on the development of tourism. The Association stated that the drain of middle and senior management professionals in the tourism sector in recent years is the result of the successive opening of new tourism facilities in Macao in recent years, as they have offered very attractive remuneration to these professionals. It is estimated that the attractive remuneration package has managed to recruit over 1 000 hotel professionals to work in Macao. In some cases, the remuneration offered by them is 100% or even more than that offered for the same posts in Hong Kong. In this connection, Hong Kong should step up the training of professionals in the tourism industry, in order to consolidate our advantages while taking forward the development of the industry. Meanwhile, it is also necessary to improve the remuneration and fringe benefits for local professionals in the tourism industry, in order to keep these talents. On the other hand, in order to nurture talents and facilitate their development, the Association has proposed that the authorities should expeditiously designate more sites for hotel development to meet the demand of a growing number of tourists and enable local tourism and hotel professionals to give play to their talents. Besides, the authorities should also map out long-term plans for the development of the tourism industry jointly with the Hong Kong Tourism Board. Furthermore, as many hotels in Hong Kong do not have an effective long-term policy on human resources, they take on employees on contract terms rather than permanent employment terms and hire workers on a piece-rate and hourly basis to replace permanent workers. It is common that workers are employed on an hourly or piece-rate basis for jobs such as room attendants and cleaning workers, thus undermining the sense of hospitality felt by hotel guests. The increasingly laborious physical work and the lack of promotion prospects have thus resulted in an exodus of employees and talents. For this reason, the Association has proposed that hotels should improve their employment policy as well as the fringe benefits and promotion prospects for employees, in order to foster the sense of belonging and achievement of employees who will in turn find greater motivation to work in concert with their employers to make contribution for the enterprise and the tourism industry.

Furthermore, it is found in a survey that the pattern of mainland tourists visiting Hong Kong has changed in recent years, as over half of the visitors have stayed in Hong Kong for only one day or less. In other words, they do

not need to arrange for hotel accommodation, and the number of these visitors has increased by 20% compared with six years ago. In September this year, 41.7% of mainland visitors chose not to stay overnight in Hong Kong, representing an increase over last year. The trend of a shortened length of stay in Hong Kong by visitors has sounded a serious alarm for the tourism industry, because if they do not stay overnight in Hong Kong, it will mean a substantial drop in their spending. For this reason, I propose in item (d) of my amendment to vigorously advocate and promote honest tourism, as well as enhancing the professional management in various areas such as hotel, tourism, catering, retailing, and so on, thereby boosting our attractiveness and increasing travellers' duration of stay and spending in Hong Kong.

Deputy President, be it admission of workers or middle and senior management professionals and talents from places outside Hong Kong, I think it must proceed through existing statutory channels in Hong Kong to ensure that priorities are accorded to local professionals and employees in employment.

Lastly, I wish to point out that Secretary Frederick MA had said to the effect that while Macao has the hardware, their software is still riddled with problems. Software includes talents. Hong Kong has had successful experience in software training and we all the more should in the future effectively capitalize on our advantages to take forward our development, in order not to become the hare which is still complacent even though it is being overtaken as in *The hare and the tortoise*.

With these remarks, I hope that Members will support my amendment.

MR SIN CHUNG-KAI (in Cantonese): Deputy President, the objective of the Democratic Party in proposing this amendment is primarily not contradictory to or conflicting with the original motion of Mr James TIEN and the amendment of Mr WONG Kwok-hing. First of all, as Mr James TIEN has said, we think that the Government should attach a certain degree of importance and support to the tourism industry. As for the labour issues — not labour issues, but the issue of employment raised by Mr WONG Kwok-hing, we are also very concerned about it. So, I think our amendment is actually more or less the same as Mr WONG Kwok-hing's amendment, just that ours suggests a more proactive approach.

Mr WONG Kwok-hing said earlier that 1 000 employees at the middle and senior management levels have been recruited to work, or to put it plainly, to make a living, in other places. This is actually not a bad thing. It is a good thing that Hong Kong, being well-known for management, can export professionals to other places. In fact, I think in Hong Kong, apart from the hotel sector, other sectors of the service industry, such as lawyers and even surveyors or many other sectors have to some extent exported their professionals elsewhere. A simple example is that we also have colleagues who work in Shanghai and Beijing. The tourism industry is exporting professionals to other places and this, we welcome, as we think that this will at least give young people in Hong Kong more room for development.

The problem is that while there are in Hong Kong many prestigious star-class hotels with very high ratings internationally, can we increase the number of local middle and senior management professionals for the hotel sector systematically and upgrade the quality of training? I think Members are aware that many countries, especially the Switzerland, are famous for training middle and senior hotel personnel and in particular, senior hotel staff are deployed to work overseas. In fact, if Mr WONG Kwok-hing understands the situation, he will know that many employees in star-class hotels or four- and five-star hotels come from overseas, and this is still the case in Hong Kong nowadays. For instance, the Captains in the French restaurants of some hotels may be French. Can we train up people to play this role in Macao? It will depend on our ability or capacity to train.

That said, however, the main objective of our amendment is to enhance our service quality. We understand that the relevant training programmes are provided in universities, such as The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Or to put it more accurately, since two years ago the relevant training programmes have been very popular among students, and many students have been enrolled in these programmes. Be they run by the Vocational Training Council or universities, I think if the Government can provide some skills training or upgrade the quality of training, it will be conducive to the development of Hong Kong into a base for exportation of professionals.

As for James TIEN's motion, sorry, we are not particularly against co-operation with Macao and Guangdong Province. This is not the case. We think that it is most important for Hong Kong to assume a leading role in

training middle and senior management professionals to provide the basis for Insofar as junior staff are concerned, or staff whose duties are cleaning up rooms, and so on, as mentioned by him earlier, manpower supply may actually be sufficient for these jobs there, but insofar as middle and senior management is concerned, can Hong Kong step up efforts in this regard?

Deputy President, can the Secretary tell us in his response what the Government is going to do in respect of the training of middle and senior management personnel? This is, in fact, a high value-added industry, as the remuneration of these middle and senior management professionals is by no means low. Will the Government propose strategies and plans for training more of these professionals, in order to enhance our competitiveness? In fact, we think that Hong Kong is famous not just for hardware. Our software is also quite good. Such being the case, can we take the lead in the Pearl River Delta Region (including Macao) to upgrade their overall competitiveness in this respect?

With regard to co-operation, we are supportive of this direction but in respect of the training of talents, we think that we should assume a leading role.

I so submit.

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in the absence of the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development) (in Cantonese): Deputy President, today, I am here to stand in for the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Frederick MA, who is on a business trip to the North America conducting activities to promote Hong Kong. I attend this meeting as his stand-in to give a response in this motion debate proposed by Mr James TIEN. One of the issues raised in the motion is the training of talents and conducting exchanges which are under my purview. So, I think it is still appropriate for me to give a response here. First of all, I wish to thank Mr TIEN for proposing this motion on "Enhancing co-operation with Macao in developing the tourism industry" today.

The Government has all along attached importance to the partnership relationship between Hong Kong and the neighbouring cities (including Macao). In the policy address and the policy agenda the Chief Executive proposed many cross-boundary infrastructure projects (including the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao

Bridge and the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link) as well as measures to facilitate cross-boundary tourism (including strengthening the promotion of multi-destination itineraries and promoting visitor-friendliness of entry facilities to further facilitate visitors' entry into Hong Kong). We consider that these developments and measures can certainly create more opportunities for co-operation and exchange of experience between Hong Kong and the neighbouring places (such as Macao).

The tourism industry in Hong Kong has been developing steadily. Last year, visitor arrivals in Hong Kong reached 25.2 million, and there has been continued growth in the number of visitors this year. In the first nine months of this year, the total number of arrivals increased by about 9.6% compared with the same period last year. However, a booming tourism industry is not unique to Hong Kong, as the number of visitors to the neighbouring Macao has also increased continuously. Last year, the number of arrivals in Macao was about 22 million; the number in the first eight months of this year increased by about 22% compared with the same period last year, and Hong Kong residents alone accounted for 31% of the total number of visitors to Macao. To both Hong Kong and Macao, mainland tourists are the principal source of visitors as they account for over half of the total visitor arrivals in both places. Last year, of the 13.59 million mainland tourists visiting Hong Kong, about 2 million went to Macao after their visit to Hong Kong, while 380 000 of the 12 million mainland tourists in Macao came to Hong Kong after their visit to Macao. This shows that there is no question of vicious competition between the tourism sectors in the two places. On the contrary, good co-operation between the two places will provide immense room for development.

Owing to geographical, historical and other development factors, Hong Kong and Macao have different tourism resources and attractions. It is for this reason that in planning the direction of tourism development, Hong Kong has considered Macao as a partner, in the hope that by working together, we can complement each other's strengths and hence achieve synergy. Insofar as tourist attractions are concerned, Hong Kong has the Ocean Park, which is always popular among family visitors, the world-renowned Disneyland, the Peak, Tsim Sha Shui, and so on. What is more, shopping and dining in Hong Kong are highlights that tourists will never grow tired of. All these fascinating experiences to travellers have consolidated Hong Kong's position as a preferred destination in the region for family travel. Moreover, Hong Kong has a good business environment, and with its strategic geographical location in

Asia, Hong Kong can offer ready access to such vast markets as the Mainland, Southeast Asia, Japan and Korea, attracting various types of convention and exhibition activities. Capitalizing on our strengths in organizing major international events, conventions and exhibitions, Hong Kong has developed into a prime destination for business-cum-leisure travellers. Being the hosting city of the Equestrian Events in the forthcoming Beijing Olympics in 2008, Hong Kong is set to become the focus of world attention.

In recent years, Macao has done remarkably well in its gaming and entertainment industry and also in respect of cultural and heritage tourism. The newly completed hotel and entertainment facilities in Macao have opened up new opportunities and prospects for co-operation. We are currently studying how Macao's tourism and entertainment facilities and Hong Kong's advantages in hardware (such as the international airport) and software (such as talents mentioned by Members earlier) can be combined to perform a complementary role to each other, thereby providing new momentum for the Pan-Pearl River Delta and the Asian-Pacific Region. This will also facilitate the robust development of the entire tourism market in this "greater tourism zone", thus creating an all-win situation.

On the promotion of co-operation in tourism, I understand that the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) under the leadership of Mr TIEN has made a lot of efforts. The HKTB and the Macao Government Tourist Office have been closely working together in developing new source markets and promoting multi-destination itineraries. We will continue to mainly target the family, business and young executive segments and introduce brand new products tailored for various tourist types, making concerted efforts to establish the position of promoting joint tours to Hong Kong and Macao, with a view to attracting more tourists to visit both Hong Kong and Macao. Meanwhile, the Financial Secretary and the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development are leading a cross-sector steering committee comprising members from the Government and the industry. The committee will conduct a comprehensive review of the convention, exhibition and related tourism industries and draw up strategies for development. Mr James TIEN and Mr Andrew LEUNG are also members of this committee.

We are very grateful to Mr James TIEN, Mr WONG Kwok-hing and Mr SIN Chung-kai for proposing in the original motion and amendments four concrete measures for enhancing co-operation with Macao in developing the tourism industry. I will briefly respond to their proposals one by one.

Firstly, the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS). On the proposal of appealing to the Central Government for issuing a single exit endorsement for visiting both Hong Kong and Macao under the IVS to facilitate mainland tourists in visiting the two places, from the angle of promoting the development of the tourism industry, the SAR Government welcomes measures taken by the relevant mainland departments under the IVS to facilitate more mainland travellers in visiting Hong Kong.

As Mr TIEN has said, at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 17 October this year, the Secretary for Security and the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development already responded to Mr TIEN's question. To put it simply, according to the policy on entry and exit control in the Mainland, all residents should obtain approval from the relevant mainland authorities to visit places overseas, including Hong Kong and Macao. Under the IVS, mainland residents are required to obtain from the relevant authorities an exit endorsement for visiting Hong Kong. Mainland residents holding the IVS exit endorsement for the Macao Special Administrative Region only will not automatically enjoy a waiver arrangement for visiting Hong Kong. However, we support the idea of a single exit endorsement for visiting Hong Kong and Macao concurrently under the IVS. We will exchange views with the relevant mainland authorities as soon as possible and look into all viable options with a view to facilitating mainland travellers in visiting Hong Kong and Macao concurrently.

As regards the immigration clearance service for visitors, robust economic development and a booming tourism industry in both Hong Kong and Macao in recent years have led to a significant growth in the number of Hong Kong residents visiting Macao and that of Macao residents visiting Hong Kong. In the first eight months of this year, Hong Kong residents already made as many as 5.39 million visits to Macao, representing an increase of 21.9% over the same period last year, while the number of Macao residents visiting Hong Kong reached 410 000, showing an increase of about 8.7% compared with the same period last year.

The relevant departments in Hong Kong and Macao have implemented a myriad of measures to speed up immigration clearance for travellers. As far as we understand it, the Macao authorities have provided at the ferry pier in Macao about six to seven counters exclusively for Hong Kong residents, and the number of such counters will be adjusted flexibly in the light of need.

In respect of immigration clearance for visitors, the Hong Kong Immigration Department has all along endeavoured to enhance the efficiency of their services. The e-Channel has since its introduction been extensively used by Hong Kong residents, and the process of immigration clearance has been greatly improved. Besides, Macao residents visiting Hong Kong generally choose to travel by ferry. At present, over 98% of sea passengers completed immigration clearance in less than 30 minutes, which is far higher than the performance pledge of 92%.

The Governments of Hong Kong and Macao will continue to maintain close liaison to facilitate passenger flow between the two places, and explore ways to further enhance co-operation in immigration clearance.

As regards the training of middle and senior management professionals for the hotel and tourism sectors, I very much agree with the views expressed by Members earlier. Robust tourism development in the region has given rise to a very keen demand for hotel and tourism-related talents. The industries have reflected to us that many management professionals in the hotel and tourism sectors have been recruited to work in Macao or elsewhere in the region. Mr SIN Chung-kai also mentioned earlier an exodus of about 1 000 professionals. As Mr SIN Chung-kai also said earlier, that our professionals in Hong Kong are so much prized by companies in the region indicates that Hong Kong is a hub of talents and that our service is up to the international standard. This is also tantamount to giving recognition to the past efforts made by Hong Kong in the training of talents.

In the policy address the Chief Executive mentioned the need to "enlarge our pool of talent" and "fortify our status as a regional education hub". To train management professionals for the hotel and tourism sectors, the local tertiary institutions have offered many relevant tertiary programmes. In the 2007-2008 academic year, for example, institutions funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) provided nine hotel and tourism-related programmes enrolling about 1 200 students. The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) will also develop a four-star teaching hotel complex on campus. The teaching hotel complex, which is expected to open at the end of 2008, will provide valuable internship opportunities for students of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management of CUHK.

In fact, the training programmes currently provided for the hotel and tourism sectors are not confined to training middle and senior management professionals. The Vocational Training Council, the Employees Retraining Board and the Labour Department have also provided a diversity of pre-employment and on-the-job training programmes for junior management personnel.

The Government and the relevant institutions and educational institutes will continue to listen to the views of the sectors while reviewing from time to time the number of places and contents of the various training programmes to meet the needs of the tourism industry.

We support that co-operation be strengthened between the local institutions and educational institutes in the neighbouring regions. As mentioned in Mr WONG Kwok-hing's amendment, we should promote the sharing of advanced management expertise of the hotel and tourism sectors between these institutions and educational institutes, so that they can work together and contribute to the training of talents. We understand that some UGC-funded institutions and training institutes have organized hotel and tourism programmes in the Mainland. We support the involvement of local institutions in these academic programmes outside Hong Kong in response to the needs of different markets, thereby meeting the demand for various types of management professionals in the region.

We consider that apart from promoting the training of talents, we also have to compete for talents with other places in the region, in order for Hong Kong to retain talents of the best quality. Members may recall that in the policy address the Chief Executive proposed to increase the admission quotas for non-local students to local tertiary institutions, relax employment restrictions on non-local students, and offer scholarships to strengthen support to local and non-local students. We will also modify the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme by relaxing the restrictions on age limit and other prerequisites, while actively promoting the Scheme to attract more talents from all parts of the world to come and contribute to the development of Hong Kong. These measures will be conducive to attracting quality talents from all parts of the world for all trades and industries in Hong Kong, including the tourism and hotel industries, thus bringing new blood and new momentum for our population.

On honest tourism, I must thank Mr WONG Kwok-hing for proposing in his amendment that honest tourism should be vigorously advocated and promoted.

The Tourism Commission has been working with the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), the HKTB, the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) and the Consumer Council to promote honest tourism in four aspects:

- (1) In respect of industry regulation, the TIC has actively strengthened regulation of travel agencies, tour guides as well as registered shops which exclusively receive inbound mainland tour groups, expedited the processing of cases of non-compliance and imposed heavier penalties on non-compliant parties;
- (2) In respect of publicity and consumer education, the HKTB has launched "Honest and Quality Hong Kong Tours" in eight cities in the Mainland, stressing that these tours will not be taken to designated shops to make purchases or forced to join self-paid activities, so that visitors can truly enjoy quality sightseeing activities arranged by these tours. These honest and quality Hong Kong tours will be further extended to Jilin, Harbin and Chengdu this year. Besides, the Consumer Council has just launched a new website of "Shop Smart in Hong Kong" in September to provide mainland visitors with updates and tips on shopping in Hong Kong, with a view to providing more information to mainland consumers.
- (3) In respect of co-operation with the Mainland, the Tourism Commission has maintained close liaison and contact with the CNTA and the Guangdong Provincial Tourism Administration to update each other on the work progress in promoting honest tourism. Upon receipt of complaints from inbound mainland tour groups, the TIC will immediately notify the CNTA and the relevant provincial tourism administration for them to follow up these cases expeditiously.
- (4) Finally, in respect of strengthening law enforcement and review of legislation, we will continuously make greater efforts to step up enforcement, in order to rigorously combat such malpractices as

deceiving tourists into making purchases. The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau is in the course of considering an amendment of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, with a view to combating undesirable sales practices.

It is the prime objective of the tourism industry to maintain Hong Kong's reputation as a quality tourist destination. Apart from the many measures to promote honest tourism that I mentioned earlier, the tourism related sectors, including the hotel, catering and retail sectors, all have a pivotal role to play. The Government has consistently encouraged these sectors to enhance management and provide more training to employees, in order to upgrade service quality and standard. The HKTB has introduced the Quality Tourism Services (QTS) Scheme for the catering and retail sectors, prescribing a set of criteria for assessing the service standard of merchants and for certifying participating merchants as QTS merchants. In the meantime, publicity has also been stepped up among visitors and the public, so as to provide safeguards for their spending and shopping activities through these quality merchants, thereby consolidating the image of Hong Kong as a quality tourist destination and, as Mr WONG Kwok-hing has said earlier, extending visitors' duration of stay in Hong Kong.

I so submit, Deputy President. And I will give a further response after listening to Members' views on this topic. Thank you.

MR CHAN KAM-LAM (in Cantonese): Deputy President, the recent opening of the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel has captured the attention of all sectors across the Hong Kong and Macao communities. Actually, Hong Kong people used to look down on Macao and thought that there was little worth mentioning in such a tiny place with scanty population except gambling. We hold the same condescending attitude towards other places in the Pearl River Delta (PRD). But when we find places like Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Dongguan, Zhongshan and Zhuhai are beginning to catch up, we are suddenly awake. The cause of this is not merely due to the "great Hong Kong" mentality but also the far too many disputes and contentions that we have had in the course of our development. As a result, we let slip the golden opportunities. The DAB thinks that we should view the development of our neighbouring cities with a realistic frame of mind and regard it as competition. This will enable us to go for innovation and change. At the same time, we should see the emerging

cities as our co-operative partners and we should forge mutual development with them.

In the 1 October "Golden Week" that has just passed, we can see that 540 000 mainland travellers have visited the territory, representing a drastic increase of 37% compared with last year. There were 390 000 mainland travellers who visited Macao during the same period and that represented an increase of 31%. From these figures it can be seen that the growth of visitors to Hong Kong is as good as that for Macao. Deputy President, we must realize that we have excellent basic conditions for the development of our tourist industry and these include an airport which is the hub of international flights, piers with deep-water berths, shopping facilities, hotel matching facilities, and so on.

The development of the tourism industry in Macao is riding on a strong momentum and Macao is doubtless a strong rival for us. But if we can adjust our thinking and policies, make good use of the leading edges of the Hong Kong tourism industry and tie in with the special features of Macao, we can begin a "multi-destination-itineraries" mode of tourism and Macao can become our excellent partner in attracting more international visitors.

With respect to enhancing co-operation with Macao in developing the tourism industry in both places, we opine that this is a diversified and multi-level task. The DAB thinks that an issue on a higher plane is to explore resource planning for the development of the tourism industry in the entire PRD. Such would include hardware facilities and matching software.

Hardware mainly refers to the construction of tourist spots and hotel facilities. In this regard, there should be a clear division of labour, giving full play to individual features of the three places in order that there would not be any duplication of construction efforts, cut-throat competition and a wastage of resources brought about by excessive development.

On the software side, the focus is mainly on manpower training. Now there is a great demand for management professionals in the tourism industry of the entire PRD. There are even headhunting activities going on. Therefore, the three places should undertake a study on the manpower demand in the tourism industry in order to draw up standards for future manpower training. For Hong Kong, apart from increasing training places at our own initiative, we

should also organize joint training programmes and in-service exchanges which take into account differences in the tourism facilities of the three places. This will enable the acquisition of different kinds of management experience by managers in order to help raise the quality of local tourist services and the development towards internationalization.

Deputy President, in order to promote greater numbers of mainland travellers visiting both Hong Kong and Macao, there must be more convenient measures to facilitate their travel. Two policy areas are involved in this. The first is immigration policy. This issue was also mentioned by the Secretary earlier. Now the endorsement for visitors on the Individual Visit Scheme applies to either a visit to Hong Kong or Macao and so in principle mainland visitors who have been given one endorsement cannot visit the two places together. The DAB thinks that this endorsement restriction should be lifted. This is definitely beneficial to the tourism industry in both Hong Kong and Macao. The SAR Government must take active steps to follow this matter up and strive to secure the issuance of a single exit endorsement for visiting both Hong Kong and Macao.

Besides, many Hong Kong residents who visit Macao have long since complained that the waiting time for entry into Macao during the peak hours is too long. This is also an experience shared by mainland visitors as well. Therefore, the Governments of Hong Kong and Macao should engage in talks on immigration matters such as letting Hong Kong and Macao residents use electronic immigration clearance. This can reduce the waiting time and also enable the Macao immigration authorities to deploy resources to serve travellers from other places and thereby ease the pressure on the control points.

The second aspect of policy studies should be on improving the transport links between Hong Kong and Macao. Now the transport between the two places is mainly ferry services. The helicopter is only playing a limited and secondary role. Since there are more than 6 million passenger trips from Hong Kong residents travelling to and from Macao, and there are 2 million passenger trips of mainland travellers going to Macao via Hong Kong, plus travellers to Hong Kong and Macao from other places, the demand for transport is constantly on the rise. But there are already signs of saturation at the outport piers in Macao. Plans to open a new ferry service to Macao fell through some time ago because there were not enough berth places. Of course, the Macao Government should take active steps to undertake expansion

of the existing piers and to construct new ones. In the long run, both Hong Kong and Macao should develop more air, marine and overland transport links and in this respect, helicopter service would have great market potentials.

Also, the proposed Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge has met repeated delays and is not yet finalized. This is also a vital issue to be addressed. We hope that the SAR Government can expedite the procedures for finalizing the project so that there can be greater and all-round co-operation and development for the economies and tourism industries of both places.

Thank you, Deputy President.

MR TOMMY CHEUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, as we all know, Hong Kong is known as a gourmet's paradise because Hong Kong is a rendezvous of the Chinese and Western culinary arts. Be it dishes from all over China or delicacies from every corner of the world, these can all be found in Hong Kong. The stunning variety of foods here and their superb quality are a source of pride for the local people and a cause for praises from foreign visitors.

According to figures from the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), spending on food and catering by incoming visitors who do not stay overnight clocked in double-digit growth for each of the past few years. In 2004, for example, the growth rate was 15.8%. In 2005, it was 21.3% and in 2006, it was 10.9%. The amount of money spent was as much as some \$560 million. From this it can be seen that if we can boost the tourism industry, there will certainly be robust growth in the food and catering industry. So apart from those employed in the industry, the local economy will also stand to benefit. Of late some people from the industry told me that in some areas frequented by the local people, that is, in some eateries well-liked by the locals, such as in shops offering hot-pot meals in Kowloon City, it was found that there were many mainland visitors queuing up to have a taste of this local favourite and their spending was very high too. So we can see that mainland travellers know how to find their way to good food in Hong Kong.

With the development of the nearby places, the tourism industry of Hong Kong is facing a challenge. But this also means good opportunities for development. The question is how we would seize these opportunities, get well-prepared and take on the new kinds of competition.

It follows that we must be innovative and make ourselves more attractive. An example is that LI Changjian, the Minister of the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China, made a call lately to urge tourists to come to Hong Kong for hairy crabs. As a matter of fact, hairy crabs are a great attraction for Japanese and Taiwanese visitors. A few months ago, the Chairman of the HKTB, Mr James TIEN, personally hosted the filming crew of the Discovery Channel and brought them to savour the local delicacies found along the tramway on Hong Kong Island. These included the local bistro cafes, the famed barbecued pork served with rice, and so on. The foreign filming team lavished praises on the great food and good taste.

However, our neighbour Macao is sparing no efforts in publicizing its own local delicacies and rich tourism resources. In my opinion, Hong Kong and Macao each has its own distinctive qualities in tourism and culinary culture. If the two places can join hands and step up the promotion, I am sure more visitors will be attracted to stay longer and hence a win-win situation can be made possible.

On the Mainland, regional tourism is fast booming. Ever since the end of 2004, the Pan-Pearl River Delta Region is gradually opening itself up to barrier-free tourism partnership, with many measures introduced to break the barriers in the tourism region and to forge collaboration in developing the tourism industry. According to preliminary statistics, as of mid-2006, the number of inter-province travellers rose by nearly 20% and this gave a great boost to the regional tourism revenue, from that the food and catering industry gained much benefit.

Regional tourism is also a key strategy in developing the tourism industry in other countries. A well-known example is the tourism partnership between Fukuoda of Japan and Busan of Korea. The cities of Fukuoda and Busan are separated by the Korea Strait and they are just 200 km apart. The tourist departments of the cities have reached an agreement whereby foreign visitors to Fukuoda or Busan may ride on a hydrofoil at the Hakata Port to the other side to continue with their journey. Travellers can get concessionary prices in the hydrofoil return tickets and in accommodation. As the hydrofoil trip only takes three hours and the fare is cheaper than travelling by air, so after this measure is introduced, there has been a great surge in the number of foreign visitors travelling to these two places on hydrofoil.

The distance between Hong Kong and Macao is much shorter, being a mere 40 km. A trip only requires about one hour. Therefore, there are immense potentials for greater collaboration. The rich resources in tourism as well as tourist products of both sides can be made good use of and when coupled with the hosting of world-class events, I am sure both sides will stand to benefit.

Therefore, I agree very much with the recommendations made in the motion today, that is, to simplify the formalities for mainland visitors to Hong Kong and Hong Kong visitors to Macao in a bid to boost the visitor volume of the two places.

It is amazing to see that in such a small place as Hong Kong there are some 12 000 eateries with more than 200 000 people employed in the trade. They are making immense contribution to the local economy and the quality of life of the people here. If we can put in vigorous efforts to develop regional tourism, it will certainly give a further impetus to the local food and catering industry and upgrade our reputation as an international gourmet's paradise. I think the Secretary would be pleased to hear that as we hire a lot of low-skilled workers and those with low educational attainment, this will certainly be a good thing for these workers.

Lastly, Deputy President, I would like to talk about the issue of training. Over the past some 20 years with the opening up of the country, the food and catering industry was the one which suffered most. This is because at the beginning of the opening up, the senior management staff and the chefs moved out of Hong Kong and worked on the Mainland. Hence there was a problem of succession gap and a lack of professionals in the industry during the past two decades, resulting in great difficulty in running the business. I hope when Honourable colleagues are to plan training programmes, they can work more on the Pearl River Delta and Macao and they should not just focus their attention on training the people there for the purpose of exporting them to work in Hong Kong. The reason is that if we can train up people in those places, they will then not have to headhunt our talents. Then the Hong Kong food and catering industry can grow on solid ground. With respect to investment in China by the Hong Kong food and catering industry, it was a tough time during the 1980s and 1990s, but things have started to change for the better since the turn of the century. Why? Because many of the eating establishments opened in China can be managed by chefs from Guangzhou, and this applies especially to

Cantonese cuisine. There would not be any need for chefs from Hong Kong. In a way this has made us more competitive and we are finding the business environment on the Mainland better.

I therefore think that training is essential, but we should stop thinking about the question of whether the food and catering industry needs to import talents. On the contrary, training will serve to reduce the need to export local professionals. Thank you, Deputy President.

MR TIMOTHY FOK (in Cantonese): Deputy President, with the opening of new casinos and huge holiday resorts in Macao, the tourism industry in Macao is posing direct and increasingly noticeable competition to Hong Kong. The pressure on Hong Kong is felt when we compare the visitor figures, hotel occupancy rates, arrival figures, duration of stay and spending in the two places.

Hong Kong has always held a prominent position on the tourism map of Asia but when faced with the fast development of Macao in tourism and other aspects, the pressure on us is increasingly felt. There is this sense of being caught up and overtaken from behind. However, I must point out that no one can enjoy a leading position forever, for by the same token, no flower can bloom and blossom forever. To stay ahead and given the macro context of globalization and market integration, one must make constant adjustments and improvements. This is the hard truth of survival in the market and it is no exception for the tourism industry. As a matter of fact, Hong Kong still has a clear edge in the global tourism market and in attracting mainland visitors. Only that the sense of novelty is found wanting in our tourism infrastructure. The failure to catch up is becoming more marked and we are getting increasingly dependent on the existing resources. This is in stark contrast to an emerging Macao in its prime. Hence the Hong Kong tourism sector is caught by a sweeping sense of crisis. After all, this could well be a good thing, for it is only when we are aware of our own inadequacy that we will strive to improve.

Deputy President, given the geographical proximity between Hong Kong and Macao and despite the same source of patrons in the two places, the sightseeing and spending pattern of visitors in Hong Kong and Macao is completely different. There is no vicious competition of a zero-sum kind.

The two places are only competing for being the first stop on the travellers' itinerary and how much the travellers are going to spend. So what is needed is for the tourist industry of both cities to engage in dialogue and closer partnership, work together to boost the tourism market, and then both will arrive at a win-win situation.

Of greater importance is that we must look farther ahead and we should not focus all our attention on Hong Kong or on such a tiny point as collaboration with Macao. This is because the source of clientele and travel pattern in Hong Kong, Macao and the Mainland, especially the Pearl River Delta, have merged and are inextricably linked. Therefore, when looking into co-operation between Hong Kong and Macao, efforts must be made to extend the objective of co-operation into the Mainland, especially Shenzhen and Guangdong Province. Otherwise, I am afraid the effect of such co-operation would be very limited indeed. I so submit.

MS AUDREY EU (in Cantonese): The Civic Party supports the spirit behind the motion, that is, to enhance co-operation with Macao in developing the tourism industry. Of course, we also agree that greater convenience should be provided to visitors to Hong Kong, such as building or developing more tourist spots, facilitating the issuance of visas or training various kinds of professionals, and so on. However, the Civic Party is more concerned about the question of whether or not we have a sound system which allows the tourism industry to pursue sustainable development. So we are more concerned about what Mr WONG Kwok-hing points out in his amendment about honest tourism, news about problems encountered by visitors to Hong Kong and the relevant system.

As we can see, the number of complaints lodged by mainland travellers during the 1 October "Golden Week" this year dropped from 37 during the Labour Day "Golden Week" to 12. This is a sharp fall by 70%. From all appearances, this is a good achievement. But does the figure show that those problems which we often talk about, like the zero-fare tours or those problems which visitors often face have all been solved?

From the *Ming Pao* we learn that the local receiving travel agencies would often arrange two tour guides, one being in charge of sightseeing matters and the other of shopping matters. When problems crop up, say during the

shopping activities, the sightseeing tour guide will say that the tour guide responsible for shopping matters cannot be found and a very irresponsible attitude is shown. Actually, during the past couple of months we can still see a lot of reports in the newspaper about this kind of acts done to fleece the visitors or about institutional problems in the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong.

All along the impression which Hong Kong gives to other people is that we have a good system. For example, we have the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), the customs service and sound laws. Often when visitors come to Hong Kong, the tour guide will say to them that they can rest assured as they shop in Hong Kong because the system here is very sound. There are newspaper reports that some tour guides would say to the visitors that they should pay attention to the rule of law, management, civilized behaviour and shopping in Hong Kong. These are what they say to make the visitors feel at ease. This works to boost the desire of visitors from the Mainland or other places to shop in Hong Kong.

However, it is the Hong Kong tourism industry which will suffer in the end if this kind of tactic is used to attract visitors while we do not have an adequate monitoring system or if those unscrupulous shops are not punished. The Government is taking active steps to promote honest tourism. It is reported that only about 3 000 people joined the honest tourism package tours during the 1 October "Golden Week". The number was only about 10% of the total number of visitors on package tours. The response was not at all enthusiastic. I have learnt from the sector that more honesty tourism products would be launched to attract mainland visitors. But in the absence of an open and transparent system, should by sheer bad luck something goes wrong with even the honesty tourism programme, then it would deal an even greater blow to Hong Kong.

Poor quality tours do not just cause damage to the impression of mainland tourists of Hong Kong, it would also tarnish our international reputation. Figures for the first half of 2007 show that, of the 13 million visitors to Hong Kong, 45.6% come from places all over the world, such as America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, and so on. If this Hong Kong brand is affected, the international rating of Hong Kong in trustworthiness is bound to suffer.

If we look at a prime travel magazine of the United States called *Travel+Leisure*, we can see that in 2006, Hong Kong ranked number five in Asia in an Internet poll on the best travel city. Such a rating is not too bad at first glance, but if we look back five years ago, Hong Kong then ranked number one in Asia. Last year we did not even make the top three. This shows that we lag behind other people in many aspects. Other cities in Southeast Asia, like Bangkok and Chiang Mai, are catching up. Faced with these challenges, the Hong Kong Government must introduce many measures in the system to ensure monitoring and regulation in the tourism sector and prevent such kind of negative reports from occurring.

I have said many times in this Chamber — not with Secretary Matthew CHEUNG but other Directors of Bureau — that the Consumer Council (CC) has done a lot of work on this. Often people from the CC would say to Members of this Council when they meet us that their workload is increasing all the time, but funding from the Government does not increase at all. So in this connection, I hope that the Government can give serious thoughts to legislation and allocate more funding to the CC. In the long run, this is extremely important to the regulation and development of Hong Kong and ensuring that the tourism industry can grow in a healthy manner.

(THE PRESIDENT assumed the Chair)

Some years ago the CC came to the Legislative Council and said to us that it had to have some laws that would give the CC enough powers such that as circumstances permit, it could lodge a collective lawsuit on behalf of the visitors or consumers. Actually, after the CC has set up the Consumer Legal Action Fund, the CC has been acting in a most prudent manner in all the legal actions it takes. I hope the Government can vest more powers with the CC in many aspects to ensure that not only local but also overseas consumers can be protected, so that they can have the confidence to do shopping in Hong Kong.

President, the Civic Party supports the original motion and all the amendments. Thank you, President.

MR ANDREW LEUNG (in Cantonese): Madam President, the tourism industry has always been a major pillar in the Hong Kong economy. With

respect to the motion proposed by Mr James TIEN today on enhancing co-operation with Macao in developing the tourism industry, both the Federation of Hong Kong Industries (FHKI) and I support it.

Last month, a deputation from the FHKI led by the Chairman, Mr Clement CHEN, went to Macao and met with Mr Edmund HO, the Chief Executive of Macao. During the meeting, the Chief Executive made it clear that both Hong Kong and Macao could join hands in developing the convention and exhibition industry. When coupled with the commercial and economic growth in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) in recent years, the three places could set up a mechanism for close partnership and dialogue and engage in co-ordination for the building up of software and hardware support in the tourism industry. Various tourist spots in the region could be linked up for expansion in leisure, business and family travel and attracting more business travellers from overseas and the Mainland to Hong Kong, Macao and the PRD. The longer the duration of their stay, the greater will be the economic benefits so gained.

Madam President, the motion proposed by Mr TIEN today focuses on the collaboration between Hong Kong and Macao, so I would concentrate on this aspect. All along many visitors, especially those from overseas, would first come to Hong Kong before they go to Macao. Though in recent years some travellers would choose to go from the control point at Gongbei or take a plane and fly to Macao direct, as the international flights to the Macao airport are much fewer than those to Hong Kong, plus the fact that our image as an international financial centre and a cosmopolitan city is widely known among travellers from many countries, Hong Kong remains a major passageway to Macao. Over the past few months, many of the participants in conventions and exhibitions in Macao also went there via Hong Kong. Although these travellers did not make Hong Kong their principal destination, they had brought some positive impact on the Hong Kong tourism industry. This is a good showcase of for collaboration between Hong Kong and Macao in tourism.

The tourism industry is from first to last a service industry. Apart from tourist spots and accommodation, people are the essential element. Now many of the people in Macao who work in the tourism, entertainment and related trades, such as those managers of the large shopping malls, are those who have crossed the other side of the sea from Hong Kong. This permits greater room for development of the management professionals in Hong Kong while also furnishes a supply of high-calibre management professionals in Macao.

Madam President, on this question of professionals, I think I would have to speak in my capacity as Chairman of the Hong Kong Vocational Training Council (VTC). The VTC is the largest training organization in Hong Kong and of course we are delighted to see the Government launch policies and measures to foster growth in the local tourism industry and enhance service quality in tourism and related trades as well as assisting the professionals in their employment.

Every year the VTC would offer prevocational courses for young people with various levels of educational attainment. At present, the Department of Hotel, Service and Tourism Studies of the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE), the Hospitality Industry Training and Development Centre and the Chinese Cuisine Training Institute offer related programmes. Each year a total of 5 000 prevocational places and 2 000 in-service training places are offered to the industry. The scope of IVE programmes covers hotel operations, food and beverage and tourism. Many graduates of these programmes can work their way to supervisory positions, and they can even be promoted to middle management positions after gaining one or two years' experience. Also, the Hospitality Industry Training and Development Centre and the Chinese Cuisine Training Institute mainly offer prevocational certificate courses to train staff and supervisors at the elementary level. Courses include front office, housekeeping, western and Chinese kitchen practice, cooking training, and so on. In-service courses for supervisors and food hygiene management, and so on, are also offered.

Last year the Council of the VTC decided to build a training hotel in Pok Fu Lam. The project is financed by the VTC, encompassing elements in hotel, tourism, leisure health and tonic cuisine. It is a farsighted attempt to dovetail with the new trends in the development of the tourism industry. We hope that the Government will make a positive response by increasing the recurrent funding to raise substantially the training places.

On the third recommendation made by Mr TIEN, that is, "collaborating with the relevant authorities in Macao and Guangdong Province in training middle and senior management professionals for the hotel and tourism sectors", the VTC has over the past couple of years begun to offer some teacher training courses for some vocational training schools and technical schools in some municipalities and provinces on the Mainland. At present, this is done in a relatively small scale and we would be glad to explore further opportunities of

co-operation with Macao and the Guangdong Province, including the training of middle management professionals, for the hotel and tourism sectors in a self-financing mode.

Madam President, Hong Kong has always treasured the development of the tourism industry, for not only the tourism and hotel sectors but also the retail, food and beverage and other sectors will benefit from such. Hong Kong and Macao have been working hard in recent years to build up their tourism industry and their rich tourism resources have made their travel products very attractive. The two places offer world-class international events, excellent cultural and leisure activities, plus sceneries that are known all over the world. I trust if the tourism industry in the two places is to grow better, there would be a need to consolidate and integrate the tourist resources in the two places effectively before a win-win situation can be achieved.

With these remarks, Madam President, I support the motion.

MR LI KWOK-YING (in Cantonese): Madam President, the opening of the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel not long ago has not only become the talk of the town but also caught the attention of all quarters. The hotel has a mega deluxe exhibition hall. This is regarded as a formidable rival to the local convention and tourism sectors, posing a head-on challenge to Hong Kong's position as the leader in the convention and exhibition industry in Asia. Hong Kong's development in many areas, especially in the convention and exhibition industry, began earlier than Macao, but with Macao fast catching up, apart from worries or jealousy, can we think positively on the premise of complementing each other's advantages and strive to co-operate with Macao so that we can share the huge market potentials while maintaining our own competitiveness?

Madam President, about co-operating with Macao to develop the tourism industry, if only we have noticed the present state of affairs, we would see that it has long been true that things no longer allow us to stay at the level of discussing whether or not we should co-operate with Macao but we should be pragmatic and take the initiative to put forward all kinds of workable measures to change this threat into a complementary condition, work together to attract more visitors and achieve a win-win situation. Visitors from the Mainland have always been important clients for both Hong Kong and Macao and mainland visitors take up the largest share of visitors to Hong Kong.

However, with the opening of the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel, visitors to Macao in September 2007 have increased drastically by 30% and the total number of visitors has even surpassed that of Hong Kong. Both the number of visitors to Macao and the stunning size and immense influence of the Venetian have sounded an alarm for the development of the tourism industry in Hong Kong.

However, the convention and exhibition industry in Macao is still not fully developed and its software and matching facilities are not yet sufficient while Hong Kong has got rich experience and edges in these areas. So if we can seize the opportunity, the development of the convention and exhibition industry in Macao can bring in more business opportunities to Hong Kong. A breakthrough from the impasse of the local convention and exhibition industry can be expected.

Madam President, from all appearances it is unthinkable to view the development of our rival a golden opportunity for our own development. However, as the saying goes, water from one's field will not flow into someone else's field. Since the Venetian is making such a towering presence and it is bent on turning Macao into an international resort and centre for business conferences, how are we to collaborate with Macao? The answer to this question is that business travel in Macao is still at an infancy stage and there is a lack of sufficient professionals and software to back it up. In transport facilities, for example, because of the drastic increase in visitors to Macao, and its narrow streets and heavy traffic, the problem of traffic congestion is getting serious. In terms of other matching facilities, there is also the same problem of insufficient provision and the enclave is unable to cope with this surge in visitors.

On the other hand, insofar as manpower demand is concerned, now the greatest problem confronting the development of the convention and exhibition industry in Macao is the shortage of professionals. So it has to rely on importing management professionals. Although we have a lot of management professionals in convention and exhibition, these people will naturally become headhunting targets of Macao and even other places in Asia. In the face of the shortage of professionals in Macao and the possible drain of professionals in Hong Kong, if we just sit back and do nothing about it, there is bound to be a scramble for professionals at the end of the day. Hence, there will be uncertainties in the development of the two places. In view of this, the SAR Government should play its role to ensure that on the premise of having enough

professionals in Hong Kong, foster collaboration to develop the tourism industry and the convention and exhibition industry with Macao and places in Guangdong Province. This will serve to train up more professionals in the three places while also consolidate our position as a convention and exhibition centre.

Madam President, we can use our leading edges as the assets for co-operation with Macao and we can complement the edges of both places and realign the relevant resources in order to reverse our unfavourable position in the development of the tourism and convention and exhibition industries. At present, the fatal shortcoming of our convention and exhibition industry is a shortage of venue. If we do not want more of our exhibition participants to go over to Macao and other places, should we not study the possibility of developing the industry together with Macao? In the case of Macao, with the opening of the Venetian, although competition in the convention and exhibition industry is becoming fierce in Macao, the convention and exhibition facilities at the Fishermen's Wharf also stand to benefit. The reason is simple: The Venetian has made the entire convention and exhibition market larger and so other members of the industry can all carve out a share.

By the same token, the synergy effect can also come to play in Hong Kong and Macao, for the two places can join hands to develop the convention and exhibition industry. This will enable the sectors in Macao to go international while the problem of venue shortage in Hong Kong can be addressed. Moreover, since Macao has a lot of large-scale gaming and entertainment facilities as well as world-class historical sites and heritage, this will greatly enhance the attractiveness of mutual co-operation. The result is that a conference can be held in two places. People can go to one place for conference and exhibition first, then another place for entertainment and shopping afterwards. This will open up more opportunities for the development of the convention and exhibition industry in the two places.

Madam President, in developing the convention and exhibition sectors as well as the tourism industry, Hong Kong and Macao can work out more modes of co-operation and create opportunities for development. The key lies in whether or not we have the determination to march forward and address the problems in development. Besides Macao, Hong Kong is also facing severe competition from other cities in Asia, if we pretend not to see this state of affairs, we will only end up losing our remaining edges and position.

With these remarks, Madam President, I support the motion.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): Madam President, the motion moved by Mr James TIEN today is meaningful, for we were saying how to compete with Macao not very long ago and that was like having a fight with it over something. Of course, there are things that there is not a chance we can compete with Macao. I also know that Mr James TIEN or the Liberal Party would very much want to see gambling licences granted in Hong Kong. But I would think that this has been ruled out, for the Central Authorities have made their position clear. However, can we not do something together? The gaming issue is out of the question. This is a favour extended from the Central Authorities to Macao. Even as we are unhappy about it, we have to accept it. As for the tourism industry, including the convention and exhibition industry, plus entertainment services other than gambling, I think there are chances that we can achieve a win-win situation.

It is rather special today. Madam President, I notice that the Secretary for Labour and Welfare is present. Actually, a few other Directors of Bureau should also be in attendance. For example, something on trade and commerce may be touched upon. It is because I shall be talking about conservation. Why would I want to talk about conservation? We know that besides running the gaming business well, Macao also puts us into shame when it comes to town planning, especially in conservation policy. Many cities close to us, like Macao and Singapore, have done a very good job in conserving historical and cultural heritage and revitalizing these sites. But in Hong Kong, we can see that many historical buildings or those with conservation value are torn down one after another and this is done at the Government's own initiative. Examples are the Star Ferry Pier and the Queen's Pier which we have all seen. When I talk to tourists about this, they feel sorry about this. They cannot come to Hong Kong to try their luck at a gambling table. And often times, the convention and exhibition industry in Hong Kong is powerless to withstand the fierce competition. But when people come to see cultural relics and our culture which are the most valuable things here, there is not much to be seen. And the situation is getting from bad to worse. Why can we not compare favourably even with Macao? The SAR Government must search its soul and ponder over it.

We know that there are many famous tourist spots in Macao, like the Ruins of St Paul's, the Leal Senado Building, Banco Naciono Ultramarino and numerous museums that are scattered all over the enclave such as the Folk Museum, the Furniture Museum and the Maritime Museum, and so on. All

these are favourite tourist spots. Many people in Hong Kong — apart from some who like gambling — would go to Macao especially to see things that are no longer seen in Hong Kong. Actually, such things used to be here in Hong Kong but our Government is so short-sighted. We do not have to refer to the SAR Government now or the colonial government in the past. What is so heartbreaking is that after 1997, we thought that the Government would look at things farther ahead and it would look at the value of things and do its best to preserve cultural relics of lasting value to Hong Kong. But the Government did not do it. We know that tearing down some of the antiquities and relics and sell the land will definitely make money. This is because land prices have been pushed to sky high by the high premium policy practised by the Government. Land is worth at least \$10,000 per sq ft and in some cases it may even be \$20,000 to \$30,000 per sq ft. When the Government tears down the relics and antiquities, mind you, these are situated in the prime sites, it will certainly make a lot of money. But this is like killing the hen to get the egg. These are the treasures of Hong Kong. These are what visitors from all over the world want to see now and will want to see in the future in Hong Kong. They want these to be preserved. But we have not preserved these things and we have not done a good job in preserving them. So I think if we are really to co-operate with Macao in developing the tourism industry, then the SAR Government, that is, all the government departments, should go to Macao and take a look there, especially at the planning departments.

We should see how the Macao Government carries out work in the conservation of cultural relics. It is doing it in a practical and down-to-earth manner. For example, many people would go to some of the former clubs in Macao, such as the one for Portuguese civil servants, which has been turned into a restaurant. But there is no such thing in Hong Kong. We just have to look at the former Marine Police Headquarters in Tsim Sha Tsui to see what a total failure is like. The Government has now turned it into a super six-star hotel and in future I am afraid we cannot even afford to pay for a cup of coffee there. Because it is a super six-star hotel. But in Macao, new life is breathed into the heritage buildings and they become affordable restaurants that ordinary residents of Hong Kong and Macao can patronize. This is actually the kind of things we need.

There are things that we can do, but we have either given them up or have not done them. There are things that we should have done such as fighting for the preservation of antiquities and monuments or forging

complementary arrangements with Macao. Such are the things that can be done. I also believe that insofar as the conservation of cultural relics and heritage tours are concerned, there would not be too much negative competition between Hong Kong and Macao in many areas. For after all, besides gambling, Hong Kong can co-exist amicably with Macao. As mentioned in the original motion, we can fight for the issuance of a single exit endorsement for visiting Hong Kong and Macao, make the immigration clearance procedures faster and co-operate in the training of professionals in the hotel and tourism sectors, and so on. Actually, there should not be too much negative competition between the two places in these areas. And I do not think the two places will put away all the relevant measures and do nothing. I do not know if the motion or the amendments can all be passed, but I hope that the Government will later act on the recommendations made in the motion and the amendments and appeal to the Central Authorities for the issuance of the abovementioned exit endorsement, and improve the immigration clearance system, and we must also do something to enhance our cultural conservation policy. We must achieve something so that other people, be they from Macao, the Mainland or visitors from all over the world, can treasure these places when they come to Hong Kong.

I so submit. Thank you, Madam President.

DR RAYMOND HO (in Cantonese): Madam President, not long ago a big hotel was opened in Macao and this sparked off a round of heated discussions in Hong Kong on the competitiveness of the two places in the tourism and convention and exhibition industries. It must be admitted that over the past decade Macao has made outstanding achievements in developing the tourism industry. This is a worthy lesson for Hong Kong. However, the advances made by Macao do not necessarily pose a threat to Hong Kong or that it would become our competitor. On the contrary, the new developments in Macao can bring new opportunities to both places if the right kind of co-operation is forged.

As a matter of fact, both Hong Kong and Macao, as well as the Pearl River Delta (PRD) nearby, do have differences in their respective historical background and mode of economic development. They are each in their own ways attractive to visitors. If the three places can join hands in developing the tourism industry, they should be able to merge and form an appealing regional

tourism itinerary. And travellers with diverse interests can be attracted to travel and spend in the region. The governments, tourism authorities or organizations in these three places can hold large-scale promotional activities to market this regional travel itinerary and the great diversity in these places to both overseas and mainland tourists. Such an arrangement will on the one hand enable systematic promotions to be carried out and produce a synergy effect, offer diversified, coherent and theme-based travel plans while on the other save on promotions made by each place on its own, hence enabling a better use of resources.

Moreover, if efforts can be made to upgrade the existing transport network in the region, this will definitely be conducive to the development of regional travel itineraries. If the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge which has been under discussion for a long time can be finalized soon, it would have a positive impact on the development of the tourism industry in the region. The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge will provide a more convenient and faster overland transport link to the tourists. If the design of the Bridge can accommodate a railway, the tourists can even choose to go to various scenic spots or destinations in the region by train. The trip itself can be packaged as a very attractive tour. As for the future immigration clearance arrangement for the new Bridge, it should aim at providing convenience to travellers and if circumstances permit, the plan to implement co-location of clearance at three places should be accorded top priority.

To facilitate mainland travellers in coming to Hong Kong and Macao on the same trip, the governments of the two places should study at the soonest the advantages and disadvantages of the issuance of a single exit endorsement for visiting Hong Kong and Macao under the Individual Visit Scheme. If the plan is found to be beneficial to all parties and if the matching facilities at the border control points can cope with the passenger flow, then the SAR Governments of Hong Kong and Macao should appeal to the Central Government for taking the plan forward and discuss with it the specific arrangements concerned.

Apart from striving for co-operation with Macao and the PRD Region, Hong Kong should enhance its own tourism facilities as well as the related matching facilities, including finalizing as soon as possible the construction of a cruise terminal at the old Kai Tak Airport, begin the tourist projects in Aberdeen, upgrade and expand the local convention and exhibition facilities, and so on. Of equal importance to the development of the local tourism

industry is the enhancement of service quality in the industry. Training should also be provided to groom management professionals of a high quality. In addition, Hong Kong must forge closer collaboration with Macao and Guangdong Province and engage in more exchanges and visits, before the synergy effect can be brought into full play.

With these remarks, Madam President, I support the original motion.

MR VINCENT FANG (in Cantonese): Madam President, it has been five years since I have served as a member of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, so I can say that I know something about marketing Hong Kong as a must-see city in Asia and how to attract visitors to stay longer in Hong Kong. Actually, it is never easy doing these, because Hong Kong does not have any unusual natural scenery or any historical sites and antiquities. So we must work hard on adding scenic spots, produce some big events and raise the quality of tourist service and provide a good shopping environment, thereby attracting more visitors. However, there is a kind of work that not many people are aware of and that is, we have done a lot of work to develop linked tours such as those between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta or even as far as places like Yunan and Guizhou.

When people go out to travel, they would seldom just go to a certain city. The situation is just like that of the travel agencies in Hong Kong, for they would have tours to six countries in Eastern Europe, four countries in Scandinavia, or western Portugal and Gibraltar, and so on. This summer, the Panel on Commerce and Industry and the Panel on Economic Services paid a visit to Barcelona in Spain and studied the cruise terminal facilities there. The place is the base of the largest cruise company in the world. The company also invests in piers in the tourist cities along the Aegean Sea as well as running overland tours. The reason is that travellers would choose to visit more than one place. It is like after going to Shanghai, we would like to go to Hangzhou and Suzhou. In this way, the development of peripheral cities may also benefit.

It is actually not enough to make Hong Kong a single selling point. If we can collaborate with our neighbouring cities and form a tourist region, it would complement things and everyone will benefit.

Recently, we have had a debate on the challenge posed by the fast development of the exhibition and convention industry in Macao. It is actually not a bad thing to have challenges or competition, the question is whether or not we pretend not to see such challenges and competition and we would just sit here and do nothing or if we would take on the challenges and make ourselves more competitive. If it is the latter, then with the existing advantages that we possess, we are certain that we can continue to play a leading role.

The greatest advantage we have is that we are the aviation hub of Asia. Our network of international flights is much better than our neighbouring cities and countries. And we have good links with the transport networks on the Mainland. On top of these, we have rich experience in tourist services of an international standard. Our attraction for the tourists is vastly different from that our neighbours, especially Macao. I do not think I need to dwell on this point. So there is definitely room for collaboration between Hong Kong and Macao in developing the tourism industry. Our target groups can be divided into mainland and overseas tourists. As mainland tourists take up the largest proportion of our inbound visitors, I think that we should work more on this. Of the many recommendations made earlier on by the Chairman of our Liberal Party, I would only like to stress one point and that is, we hope that the Government can discuss with the Central Government on the issuance of a single exit endorsement for mainland tourists to visit Hong Kong and Macao. This is because the arrangement can save the time and visa fees, thereby attracting more mainland visitors to come to Hong Kong and Macao on a single trip.

As for international travellers, I think that efforts must be made to enhance the co-operation between Hong Kong and Macao in promotion, especially with respect to international events. This applies, for example, to the Lunar New Year Parade. If Macao can hold some events such as the recent fireworks competition and they can be held more or less at the same time with our fireworks display on the National Day, this would help make this region more attractive to the tourists.

It is only with competition that there can be any progress. The most important strategy to employ in the face of competition is to make ourselves stronger and better. Therefore, I hope that the Government can continue to enhance our tourist facilities and transport infrastructure, and increase the supply of hotels. The tourism sector should provide better services. And we

in the retail sector should raise the service quality and work hard to strengthen our reputation as a shopper's paradise. Then this economic pillar of tourism will continue to lend a firm support to our economic development.

With these remarks, Madam President, I support the motion moved by Mr James TIEN.

MR RONNY TONG (in Cantonese): President, I was quite disappointed when I saw today's motion for the first time because the terms of the motion merely emphasize technical co-operation and improvement without any attempt to make a comparison between the tourism industries of Hong Kong and Macao to find out their similarities or inadequacies. On the other hand, I was quite disappointed with the first proposal raised in the motion appealing to the Central Government to make available to the Hong Kong Government more room under the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS). I recall this very witty line in a movie I watched a long time ago: "If you build it, they will come". In other words, the problem hinges not on whom should be invited to come but how one should enrich oneself to enhance his or her own attractiveness.

President, Macao and Hong Kong are an odd pair of twins. Despite being separated by a stretch of water, Macao (though it seemed so alien to me when I was small) resembles Hong Kong very closely. Both cities were once European colonies and reunited with China only in the recent decade. Furthermore, they each have their unique historical backgrounds. However, the two cities are actually vastly different, especially in terms of their course of development. While Hong Kong is moving gradually towards a business hub, Macao is moving towards a so-called entertainment centre. Actually, there are huge differences between the two places. Given the differences, how can the two places co-operate? Actually, they can simply complement each other. We have no wish for Hong Kong to become a second Macao. Therefore, President, I strongly oppose the proposal raised by the Liberal Party some time ago for a casino to be built in Hong Kong. How can we achieve what Macao has already achieved? How can Hong Kong compete with Macao to become a so-called leisure tourism centre? By the same token, there is no way for Macao to compete with Hong Kong to become a business hub.

Therefore, such technical problems as how to facilitate immigration clearance or widen the room under the IVS should not be a matter of concern to

us. Instead, we should pay attention to our geographical strengths. Because of the proximity of the two cities to each other, it takes only an hour to travel by sea between them. It will be even faster if a helicopter is taken instead. Such being the case, their attractions will be enhanced if they can give travellers two kinds of diametrically different travelling experience, and both Hong Kong and Macao can be benefited as a result. So, what should we do?

President, in my opinion, Hong Kong's tourism industry has three key areas: first, cultural tourism; second, ecological tourism; and third, business tourism. Please allow me to briefly introduce the key points one by one.

What does cultural tourism mean? Actually, many internationally renowned tourist destinations are characterized by their unique cultural backgrounds. Hong Kong has its unique cultural background too. Besides Singapore, Hong Kong is actually the world's only colonial society inhabited by Chinese people. Therefore, when we talk about culture, we do not merely talk about arts and culture, we also have to talk about our historical and social culture. If these unique characteristics can attract tourists, we will be able to truly develop cultural tourism. However, it is greatly regrettable that the SAR Government seems to have never considered how to turn Hong Kong's historical background into a tourist attraction. Actually, many Honourable colleagues have in the past mentioned in this Chamber a lot of buildings or scenic spots with historic or cultural value. However, these buildings and scenic spots have been demolished one by one. In this regard, I think it is really necessary for the Government to review how Hong Kong's uniqueness can be preserved rather than eliminated.

President, ecology tourism is in itself a new tourist attraction. Actually, the Wetland Park developed in Hong Kong marks a very good beginning. However, the Wetland Park is not, and cannot be, the only point on the eco-tour map. There are indeed many natural and ecological attractions in Hong Kong. Our coastlines and small islands can be considered unique in the world. If Members pay a visit to Greece or the Mediterranean Sea, they will probably find that the Mediterranean Sea is nothing special. Our coastlines are actually very beautiful and attractive. Furthermore, many small islands in Hong Kong are extremely attractive too. Members paying attention to reports in newspapers or weekly magazines recently would find that there are a large number of funny scenic places unknown to the locals, such as the "Tortoise

Climbing up the Mountain" and "Finger Rock", in Hong Kong. Why do we not capitalize on these ecological attractions to attract overseas tourists? I think the Government should consider this.

Furthermore, there are well-known parks in almost all attractive cities, such as the Central Park in New York and many more attractive parks in London. Therefore, it is worthwhile for us to consider developing ecological tourism in this direction.

I would like to turn to business tourism as soon as possible. Actually, business tourism has proved to be attractive in modern times. Though we are heading in the right direction by developing our convention and exhibition facilities, it must be borne in mind that we can still broaden the attractiveness of business tourism in other aspects. For instance, the global vision of our professional services or arbitration facilities can be widened. Insofar as the latter are concerned, a non-judicial mediation service has been provided most recently. All these facilities may attract business travellers to stay in Hong Kong for a longer period.

President, I hope through this debate question today, the Hong Kong Government can reflect on how to develop Hong Kong's uniqueness and thereby co-operate with Macao. Thank you, President.

MR BERNARD CHAN: Madam President, even by Hong Kong standards, Macao's tourism industry has seen very rapid growth in recent years. Visitor arrivals are now running at over 20 million a year — over 40 tourists per resident. Hong Kong's visitor levels are only a few million more than last year, leaving us with less than four visitors per resident. This is of course tied to the fact that Macao has now overtaken Las Vegas in terms of gambling revenues.

It is wrong for us to think that Macao's success is bad for Hong Kong. If some mainland tourists are going to Macao rather than Hong Kong, it is not the end of the world. Macao has no other industry.

I think it is also worth remembering that visitor numbers are not the only measure of success in the tourism industry. Obviously, some retailers and hotels benefit from each additional million visitors we receive, and some jobs are created.

But it is a basic fact of economics that most tourist revenues leave the Hong Kong economy pretty quickly, because most of the things that visitors buy are imported. In addition to that, large numbers of tourists put a strain on our roads and border crossings. Tourist buses are seen as a problem in some neighbourhoods. Ideally, Hong Kong would be moving up the value chain and leaving mass-market tourism to other places — like Macao, perhaps.

Although the suggestions in this motion do not really address these issues, they are sensible, and I hope the relevant authorities will seriously consider them.

A single exit endorsement for mainland travellers covering Hong Kong and Macao would be a very good idea. Even better, perhaps further ahead, would be endorsements covering Hong Kong and other destinations like Southeast Asia. That will be a win-win situation for all parties concerned.

I believe everyone would also welcome a speedier, automated immigration system for Hong Kong visitors to Macao. Again, anything that would help to speed up the process for Hong Kong people elsewhere in the Delta Region would be very useful.

I also support the idea of Hong Kong increasing its co-operation with Macao and the Mainland in professional and management training for the tourism industry. This is a good example of how Hong Kong expertise can find new markets as a services export.

Thank you, Madam President.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): Mr James TIEN really deserves to be a Member of the functional constituency, as this motion was proposed by him right after he had become Chairman of the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

Speaking of Macao, however, I do have a problem as I cannot visit Macao. I wonder if Mr TIEN can help. I guess there must be something wrong with a place denying certain people of entry. I was once denied entry to Macao. But why do I not choose to go there now? Because I have no idea whether or not the ferry ticket bought by me is valid. Of course, this is a digression, but it is intentional. It is vital for a place to develop software in

society, regardless of the development being pursued, namely, there must be an institutional framework. As Members are aware, the trial of AO Man-long has already begun. Macao once hit media headlines and was described as a land of prosperity because of the extremely poor performance of TUNG Chee-hwa back then. Now, we can tell whether this is really the case from the emerging signs in Macao. Even if analyses are made with the simplest concept of economics, we know that a certain franchise, once opened up, will definitely lead to economic development because of the introduction of competition. However, the bubble thus created will lead to very serious consequences.

There is a problem of monopolization with our strengthening of ties with Macao to facilitate more tourists in going there. The ferry trip alone is a kind of monopolization. Though Macao is slightly farther away from Hong Kong than Discovery Bay, a ferry trip to Discovery Bay costs merely \$20 or so, while a ferry trip to Macao costs more than \$100. Such monopolization will, first of all, stifle social development and, secondly, diminish the benefits originally enjoyed by the grassroots. Simply put, if my budget is \$1,000, it will already cost me more than \$300 for the ferry tickets. Naturally, I will eat less on my arrival in Macao, right?

Actually, if we are to enhance the development of our tourism industry, not only must we strengthen our communication with Macao, we should also look at the development of our own tourism industry. I do not see that Hong Kong has a very stable future. Mr TUNG once said that we had four pillars. However, the pillars have already collapsed, and actually disappeared. Therefore, the Liberal Party's proposal of establishing a casino might not be unacceptable at that time, though it will be considered so if it is raised now. Hong Kong has now become the world's largest casino, or a roller-coaster casino, because it can fluctuate by more than 1 000 points. This has cast a shadow over all trades and industries in Hong Kong.

Capitalism is actually very simple. All capitals will be channelled towards sectors where profits are high. At a time when stock speculations are extremely rife at the moment, developing the tourism industry is simply a waste of time and energy. However, the bubble attributable to stock speculations has also cast an enormous shadow over our economy. Because of our need to maintain the exchange rate, coupled with the inflation brought about by speculations, all trades and industries in Hong Kong, including the tourism

industry, find their operating costs continue to soar. This will definitely deal a blow to the development of the tourism industry. Members should have travelled around the world. I believe even Mrs FAN — the President should have been a tourist too — will not visit expensive places.

As we have to develop a big casino to allow people, including major mainland consortia, to make money here, how can inflation be curbed? We sing praises of the property market — my old friend, SHIH Wing-ching, must be thrilled because the market is surging. However, have Members ever considered that the surge of the property market will affect society as a whole? First, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) will experience operational hardship. Even with the development of the tourism industry or other industries, SMEs have not shared the fruits of social prosperity. Second, people working in the services industries have not seen any improvement in their pay. We can only see a growing bubble, including the bubble of the tourism industry. A friend of mine complained to me that he had once invited an American to business talk in a China-affiliated hotel in the Western District and found the hotel having doubled its rates, though it did not matter to the American because he was paying in greenbacks.

Let us consider this. If we say that we have to leverage on the Mainland and welcome our relatives from our Motherland to visit Hong Kong, and yet the hotels in Hong Kong are operating in this manner, how can the visitors stay in these hotels, mate? I would rather advise you to rent a bed — if our hotels continue to operate in this manner, visitors can only rent a bed. When we discussed the development of the tourism business, we aimed at a double, and it was said to account for 6% at that time. Actually, we knew that the development of the tourism industry would produce some ornamental effect on Hong Kong economy, and resolve the problems faced by some low-income people working in the services industries. Today, however, the big casino in Hong Kong and the bubble are allowed to inflate freely, and yet we are still talking about the tourism industry. Hence, I can point it out very frankly that we simply have no idea what we are talking about.

Another point I would like to raise is that when we are practising an "instant culture" allowing continuous demolition, it is useless even when all the buildings in Central were lit up for location shooting of the movie "Batman". This is because tourists visiting Hong Kong two years later will feel that they have been cheated and ask why what they saw two years ago can no longer be

found. It is all because of the continuous demolition. It does show that the entire Government has continued to adhere to its stopgap measure (as pointed out by me many times before), and our illness will never be cured.

Therefore, I would like to appeal here that we must pierce the bubble if we are really determined to let the grassroots benefit from the tourism industry or services industries. Second, we must not act like a fool as Chief Executive Donald TSANG does. Even the Mainland has pointed out that the bubble has become excessively large and a soft landing is desired. Even Premier WEN has stepped forward and warned that no excessive speculations will be allowed — I certainly knew that he was resorting to "verbal coercion". Two months ago, our Chief Executive said in this Chamber, "Everything is fine. It will be difficult for Hong Kong to become poor!" — he was in high spirits and had not yet alluded to his Cultural Revolution theory. What sort of a leader is he? If James promotes the tourism industry, he is very likely to outperform the Chief Executive. However, the Chief Executive has been keeping his mouth shut. He just sits there allowing the casino to expand freely. Even my request to raise the stamp duty by a mere 0.01% to bring an annual revenue of \$40 billion has been rejected by him. With a revenue of \$40 billion, Mrs FAN, will there be any more need to develop the tourism industry?

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, I hope you

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): I should have addressed you as "President".

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): You had better refer to other Members by their full names when you mention them.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): I know. I will act according to your instruction next time.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Fine. Does any other Member wish to speak?

MRS SELINA CHOW (in Cantonese): President, first of all, I would like to thank Mr WONG Kwok-hing for proposing an amendment relating to honest tourism to give us an opportunity to express our expectations for the tourism industry in Hong Kong. I have recently attended a meeting held by the Quality Tourism Services Association. Of course, a number of members of the Association have expressed great support for honest tourism (they are concerned about overall honest tourism, not just the promotion of honest tourism on the Mainland, as proposed in the amendment). Being honest businessmen, they very much hope to encourage business operators to operate in a honest manner and not to operate unscrupulous shops to undermine Hong Kong's reputation which we cherish very much.

The next issue I would like to raise is illegal touting. This is vital to honest tourism for we must not allow some mysterious people to target tourists for peddling of counterfeit goods. However, this is commonly found in certain districts, particularly Tsim Sha Tsui. Actually, the police have been very helpful. However, their operations are like cat and mouse games. Once police officers have left, those people will appear again, and their sporadic appearance poses a great nuisance to tourists. Therefore, honest tourism should indeed be extended. For the tourism development of Hong Kong as a whole, honest tourism is worthy of support and promotion.

Actually, we cannot blame Mr Ronny TONG for expressing his disappointment with the topic because it is too narrow. However, this topic was proposed by Mr James TIEN not without a reason. It was because we found some problems with Macao over immigration matters, and many other areas are involved as a result. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was really remarkable a while ago. He could have associated Macao with our stock market, international issues and even how our livelihood is affected. However, for the sake of debate, this is undesirable because he has actually digressed far from the subject. Certainly, we are being most tolerant in this Council. Sometimes, Members might stray away from the question. However, Mr LEUNG was particularly remarkable in the sense that his digression was especially serious.

Regarding Mr Ronny TONG's mention of casinos, I would like to point out that what we in the Liberal Party advocate is not to follow the example of Macao. Neither does Macao have any franchise. Macao is not the only place in the world that can build casinos; casinos can be built elsewhere too. During

our previous debate on this subject, we did raise the point that casinos were considered leisure or entertainment facilities in other parts of the world. I did mention Australia as one of the major cities where casinos were built. We did not say that we will follow the example of Macao by relying mainly on casinos.

I would like to mention Mr SIN Chung-kai's speech in particular because it is very interesting. He said in his speech earlier that they actually had no wish not to collaborate with Guangdong Province and Macao, for they just wish to propose an amendment targeting issues pertaining to Hong Kong. However, he has proposed to delete the word "collaborating" in his amendment. President, his amendment has clearly deleted the wordings "collaborating with the relevant authorities in Macao and Guangdong Province in training". Moreover, he has also proposed to delete the wordings "and tourism sectors". In other words, he proposes that we have to, on the one hand, increase the number of trained middle and senior management professionals and, on the other, there is no need to train professionals for the tourism sector. He also says that we can increase the number of professionals on our own without collaborating with Guangdong Province and Macao.

Here I would like to say a few words on why we really need to collaborate with Guangdong Province and Macao. The Pearl River Delta is a very attractive option for the "multi-destination-itineraries" travel we are promoting. Multi-destination itineraries are now being promoted by other countries as well. For instance, though Thailand has such popular tourist destinations as Bangkok, Phuket and Chiang Mai, new tourist destinations are still being developed. In the case of Hong Kong, however, given its enormous limitations owing to its small size, if multi-destination itineraries are to be promoted here, our human resources must complement multi-destination itineraries management and promotion. Therefore, we should collaborate with Guangdong Province and Macao in manpower training. This is my first point.

Second, given the introduction of the world's best known Las Vegas-style of management to Macao, such as the running of Venetian Macao-Resort-Hotel in the Las Vegas-style, we can learn a lot from it. Therefore, we can benefit if joint training is conducted.

Third, a complementary effect can be achieved. While Hong Kong is good at hotel management, the Mainland — President, as I know you are very fond of travel, I think you will surely agree with me — is good at training

tourist guides. As the quality and education and education levels of tourist guides are taken quite seriously on the Mainland, Hong Kong cannot compare with the Mainland in this regard. If we can work together, the Mainland can benefit from our merits, and we can benefit from that of the Mainland too. Generally speaking, the human resources of the whole region will be greatly enhanced.

In our opinion, Hong Kong is a bit like a frog looking at the sky from the bottom of a well if it merely emphasizes increasing the number of people trained for local hotels. We hope we can widen our horizons in considering the development of tourism in the entire region.

Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any other Member wish to speak?

MR CHIM PUI-CHUNG (in Cantonese): President, I speak in support of the original motion.

This Council has not only once but on numerous occasions given Members opportunities to express their views on the threats posed by Macao to Hong Kong on various fronts. As the question for debate today is co-operation, a review should be conducted from various aspects.

Undeniably, Macao's gaming industry is rising to the forefront of the world. I recall a study tour by our Chief Executive to Las Vegas several years ago which aimed at studying the feasibility and possibility of establishing the gaming industry in Hong Kong. However, no news has been heard from him since his return — of course, he is no expert in this field. Regrettably, as time passes, three licences, now indirectly turned into six, were issued in Macao in 2000. Yet there are some people who are still dreaming and wondering if there are still chances of setting up a casino or comparable gaming centre on Lantau. I can tell Members that, with the passage of time, our opportunities are already gone. There is absolutely, absolutely, no way to build a casino on Hong Kong Island, not to mention Lantau, to compete with Macao because all gaming funds worldwide have been attracted to Macao.

We must understand that competition in Macao is already keen. The three licenses mentioned just now have now turned into six. Many competing hotels are also equipped with casinos. Some hotels which are relatively outdated or old are already on the brink of change of trade, or even closure. These are all facts. In the coming three years, 50 000 world-class hotel rooms will be completed in Macao. Upon their completion, Hong Kong will face even greater threats on various fronts. We understand that some three- and four-star hotels have revived as Hong Kong is benefited from the Individual Visit Scheme. However, Hong Kong's tourism sector is short-sighted and resorts to raising prices indiscriminately. As a result, worldwide travellers are found themselves being indiscriminately ripped off in Hong Kong. The SAR Government must pay attention to and review this. Otherwise, it will be too late to regret when travellers passing by Hong Kong say: "Excuse me."

The first point I would like to raise is that the Government must complement Macao and conduct a self-review as well as an evaluation of hotels. The second point concerns the so-called convention centre — this is probably the third time this issue is raised by me in this Council. Despite our Chief Executive's emphasis that the convention and exhibition centre in Hong Kong is sacrosanct, this is regrettably not the case. How can the Chief Executive be qualified to disallow others from taking part in the competition? In the face of competition from other places such as Macao, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, Hong Kong is still sleeping, dreaming that it is very special. This will make its tourism industry suffer badly ultimately.

The third point I would like to raise is the so-called side shows. It should be understood that the gaming industry, or even the resources of casinos, can be considered as inheriting from stock markets or funds from around the world. By this I mean they need not shed any tears even though both of their parents have died, because they still have food to eat. As they rely on funds from around the world to operate, they need not worry about losing money. Under such circumstances, world-class performers, be they movie stars or singers, will be hired. As Members are aware, the NBA show games have recently received excellent reactions and responses in Macao. In the future, international sports events will even be staged — held mainly indoors. Under such circumstances, how can Hong Kong compete with and complement Macao? This is the third issue which warrants the Government's injection of manpower to study.

Of course, we understand that the Olympic equestrian events will be held in Hong Kong as a result of the hosting of the Olympics by Beijing. However, I have some reservations about the performance of equestrian talents and relevant people in Hong Kong. I do not mean to look down upon them, but I do believe that they must be creative and innovative. The practice of sticking to established practice is virtually outdated. More importantly, Macao will make use of Heng Qin Island to serve as its rear base for the construction of resort villages for families. In other words, besides places for gaming, exhibitions and performances, there will also be places for staging activities for children. Under such circumstances, Hong Kong only has the Ocean Park to compete with Macao. So how can it complement Macao, and how can the two places co-operate? This is the fourth issue the Government must consider.

Regrettably, we have only seen the Government transfer a lot of benefits to overseas businessmen and foreign funds, and nothing has been achieved so far. It is indeed worthwhile for the SAR Government to review this. The era of a sense of superiority felt by capitalist society is over. In the days to come, we must face imminent challenges. Concurrently, we can see that there is simply no way for us to compete with others should we fail to achieve continuous self-improvement.

A Kwun Yum temple in Repulse Bay has now become a "must-see" attraction for many mainlanders. Why has the Government not allocated more funds to beautify and enhance the attractiveness of the temple? I believe this is an urgent task for the Hong Kong Tourism Board and the SAR Government. Meanwhile, there is a monument at Caine Lane which is rich in collective memory. By collective memory I do not mean we should get stuck in the colonial era in remembrance of it. Instead, I hope we can go further.

President, I support the original motion.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): President, I think Mr CHIM Pui-chung should have declared his interest with regard to this question because I believe he has won more than a million dollars during his trips to Macao.

President, I would like to first thank Mrs Selina CHOW for praising members of the League of Social Democrats with her remark that Mr LEUNG

Kwok-hung is highly imaginative. Her compliment that Mr LEUNG demonstrates an exceptional power of association is absolutely true because he is indeed full of vitality and highly imaginative. Not every Member can do this. President, this is the characteristic of the League of Social Democrats.

President, I would also like to first thank Mr James TIEN for proposing this motion. I believe he was sincere in doing so, and his remarks were made out of true feelings. However, if we refer to the development of history and the times and look back at the question, we will actually feel very sorry. During the '60s and '70s, Hong Kong was hailed as the Pearl of the Orient. Basically, only Hong Kong in the whole Southeast Asia was glittering and lighting up the entire region. Hong Kong's prosperity was also considered a unique phenomenon in the whole Southeast Asia. However, with the opening up of our Motherland and the change in Macao's gambling monopoly, other regions are progressing by leaps and bounds. When we see others progressing by leaps and bounds, we will feel a sense of inferiority, that we are lagging behind. When we see others making progress, we will find it necessary to catch up and, in the course of doing so, take more initiatives in stepping up co-operation. Actually, this phenomenon is good, absolutely good. This mentality is better than that of some senior officials. I recall I once expressed my concern to a senior official during the financial turmoil that the 1988 turmoil might bring serious consequences. Yet I was warned by the official not to be a scaremonger, for the turmoils experienced by Hong Kong over the years would all come to an end in six months. However, Hong Kong was thrown into years of depression by the 1998 turmoil. When we pointed out to some government officials that Hong Kong was not proceeding smoothly in certain areas of development and requested them to pay more attention, they would tell us not to be bothered because of Hong Kong's strong competitiveness.

Hence, the underlying well-intentioned motive and proactiveness of Mr James TIEN's motion is praiseworthy because we must address the fact that we are lagging behind. When we see others progressing by leaps and bounds, we will find that we have come to a halt; when we see others making progress, we will have to learn from co-operation. It is vitally important that, when we realize that our position has begun slipping, we must seek improvement to prevent Hong Kong society from being trapped in a state of depression.

Co-operation between Hong Kong and Macao is of paramount importance. I definitely do not want to see the tourism industry under discussion being equated to the gaming industry. Of course, the inclination of Mr CHIM Pui-chung is absolutely stronger than mine because he is an expert in this field.

It is most important for the Government to examine how the tourism industry can create more job opportunities for Hong Kong people, especially the general public, and how the grassroots in Hong Kong can earn more income through this partnership and the development of the tourism industry. Furthermore, the Government should avoid further exploitation and prevent the tourism industry from further inducing Hong Kong workers to bring their hard-earned money to Macao for gambling, thus creating more pathological gamblers, more tragic families and more suicides.

I have frequently received cases from help-seekers in my district. What were the cases all about? Some people were escorted back to Hong Kong to look for their family members to pay back loans. Insofar as these cases were concerned, there was nothing the police could do. I once made a telephone call to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to discuss this problem, and I was advised that the sole purpose of the persons accompanying my client to return to Hong Kong was to ask him to repay money. Not only had they done nothing to threaten or intimidate him, they also had an IOU signed by the client in their hands. As it is a matter of fact that the client owed someone's money, even the police could not take any action. Generally speaking, people signing these IOUs are required to furnish the information of at least three of their family members, such as their mothers, brothers or sisters, for reference. From then on, the three family members will be living in anxiety. I believe cases like this are frequently found in various districts through the territory. In the end, a considerable number of families encountering such cases will have to obtain a remortgage on their flats or a top-up loan amounting to some \$200,000 or even \$300,000 for the sake of repaying the loans. Since Macao's gambling industry started to take off, the number of these cases has been on the rise. Although such cases already existed in the past, President, I am convinced of their existence in the past, I hope the Government can give us a written reply in future to let us know by how many times these cases have increased. As these cases will also lead to family tragedies, the authorities should also study the problems caused by gambling and consider what preventive measures can be taken to prevent tragedies while strengthening co-operation.

President, to strengthen co-operation on the tourism front, Hong Kong must achieve self-improvement. As I pointed out at the beginning of my speech, Hong Kong is lagging behind and Macao is progressing by leaps and bounds. While we are witnessing Macao's progress, what has Hong Kong done in recent years? Since Hong Kong's reunification a decade ago, we have only got a Disneyland, which has 10 000 or even less than 10 000 visitors daily. Even though we have spent tens of billions of dollars on it, how many job opportunities has it created? If Hong Kong stops creating more tourist spots or tourism programmes with special characteristics — I mean tourism programmes with local characteristics, not imitations. Regarding the proposal of spending tens of billions of dollars to introduce Universal Studios into Hong Kong, I think it is absolutely wrong — we must create local tourist spots because we all wish to visit unique tourist spots when we visit other parts of the world. For instance, when we visit Macao, we will find the residence left behind by the senior officials of the former Portuguese government very special. How about Hong Kong? Where have all the buildings gone? All of them are already gone; they have all been torn down. Owing to a lack of active publicity, not a single building has been left behind.

The most serious problem faced by the Hong Kong Government is that there is always the fear of publicity whenever the expression "British Hong Kong" appears, and yet Macao does not have the slightest fear in that regard. Macao has demonstrated no fear of publicizing some of the buildings left behind by the former Portuguese government. The Hong Kong Government is worried that it will be accused of being a remnant of the former British Hong Kong government should it publicize anything left behind by the former government. Hence, if this mentality remains unchanged, many of Hong Kong's development opportunities will be stifled.

Besides, the ferry service between Tuen Mun Pier and Macao has still not been put into operation. It will make a laughing stock if we are to co-operate with Macao and yet this problem remains unsolved. What is the point of talking about co-operation? What is the point of talking about co-operation if the ferry service has yet to come into operation? Therefore, I hope James can talk to the Chief Executive of Macao during his next visit to Macao that Tuen Mun Pier — the pier closest to Macao — has yet to operate any ferry service to Macao. Thank you, President.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): President, I will also briefly discuss this question from the angle of security.

First, one of the measures proposed by Mr TIEN is to appeal to the Central Government to issue a single exit endorsement for sightseeing under the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) so as to facilitate travellers in visiting Hong Kong. From the angle of security, I find this measure not at all problematic because the original number of people visiting Hong Kong under the IVS is already quite large. Therefore, the percentage of increase will be very small. Furthermore, with the gradual expansion of the IVS, nearly 10% of mainlanders can now visit Hong Kong with great convenience. Given the stability of Hong Kong's law and order situation, the increase in the number of these visitors has not led to a higher demand for police resources. Therefore, insofar as this aspect is concerned, the efficiency of the police has actually risen remarkably. Furthermore, the security authorities have already identified proper channels to co-operate with the mainland authorities. For this reason, as the figure of increase is going to be very small, I believe the measure can be implemented expeditiously without causing any security problems.

Second, regarding the use of an automated clearance system to make it easier (or faster) for Hong Kong people to enter Macao, I have two points to make. First, I believe an automated clearance system, even if adopted, will not make much difference in terms of convenience (of course, convenience will be enhanced slightly). Given that the population of Macao is quite small, the entire automated clearance system, if installed, will mainly facilitate the immigration clearance of Hong Kong travellers only. Such being the case, Macao will have to calculate whether the investment is worthwhile. This is because travellers from other places might not be able to use the automated clearance system, and their number will not be as large as that of Hong Kong travellers. Many travellers from the Mainland, Southeast Asia or other parts of the world will not visit Macao many times within a short period of time. Therefore, it is, relatively speaking, not economical to require them to make use of the automated clearance system. This is why I reckon that Macao should consider whether or not this investment is worthwhile. It is certainly good for us. We can enjoy more convenience, right?

Nevertheless, immigration clearance will not necessarily be speeded up even if an automated clearance system is put in place. According to my personal observation, Macao people will queue up at the immigration counters

specially provided for them at the Macao control point. Moreover, the clearance time is very short as not too many passengers make use of those counters. This shows that the system will mainly serve Hong Kong people and travellers from other places. Furthermore, overseas travellers reaching Macao by plane will not find Macao's immigration control point too crowded. Actually, most of the places considered to be crowded are found in the ferry terminal where Hong Kong travellers are received. Even if this system is put in place, it would only mean that Hong Kong travellers will be gathered at one side to queue up for immigration clearance. Hence, notwithstanding a possible slight improvement upon the introduction of the system, I believe the result will not be as impressive as what has been achieved in Hong Kong as a result of the use of the system. Furthermore, according to my estimation and observation, it is still not necessarily possible for a large number of additional immigration clearance counters to be provided by the immigration authorities in Macao, especially at the Macau Ferry Terminal, unless a very special design is introduced. Therefore, this is an investment issue for Macao.

I have also noted that Mr TIEN has not raised a proposal in item (b) of his motion that he hopes Macao travellers can make full use of the automated clearance system in Hong Kong. He might have given prudent consideration to this matter — careful consideration must be given in this regard. I personally have some misgivings about this. Anyhow, I believe it is actually possible for us to consider, after a period of observation and careful selection, allowing certain Macao residents or businessmen to apply for the use of the system. However, for the time being, I still have some reservations about opening up the system to all. Anyhow, Mr TIEN's motion has made no mention of this point in particular. But generally speaking, if we make a request to someone, he or she will normally make a similar request to us. Actually, even if the Hong Kong Government believes that it will benefit Hong Kong more by taking the initiative to adopt some measures, such as providing endorsement services to certain countries, those countries might not necessarily give us reciprocal treatment. Such examples can indeed be found. Therefore, it is most important for the Macao Government to consider whether Macao will thus be benefited in the long run.

From the angle of security, Hong Kong actually has a very clean Police Force and pretty strong law enforcement power. Even if Macao vigorously develops its gaming industry and strengthens its co-operation with Hong Kong on the tourism front, I believe we can certainly handle this. Furthermore, it is

impossible for Macao to speed up its pace of implementation in one go in a particular area. Therefore, we can have ample time to observe certain developments.

In the final analysis, however, I believe it is most important for ties to be maintained through strengthening co-operation between the two places and with the Mainland — depending on the arrangements to be made and support facilities to be provided to cope with the challenges thus arisen or to be encountered or security problems, whether in Hong Kong, Macao or the Mainland. I hope we can continue our efforts in properly accomplishing this task together.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any other Member wish to speak?

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): If not, I now call upon Mr James TIEN to speak. You have five minutes to speak.

MR JAMES TIEN (in Cantonese): President, as stated in my original motion, "in view of the rapid development of the tourism industry in Hong Kong and Macao in recent years", I have put forward three pretty concrete proposals. The first proposal concerns whether or not mainland travellers can be issued with a single exit endorsement for visiting Hong Kong and Macao under the Individual Visit Scheme. The second proposal, as I have said very clearly, concerns whether Hong Kong people can enjoy more convenient entry into and exit from Macao, like the e-channel, which will not be two-way. And, the third one concerns collaboration with Macao and Guangdong Province to train middle and senior management professionals for the hotel and tourism sectors. With regard to Mr WONG Kwok-hing's amendments to my proposals set out in points (a), (b) and (c), I absolutely have no objection as he has merely added "and sharing of experience" after "to enhance the co-operation", and deleted "collaborating" after "(c)" and substitute with "strengthening co-operation". The Liberal Party supports the majority of amendments to the three proposals.

Mr WONG Kwok-hing suggested in the additional point (d) to "vigorously advocating and promoting honest tourism". The Liberal Party and the Hong Kong Tourism Board surely render our full and unreserved support to this, but why was there no mention of it in my original motion? Because it is actually not directly related to the co-operation with Macao. Whether or not we will co-operate with Macao, the promotion of honest tourism, honest hotel, honest tourism and catering, as well as the enhancement of services in Hong Kong should rely on our own effort. It has no direct relationship with the enhancement of co-operation with Macao. Nonetheless, the Liberal Party still supports Mr WONG Kwok-hing's amendment.

For the amendments made by Mr SIN Chung-kai to my motion, we have some reservations about his proposed deletion of "collaborating with the relevant authorities in Macao and Guangdong Province in training" from point (c). Earlier, Mrs Selina CHOW also mentioned this point. However, I noticed from the agenda that if Mr WONG Kwok-hing's amendment is passed, Mr SIN Chung-kai has given notice to further amend my motion as amended by Mr WONG Kwok-hing. In that case, he will have to retain "collaborating with the relevant authorities in Macao and Guangdong Province in training" before incorporating his proposed amendment, such as, "increasing the number of" middle and senior management professionals. Therefore, the Liberal Party supports all the amendments.

For this reason, I support and call on all Honourable Members to endorse Mr WONG Kwok-hing's amendments, and implore all Members to support Mr SIN Chung-kai's amendment to my motion as amended by Mr WONG Kwok-hing. Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, once again, on behalf of the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Frederick MA, I thank Members for putting forward many valuable and constructive opinions and suggestions in the debate on the motion on "Enhancing co-operation with Macao in developing the tourism industry".

As I pointed out at the beginning of the debate, there is no question of, as Mr Timothy FOK has said, "zero-sum" vicious competition between Hong Kong and Macao in the development of the tourism industry. Apart from a continued increase in the overall number of visitor arrivals in both places over

the past few years, there have been increasingly frequent visits by Hong Kong residents to Macao and by Macao residents to Hong Kong. Both in the provision of tourism facilities and promotion of tourism, Hong Kong and Macao have been co-operating very closely with each other, complementing each other's strengths and hence creating a win-win situation.

Mr CHAN Kam-lam, Mr Vincent FANG and Mrs Selina CHOW mentioned earlier that Hong Kong and Macao should work in concert to promote multi-destination itineraries. I understand that the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) under the leadership of Mr James TIEN will step up work in this area. The HKTB has already identified Hong Kong, Canada, Britain, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand as the key source markets, while at the same time enhancing the promotion of multi-destination itineraries in provinces outside Guangdong. Targeting at different tourist types, the HKTB will continue to introduce brand new products. As mentioned by Mr Tommy CHEUNG earlier, we should promote Hong Kong as a Culinary Capital while leveraging on major local events, such as the Equestrian Events of the Olympics next year, as well as the newly developed tourism facilities in Macao, thereby stimulating the growth of visitor arrivals and tourism-related spending. I understand that the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development has visited Macao earlier, and Mr TIEN has led a deputation of the HKTB to conduct exchanges with the tourism authorities in Macao. I believe the relevant authorities in both places will actively follow up work in this respect.

While expressing their concern, Mr Bernard CHAN and Mr Vincent FANG called on us to actively appeal to the Central Government for issuing one single permit for mainland residents to visit Hong Kong and Macao under the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS). Let me reiterate that from the perspective of tourism development, the Government welcomes more measures taken by the relevant mainland authorities under the IVS to facilitate mainland travellers in visiting Hong Kong. The Security Bureau and the Tourism Commission will actively follow up Members' proposals and exchange views with the relevant mainland authorities.

As we all know, the Chief Executive pointed out in the policy agenda that we will advocate measures to further facilitate visitors' entry into Hong Kong and in particular, enhance the visitor-friendliness of entry facilities. In view of the continued increase in the number of inbound tourists, the Immigration

Department has plans to extend the service of the e-Channel to frequent visitors to Hong Kong for them to enjoy more efficient service.

In respect of training of talents, Mr James TIEN, Mr WONG Kwok-hing and Mr SIN Chung-kai all mentioned the need to train middle and senior management professionals for the hotel and tourism sectors. At the beginning of the debate I already explained explicitly the views of the Government. "Optimizing our demographic structure and attracting talent" is an important theme of the policy address. We do not only support enhanced collaboration among various institutions and education institutes in the region. We consider it more important to fortify Hong Kong's status as an education hub, in order to live up to the expectations of us as a world metropolis and attract more quality students to study in Hong Kong, so that they will stay in Hong Kong and make contribution for Hong Kong after their graduation. This will benefit not only the tourism industry, but also other trades and industries in the territory.

Mr Andrew LEUNG mentioned the contribution and role of the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education and the Vocational Training Council in training hotel professionals. I am grateful for his views which I also very much appreciate. I undertake that we will do everything we can to provide support in terms of resources, with a view to promoting these training programmes.

A number of Members also mentioned "honest tourism" earlier on. In particular, Ms Audrey EU and Mrs Selina CHOW have expressed their views in this regard. I would like to briefly respond to them. Since the introduction of "honest tourism" the Tourism Commission has been working with the China National Tourism Association (CNTA), the HKTb, the Travel Industry Council (TIC) and the Consumer Council to combat business malpractices as a result of travel agencies selling tours to customers at high prices but reselling them to other agencies at low prices, combining and selling packaged tours, and offering zero- or negative-fare tours. We will continue to promote quality tourism products to mainland visitors and launch publicity on smart consumption. During the tourist peak of the National Day Golden Week just passed, the TIC, the Consumer Council and the HKTb received 12 complaints, none of which involved the shopping arrangements made for mainland visitors travelling on tour groups.

On the regulation of the industry, the TIC has introduced a number of measures. These include requiring all inbound travel agents receiving mainland tour groups to register with the TIC the "tour confirmation agreement" and to distribute the itinerary to tour group visitors. The TIC has also extended the refund period of the "100% Guaranteed Refund Scheme" from 14 days to 180 days to enhance consumer protection for mainland visitors in respect of their spending in Hong Kong. We will continue to review these measures with the TIC, with a view to improving and updating them in the light of the development of the market.

Madam President, I wish to emphasize here that we will absolutely not slacken our efforts and we will continue to co-operate with the CNTA to strengthen regulation. We also wish to take this opportunity to call on the industry to upgrade the standard of their service, so that we can make concerted efforts to build up a good reputation for Hong Kong and hence maintain the important image of Hong Kong as a quality tourist destination.

Moreover, I would like to respond to the views expressed in the debate earlier by Mr LI Kwok-ying, Mr Andrew LEUNG, Mr CHIM Pui-chung and Dr Raymond HO on the development of the convention, exhibition and related tourism industries one by one. I would like to say that the contribution of the convention and exhibition industry to the economy of Hong Kong is very important. The industry, apart from its own rapid development, can at the same time facilitate the growth of jobs in various trades and sectors as well as the demand for high value-added service, thus constituting a major component of the overall economic development of Hong Kong. Convention and exhibition activities will also help consolidate Hong Kong's position as an international business hub and develop sources of international visitors and business network.

Hong Kong has unmatched strengths in the convention and exhibition industry. Hosting international events in Hong Kong will enable organizers to easily reach the entire region's buyers and exhibitors, as well as the world's largest manufacturing base in the Pearl River Delta. On the other hand, we also have world-class convention and exhibition facilities, an efficient transport network, a wealth of experience in doing business in the mainland market, a convenient business environment, and excellent professional and hospitality services.

This year, Hong Kong has successfully organized many large-scale international activities, such as last month's Asian Financial Forum and the Asian Aerospace International Expo and Congress, through which we have continuously showcased Hong Kong's strengths in hosting mega international conferences and exhibitions to the world.

As mentioned by Mr Vincent FANG, we will study how Macao's large-scale convention/exhibition and entertainment facilities and Hong Kong's advantages in hardware (such as the international airport) and software (talents) can be combined to play a complementary role to each other, thereby providing new momentum for the Pan-Pearl River Delta and the Asia-Pacific Region and hence facilitating the robust development of the entire convention and exhibition market in the Region. The Government will foster co-operation with the convention, exhibition and other tourism-related sectors, upgrade our advantages and actively co-ordinate the work of various sectors, with a view to proactively attracting more large-scale international conferences to be held in Hong Kong and hence vigorously promoting convention/exhibition-based business travel.

I wish to respond to another point and that is, the question of conservation raised by Mr Albert CHAN and Dr KWOK Ka-ki, who are particularly concerned about the work of the Government in conservation. As Members will know, the Chief Executive has in this year's policy address spoken at great length on conservation, stressing that cultural life is a key component of a quality city life. In the next five years, the Government will make the utmost effort to promote heritage conservation and a Commissioner for Heritage Office will be set up under the Development Bureau to carry out work on heritage conservation in full swing. With regard to buildings of historical significance, we will conduct studies on their revitalization and adaptive re-use, in order to turn them into unique cultural and tourism landmarks. As Members may know, the proposal on the revitalization of the Central Police Station Compound at Hollywood Road jointly put forward by the Development Bureau and the Hong Kong Jockey Club is a very good example.

I also wish to respond to Mr Ronny TONG who particularly mentioned cultural, heritage and ecological tourism. In this connection, I wish to give a response in two aspects: Firstly, heritage tourism and secondly, ecological or green tourism. The new tourism products developed by the HKTB in recent years have included heritage-themed itineraries such as the Northeast New Territories island-hopping tour organized under the Nature Kaleidoscope

programme. The tour intends to attract visitors to areas like Lai Chi Wo, Kat O and Tap Mun, and so on, which are less frequently visited by tourists, thereby enabling them to know more about the culture of fishing villages and the local architecture.

In addition, to facilitate visitors in exploring systematically the depth and diversity of Hong Kong's culture and history, the HKTB has published a guidebook "Discover Hong Kong by Rail" which aims to promote the heritage itineraries along the Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) lines and encourage visitors to take the KCR to explore Hong Kong's local culture, history and traditions. The major attractions include the Che Kung Temple, Tsang Tai Uk clan walled village and Hong Kong Heritage Museum in Sha Tin; the Tai Po Market and Hong Kong Railway Museum in Tai Po; the Lung Yeuk Tau Heritage Trail linking various traditional walled villages in Fan Ling; and the Ping Shan Heritage Trail in Yuen Long.

In respect of ecological tourism, we mainly focus on various country parks as highlights of publicity. New products mainly include the Hong Kong Wetland Park in Tin Shui Wai and the Nature Kaleidoscope programme introduced by the HKTB in recent years. Under the programme there are, among other things, guided tours to the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden and the Hong Kong Wetland Park, guided ecological tours to Tai O on Lantau, and the Northeast New Territories island-hopping tour. We will step up efforts and do more in this regard.

Madam President, the development of the "greater tourism zone" comprising Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao has continued for many years. Over the years there has been both co-operation and competition, and a good "competition-cum-collaboration" relationship has been established to the benefit of all three places. During the debate on the Motion of Thanks in the Legislative Council on 26 October, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development said that Hong Kong must continuously strive for improvement. This, I cannot agree more. Hong Kong has a lot of strengths. As a common saying goes, "The fiercer the competition, the stronger one will become". I believe co-operation among Hong Kong, Macao and even neighbouring tourist destinations in developing tourism will expand the source market for the entire "greater tourism zone", which will effectively increase the cost-effectiveness of the tourism resources in the region and achieve greater synergy and hence create the win-win situation as mentioned in this motion today.

Madam President, I so submit. Thank you.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now call upon Mr WONG Kwok-hing to move his amendment to the motion.

MR WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mr James TIEN's motion be amended.

Mr WONG Kwok-hing moved the following amendment: (Translation)

"To add "and sharing of experience" after "to enhance the co-operation"; to delete "and" after "to facilitate immigration clearance of other travellers;"; to delete "collaborating" after "(c)" and substitute with "strengthening co-operation"; to add "sharing the advanced management expertise of the hotel and tourism sectors, as well as" after "relevant authorities in Macao and Guangdong Province in"; and to delete "hotel and tourism sectors" after "middle and senior management professionals for the" and substitute with "two sectors, so as to enable the professionals of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao to develop at the same pace and serve the tourism industry of their respective regions, in order to meet the development needs of the tourism industry in the three places; and (d) vigorously advocating and promoting honest tourism, as well as enhancing the professional management in various areas such as hotel, tourism, catering, retailing, etc, thereby boosting the attractiveness of Hong Kong and Macao tours and increasing travellers' duration of stay and spending in Hong Kong". "

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Mr WONG Kwok-hing to Mr James TIEN's motion, be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you as stated. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority respectively of each of the two groups of Members, that is, those returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, who are present. I declare the amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr SIN Chung-kai, as Mr WONG Kwok-hing's amendment has been passed, I have given leave for you to revise the terms of your amendment, as set out in the paper which has been circularized to Members. When you move your revised amendment, you have up to three minutes to explain the revised terms in your amendment, but you may not repeat what you have already covered in your earlier speech. You may now move your revised amendment.

MR SIN CHUNG-KAI (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mr James TIEN's motion as amended by Mr WONG Kwok-hing, be further amended by my revised amendment.

President, I do not need to use up the full three minutes as there are only very simple changes in wordings actually. We support the training of talents in the hope of training up more local talents, not only to serve Hong Kong, but the Pearl River Delta Region as well. Thank you, President.

Mr SIN Chung-kai moved the following amendment to Mr WONG Kwok-hing's amendment: (Translation)

"To add "; and (e) increasing the number of middle and senior management professionals trained locally for the hotel sector and upgrading the quality of training, in order to enhance the service quality of the tourism industry while meeting the regional demand" immediately before the full stop."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That Mr SIN Chung-kai's amendment to Mr James TIEN's motion as amended by Mr WONG Kwok-hing, be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you as stated. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority respectively of each of the two groups of Members, that is, those returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, who are present. I declare the amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr James TIEN, you may now reply and you have two minutes 11 seconds.

MR JAMES TIEN (in Cantonese): First of all, I wish to thank the dozen of Members who have spoken on today's motion "Enhancing co-operation with Macao in developing the tourism industry", and the vast majority of them supported the three concrete viewpoints raised by me. While my original motion concerns co-operation with Macao, a number of Members spoke of Hong Kong's honest and quality tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism and business tourism. Since they are local tourism affairs which the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) should actively follow up anyway, there is no mention of this point in my original motion. And yet, I still have to thank the Honourable Members for reminding me of this. I wish that Hong Kong's tourism sector and the HKTB will strive to do better under the broad agenda of tourism, especially in enhancing our co-operation with Macao. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mr James TIEN, as amended by Mr WONG Kwok-hing

and Mr SIN Chung-kai, be passed. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority respectively of each of the two groups of Members, that is, those returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, who are present. I declare the amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Second motion: Strengthening support for Tin Shui Wai.

I now call upon Hon Mrs Selina CHOW to speak and move her motion.

STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR TIN SHUI WAI

MRS SELINA CHOW (in Cantonese): President, many people living in Tin Shui Wai will agree with the Chief Executive's remark that "I will get the job done". However, where can they go looking for jobs? This is indeed a good question. As everybody knows, Tin Shui Wai is badly hit by unemployment. Its unemployment rate of nearly 9% doubles the average unemployment rate territory-wide. The median household income of Tin Shui Wai, standing at \$13,720, is also lower than the territory's median household income of \$17,250. Coupled with the exceptionally large number of new arrivals (particularly women) and the inadequacy of community and support facilities, a wide range of major and minor reasons have also indirectly contributed to the occurrence of a number of tragedies. No wonder Tin Shui Wai has been described as "a town of sadness". In a song "Tin Shui Wai Town" sung by Hacken LEE last year, Tin Shui Wai was depicted as being trapped in a helpless plight in isolation from the outside world. This has further reinforced the negative labelling effect on the district.

We must not and should not remain indifferent to these households living in poverty. Neither should we pay attention until some problems have occurred and pretend that nothing has happened after a passing concern about the problems. Prof Nelson CHOW of the Department of Social Work of the University of Hong Kong completed a panel report after the occurrence of a shocking family tragedy in Tin Shui Wai three years ago. The improvement recommendations proposed therein can definitely be adopted as a blueprint for reform. Regrettably, the recommendations have still not been put into implementation to date. The authorities should indeed reflect on this and take immediate action to mend the fold before it is too late.

Prof CHOW's report has mainly dealt with the necessary actions to be taken by professionals and government departments. At the same time, the residents have also reflected several issues of concern to the Liberal Party. Below are the views put forward by the Liberal Party with respect to improving family support and community facilities and services: First, community facilities and family services must be improved. At present, Tin Shui Wai has a population of approximately 269 000, with the proportion of new immigrants having lived in Hong Kong for less than 10 years standing at 23%, which is higher than the average overall ratio of 16.9% territory-wide. Furthermore, the number of people living in public housing has reached 165 000, representing 61.5% of the total number of residents living in the district, and it is far above the average ratio of the territory of 31%. Notwithstanding this, the community facilities and services in Tin Shui Wai are still lagging far behind the demands of its growing population. Although the Government has undertaken to expedite the implementation of its works projects as a result of the marked improvement in its fiscal position, I still hope that the Government can honour its promise to enable the residents to enjoy the facilities and services at an early date.

Regarding the family services arousing great concern in the community since the occurrence of a tragedy in Tin Heng Estate in 2004, only three family service centres are now operating in the district. Of these three centres, the one run by the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch operates only till 9.30 pm on Friday evenings, whereas the one run by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) operates till 9 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings only. In other words, these centres will not operate in the evenings for most of the time. It has been proved that most of the previous family tragedies occurred in the early morning and late night hours. Furthermore, I

believe Members must have found the mechanical and cold telephone recordings of the so-called helplines extremely disgusting. I think the Government and relevant voluntary agencies must work in collaboration to, besides extending their opening hours, provide more manpower to man their hotlines to make them truly useful in saving lives.

The second point I would like to make is to enhance child minding and social work services. Similarly, the child minding service provided in Tin Shui Wai at the moment is evidently inadequate and in need of improvement. At present, only about 100 free places are available in the whole Tin Shui Wai. This is utterly inadequate, and the waiting list is extremely long. Furthermore, most of the child care centres operate only until 7 pm — I have also mentioned this to the Secretary when raising my supplementary question earlier. It is simply impossible for parents who have to travel a long way outside the district to work to pick up their children in time. If a large number of additional free places can be offered and the opening hours be extended to 9 pm, the problems faced by a number of parents who wish to go out to work will be resolved. Furthermore, a considerable number of women who cannot go out to work would very much like to see the expansion of the after-school care service provided to primary students.

The third point I would like to make is the enhancement of mutual aid among neighbours. The Secretary also mentioned a number of bold plans earlier in the meeting. We believe through promoting mutual aid among neighbours, we can lift these problematic families from their abyss of misery. Actually, some communities in Hong Kong have already voluntarily drawn up and promoted some programmes on promoting the spirit of fostering mutual aid among neighbours. As a case in point, starting from 2003, a "Caring Estate" project has been implemented in Yue Kwong Chuen and Ap Lei Chau by the Aberdeen Kai Fong Welfare Association Social Service Centre.

Under the project, various buildings would appoint voluntary "leaders" to assume the obligation of caring for their neighbours living on the upper and lower floors. After a three-year trial period, the project has proved very effective. Last year, the project was even offered funding by the Community Inclusion and Investment Fund for the nurturing of mutual aid relationship among neighbours. Actually, I believe such kind of voluntary community activities may work in Tin Shui Wai. However, in order to successfully promote this approach, government departments and voluntary agencies should take the lead in the initial period.

Having said that, however, the Liberal Party considers that the Government cannot merely offer a temporary solution, without effecting a permanent cure, to the wide range of problems emerged in Tin Shui Wai. To address the problems at root, the Government must make tackling the economic problems its most basic objective before employment opportunities can be created and household income raised, in order that the ultimate effect of poverty elimination can be achieved. Therefore, the motion proposed by me today is focused on improving community services and facilities. What is more, I hope my motion can serve as a bait to attract valuable comments and awaken Honourable colleagues to make more effort in vitalizing and strengthening the economy of Tin Shui Wai, thereby exerting positive pressure on the Government on the one hand and, stimulate thinking on the other, for the purpose of contributing to the future development of the district.

President, Tin Shui Wai is actually a picturesque scenic place. Let us take a look at this picture showing Tsui Sing Lau Pagoda next to the West Rail. In this picture, the picturesque Nam Sang Wai is shown situated at the junction of Kam Tin River and Shan Pui River. Let us take a look at this one. Here is Deep Bay, lying to the west of Tin Shui Wai and opposite Shekou. And this is Pak Nai, the best place for watching the sunset in Hong Kong. Actually, all these places are just a short distance from the Tin Shui Wai West Rail station. Apart from these, Members should also know that there is a popular Wetland Park in Tin Shui Wai. Because of the large concentration of migratory birds near the Park, even bird watchers from Japan and Korea will make special trips there to watch migratory birds. Coupled with the natural scenery of Lau Fau Shan, Deep Bay, which are situated nearby, and the five beaches in Tuen Mun, Tin Shui Wai can be considered specially gifted in developing eco-tourism.

Furthermore, Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun are home to the oldest dwelling places of indigenous residents in Hong Kong. With a history dating back to 1 000 years ago, a considerable number of monuments there can be developed as tourist spots. For instance, some shops on a so-called "Ching Dynasty Street" in Yuen Long Kau Hui have a history of more than a century. Other monuments, such as Yi Tai Study Hall in Kam Tin, a park built in San Tin in commemoration of WEN Tianxiang, a temple at Sam Shing Hui, Hung Lau, Tsing Shan Monastery, and so on, have given Tin Shui Wai all the conditions for development into a tourism hub in the Northwest New Territories. However, if this plan is to materialize, a great variety of major

events must be organized as a catalyst. I believe Honourable colleagues will surely come up with many innovative ideas later. They may take the form of a bazaar, carnival, arts gallery, flea market, or a fair for organic farm produces. However, they must be regular and unique. They must not be just a mix of stalls without a theme, innovation and aesthetic value. For instance, we can see that Portebelo in London and Jatujak in Bangkok have been operating with great success on weekends. The Government need only rent out venues through bidding to allow contractors to operate. However, the highest bidding price should not be used as the criterion in the selection of operators. Instead, the originality, management standard and marketing practice of the bidders must be considered to ensure that a good reputation is built up for the district for the purpose of attracting a large number of shoppers and stimulating its economic development so as to multiply the benefits enjoyed by all services industries in the district and benefit the residents living there.

Although the business activities mentioned above can be materialized within a short period of time, a mechanism must be put in place. As we cannot rely solely on the Government, the involvement of non-governmental organizations and professionals is necessary. Actually, nowadays, the future of recreational and leisure businesses is very promising, as every one of us is seeking a better quality and experience of living for ourselves and our children. Job opportunities can be created so long as the needs of the market can be met. However, if we are to pursue medium- to long-term development, we must begin with planning. There are indeed too many residential buildings in Tin Shui Wai, and the buildings are primarily public housing blocks. The number of commercial premises, however, is too small. It is understood that Area 108A has 2 hectares of commercial land and Areas 112 and 115 have a total of 14 hectares of land for comprehensive development. All these sites can be developed for the construction of low-density commercial buildings. Given the proximity of Areas 112 and 115 to the Wetland Park, a synergy effect can be easily achieved so that more visitors from outside the district will be attracted to the Wetland Park. For these reasons, the Government should expedite its planning to facilitate the development of businesses and create job opportunities.

President, since time is running out, I will defer to my other colleagues in the Liberal Party to talk about improvement initiatives in other areas. For instance, Ms Miriam LAU will say a few words about how the logistics industry can make more efforts in the vicinity of Tin Shui Wai, and how

complementary effort can be made in terms of transportation. Mr Tommy CHEUNG will propose capitalizing on the tourism resources of Tin Shui Wai and, in particular, linking them up with catering to achieve the purpose of "diverting water into Tin Shui Wai" to create more job opportunities for the residents there.

President, as a Member of the New Territories West Constituency, I frequently visit Tin Shui Wai and, every time I go there, Tin Shui Wai will impress me that it is an energetic, refreshing and young community with great potential. If various facilities and support measures can be further improved, I am convinced Tin Shui Wai will not be worse than any new town in the territory; it may even be better than a number of ageing districts and housing estates. In particular, through my encounters with a number of school teachers, parents and students, I can feel that most of the residents in the district are full of hope. I hope today's debate can open a new chapter for this community.

Thank you, President.

Mrs Selina CHOW moved the following motion: (Translation)

"That, as family tragedies have occurred time and again in Tin Shui Wai in recent years and to prevent similar tragedies from happening, this Council urges the Government to comprehensively improve the community facilities and services in the district, give suitable support to the needy families and provide family services on all fronts to create a harmonious community, and at the same time inject more economic activities into the district, and increase facilities and business opportunities for cultural and recreational enterprises, so as to enhance employment opportunities and promote a balanced community development in the district."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mrs Selina CHOW be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Three Members will move amendments to this motion. The motion and the three amendments will now be debated together in a joint debate.

I will call upon Mr Albert CHAN to speak first, to be followed by Mr LEE Cheuk-yan and Mr Albert HO; but no amendments are to be moved at this stage.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): President, in proposing my amendment, I wish to point out that owing to its delay in making progress in a number of public works projects, the Government should be held responsible for the problems in Tin Shui Wai. I also wish to point out that the only solution to all the problems must be the expeditious setting up of a grassroots livelihood improvement fund to improve the lot of the grassroots. The Government may earmark \$10 billion for solving the immediate livelihood problems faced by the residents in the district.

President, I was re-elected to the Legislative Council in 2000. Over the past seven years, I have been repeatedly raising the issue of Tin Shui Wai for discussions. But it seems that the Government has never heard the voices of many social strata. It also seems that some Members of this legislature have likewise not yet come to their senses, still quite unaware of the gravity of the problem.

In 2004, I once remarked in the Panel on Welfare Services President, it so happened that there was a tragedy at that time. It was a tragedy that infuriated all, because although the victims had actually approached all relevant government departments and service agencies for help, the tragedy still happened. The mistakes causing this family tragedy in Tin Shui Wai were even more serious than those leading to the one in Tuen Mun two decades before. But the Government has not learnt any lesson, and not only this, its responses have been very disappointing too. I must describe the Government as totally unfeeling, turning a blind eye to people facing dire danger. This family tragedy was the result of collective negligence, but no one has ever been held responsible. Such an attitude towards the handling of similar problems will only lead to the recurrence of tragedies.

President, as early as 2004, I already pinpointed the gravity of the problem and explained that if the Government did not make any improvements, similar tragedies would occur again. Unfortunately, my forewarning has come true. The residents in Tin Shui Wai are still caught in immense suffering. The solution to the problem certainly does not lie solely in the employment of

11 clinical psychologists as mentioned by the Secretary. What I wish to point out is the multi-faceted nature of the problem, and it is my hope that several Policy Bureaux can take the collective action of formulating effective measures.

President, I wish to give some examples of the delays in public works projects I mentioned just now. They are the outstanding works projects of the former Municipal Councils and some current works projects of the Government. Let me now give a brief account of these projects. The Tin Shui Wai Central Library Project has been delayed for nine years. The construction of the District Open Space in Area 107 of Tin Shui Wai has been delayed for five years. The Leisure Centre in Area 101 of Tin Shui Wai Project has been delayed for eight years. The District Square Areas in Areas 33A and 29 of Tin Shui Wai have been delayed for five years. The Local Open Spaces in Areas 25, 25A and 25B of Tin Shui Wai have been delayed for five years. And, the Local Open Space in Area 15 of Tin Shui Wai has been delayed for three years. There has been a total delay of 35 years for all these six projects, and the average length of delay is six years. As for funding, starting from 2000 and up to 2005 If we compare this period with the previous five years, that is, the five years from 1996 to 2000, we will notice that in the latter five-year period, the total funding for leisure and cultural facilities was \$1.67 billion a year on average. And, in the five-year period from 2000 to 2005, the average annual funding was \$670 million, just some 50%. There was a very substantial reduction because the Government was in a fiscal deficit at that time.

President, we may also look at leisure facilities. In Tin Shui Wai, there are currently only two indoor recreation centres, two indoor basketball courts, one turf soccer pitch and two outdoor basketball courts. There is no mini-soccer pitch but just one swimming pool. These facilities are meant to be used by a population of 270 000 to 300 000. The population in Central and Western District is roughly the same as that in Tin Shui Wai, President. But there are five indoor recreation centres, eight indoor basketball courts, 16 outdoor basketball courts and 10 mini-soccer pitches in Central and Western District.

We may still look at other districts. In the North District, there are four indoor recreation centres, 12 indoor basketball courts, four turf soccer pitches and 10 outdoor basketball courts. If we care to make any comparison, we will see that the facilities in all other districts are better than those in Tin Shui Wai. Now that the Government has the money, why does it not make any efforts?

Some of the reasons are connected with planning, timing and works implementation.

Therefore, I hope that the Government can learn a lesson from the bitter experience. It should greatly improve its town planning and push ahead with the various works projects. What is more, it has been seven years since the project of constructing an integrated medical centre in Tin Shui Wai was first mooted. But it has been delayed for seven years. At that time, owing to the reorganization of the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Department of Health, the completion of the Tin Shui Wai North General Out-Patient Clinic was delayed, and now there are talks about the establishment of an integrated medical centre. The HA has been submitting a proposal to the Government for three years in a row, but the Government has not given its approval. The problem is not with the HA — it has actually included this proposal in its works programme. The only problem is that the Government has simply kept on delaying the whole thing. As a result, residents in Tin Shui Wai must continue to face a shortage of medical facilities. The Government must be held responsible.

The problem with Tin Shui Wai is basically congenital deficiency compounded by a lack of care afterwards, President. Many family problems are caused by the population profile. I have discussed this many times before in this Chamber, so I shall make no repetition here. I only wish to point out that if the Government really wants to tackle this problem, it must come up with appropriate measures. We are all here today to seek solutions.

Currently, many elderly persons in Tin Shui Wai must still depend on the "fruit grant" of \$700. In Tin Shui Wai, the problem of "four persons having to live on the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) meant for two persons" is not uncommon in many families. In Tin Shui Wai, many residents aged 50 or above are totally unable to find any jobs. In Tin Shui Wai, many parents are entirely incapable of teaching their children how to do their homework. The subjects of English language and arithmetic at the levels of Primary Three, Four, Five and Six are already too difficult for them, and they are no longer able to help their children. All these problems are the source of stress in many families in Tin Shui Wai, leading to tragedies in the end.

Many academics have analysed all these problems. I do think that some of these analyses are specious, but basically, I would think that the tackling of

these problems will require short-, medium- and long-term measures. President, in regard to short-term measures, I think the Government must deal with the problems related to CSSA and the "fruit grant". CSSA rates must be raised substantially and restored to the past level of 11%, so that recipients can live a better life. Besides, the problem of "four persons having to live on the CSSA meant for two persons" must be addressed. There is also the seven-year residency requirement, which disqualifies many families in Tin Shui Wai from CSSA application. Another problem is transportation subsidy. We have been advising the Government that the present level of subsidy is much too low and inadequate, and that the eligibility requirements are very stringent, so they must be relaxed.

When it comes to integrated family service, drastic and thorough reforms must be introduced. The reason is that presently, such service is mainly meant for tackling individual cases rather than establishing any networks of assistance. The Government must assign special social workers to integrated family service teams. A special team for each housing estate must be established to assist residents in building up a complete and efficient network of assistance. In many cases, family tragedies in Tin Shui Wai are caused by the fact that the members of many families are new arrivals from the Mainland who have no relatives not only in Tin Shui Wai but also in the rest of Hong Kong. Once any problems emerge, they will not be able to get any assistance. Therefore, if there is no professional support, family tragedies may easily occur. For this reason, the problem must be addressed. In addition, the Government must increase the number of child care places.

With respect to medium-term measures, the Government must improve community facilities as much as possible. I have already pointed out the shortage of many facilities. The point is that when there are no community facilities for residents, they will be forced to stay home. This will cause many emotional problems, right? Another point is that the Government must make sure that there is a wider variety of economic activities. Tin Shui Wai is a city where all things are planned, including its economic activities. But planning is the precise cause of the various problems that end up in tragedies. In order to end the vicious cycle, we must change the very special economic conditions in Tin Shui Wai. There is a population of 270 000 in Tin Shui Wai, but all the shopping centres are owned by two landlords, namely, Cheung Kong (Holdings) Limited and the Link REIT. It is impossible for anyone else to start any new economic activities because in the shopping centres, only the

prescribed kinds of economic activities are permitted. All activities other than those already prescribed will not be allowed. For this reason, the Government must release the lands near Tin Shui Wai. Most of the lands in the vicinity of Tin Shui Wai are deserted agricultural lands. The Government may zone new land uses for these sites, so that they can be used for commercial or hotel purposes. In this way, there will be more lands for new economic activities and Tin Shui Wai can then be revitalized. The very inflexible planning of the Government has turned Tin Shui Wai into a place with no variety. If the situation is not improved, all money spent will be money wasted.

To revitalize Tin Shui Wai, we must boost its local economy. Transportation subsidy is no doubt very important, but it is equally important to promote its local economy. In foreign countries, there are many cases in which elected Presidents or Governors turn their places of origin into They may simply relocate the seats of their governments to certain places Australia is a fine example. After its establishment, the seat of its government was relocated to what is now its capital city. This is also the case with many other countries. Or, a university town may be established. Many towns actually depend on universities for their survival. The important thing is that in case the Government wants to construct any large government buildings in the New Territories, it must not choose Sha Tin or Tseung Kwan O as their sites. It should choose Tin Shui Wai, so as to create more employment opportunities there. If the Government sticks to its present mindset and refuses to take the lead actively, I am sure that the many problems in Tin Shui Wai will only deteriorate.

Furthermore, I must forewarn that the youth problem in Tin Shui Wai may erupt at any time in the next couple of years. The seriousness of the situation will be beyond anyone's imagination. Let me tell Members that if the Government does not take any actions now, the eruption of the youth problem in Tin Shui Wai will result in many social problems 10 times more serious than the family tragedies that have occurred so far. If all of us do not alert ourselves, do not take any actions, and if the Government still refuses to tackle the situation, then the Government will face admonishments 10 times severer than those it faces now. And, it will be conscience-stricken. I do not hope that my forewarning will come true. But I must confess that this has been repeatedly the case. If the Government still does not learn a lesson, it will be conscience-stricken in the end. Thank you, President.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): President, the tragedy in Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai, was followed by extensive press coverage the next day. What I found most heartrending from all the press reports was a local resident's remark that they were already numbed by such incidents. In discussions in the district, I was saddened by residents' reaction that they did not find cases of people plunging to their death from buildings at all uncommon. This was truly the reaction they showed during our discussions with them. Why has there been such a particularly large number of tragedies in Tin Shui Wai? I think that finding a way out is precisely our purpose of conducting this motion debate.

Some local residents consider it most important that people must never again describe Tin Shui Wai as a "town of sadness". Others suggest that it may be advisable to change the name of the district. But I am not so superstitious. I think that the problem with Tin Shui Wai does not lie in its name. Frankly speaking, the name "Tin Shui Wai" is quite elegant. The problem is not so much about any stigma. Even if the district is not called a "town of sadness" from now on, the stigma will remain as long as similar incidents or tragedies continue to happen.

Therefore, to solve the problem once and for all, we must seek to truly remove the stigma by turning Tin Shui Wai into a real haven in the eyes of all. I think this is the only ultimate solution, and I do not think that we should simply try to deceive ourselves by asking people not to stigmatize the place. Most importantly, if we can truly revitalize the district, turning it into a lively and happy community, the stigma will automatically disappear. I hope that all of us can join hands to solve the problem today.

President, I am of the view that in order to solve the problem once and for all, we must, most importantly, administer the right remedies. What actually are the problems with Tin Shui Wai? Honestly speaking, they all boil down to planning, planning and planning. And, the solutions are also planning, planning and planning. The total planning failure regarding Tin Shui Wai has led me to question why the Government has never learnt a lesson from the disastrous experience of Tuen Mun New Town. The Government plunged Tuen Mun into suffering for a decade or even more. The people who have been living in Tuen Mun for the past decade or so are really very miserable. But instead of learning a lesson, the Government has made the same planning blunder in Tin Shui Wai, plunging yet another generation of Tin Shui Wai residents into misery.

The Government must first admit this failure. Is the Secretary going to admit that Tin Shui Wai is actually the outcome of a planning failure? The Government can administer the right remedies and examine whether there are any planning solutions only when it is willing to admit the failure.

Why do I say that there is a planning failure? President, to begin with, economic activities are entirely ignored in the town planning for Tin Shui Wai. This is the greatest failure. When there are no economic activities, there will be no employment opportunities. As a result, people must work in other districts. Since there are no employment opportunities in the whole of Tin Shui Wai, grievances have amassed. Local residents feel hemmed in and cannot find any jobs at all. Without any planning of economic activities, it will be difficult to revitalize the district.

The second failure is that apart from ignoring the planning of economic activities, the Government has been adopting a population policy under which all new arrivals and low-income people are moved to Tin Shui Wai. For this reason, there is an especially large population of public rental housing residents in the district. Mrs Selina CHOW said just now that the proportion was 60%. But in Tin Shui Wai North, the proportion is 80%. In spite of this, the Government still adheres to this population policy. In Tin Shui Wai North, another large public estate, Ting Ching Estate, is now ready for occupation, and several dozen thousand people will move into Tin Shui Wai. Under such a policy, numerous low-income people are moved to Tin Shui Wai, leading to a serious population imbalance. The population in the district is not variegated in composition. It will be better to the community if there are residents with different backgrounds. But the Government's planning is a total failure and it has not done so.

The third failure lies in transport planning. I really do not know whether the Light Rail Transit System (LRT) should be retained. Many residents have told me that it may be advisable to close down the LRT. Why? What is wrong with the LRT? President, LRT trains are very slow, with the result that even buses cannot move fast because of the long cycle times of traffic lights. The Government's transport planning is also very poor. In the case of Tin Shui Wai North, for example, there are no direct bus routes to Kowloon. All buses must run through Tin Shui Wai South. But this will take 15 to 20 minutes. Why is it impossible to allow buses to head for Kowloon direct from Tin Shui Wai North? This is a problem with transport planning.

If there are direct bus routes to Kowloon from Tin Shui Wai North, local residents will be able to get to their workplaces sooner. This will at least make transportation more efficient. The LRT System is an important factor causing the planning failure.

The fourth planning failure of the Government is connected with facilities and welfare services. Mr Albert CHAN has already given many examples, so I am not going to do any more enumeration here. But I must still point out that the swimming pools he referred to just now are only leisure pools, not real swimming pools. How can the Government do something like this? Is it its intention to provide Tin Shui Wai residents with substandard facilities? People go all the way to these pools only to find that they are all very shallow, not real swimming pools. How can the Government formulate such planning? I am not talking about any major facilities. But even such a minor facility can already show that the Government is so very mean to Tin Shui Wai residents.

In regard to clinic services, as mentioned by some Members just now, seven years has passed but residents are still waiting. We have enquired with the Government, and it has replied that a clinic will not be completed until 2012. This means that residents will have to wait five more years. I simply fail to see why the progress of construction should be so slow. In order to solve the problem, planning must be drawn up anew. Secretary Matthew CHEUNG undertook very "heroically" just now that he would take up the responsibility and formulate an all-embracing strategy. But I am worried whether he is capable of doing so. He is responsible for welfare and labour issues. But economic activities, transport and housing allocation are outside his portfolio. I really wish to know how he can do anything in respect of economic activities and transport. There can be an all-embracing strategy only when he can do so. If he cannot do so, he must set up an inter-departmental task force.

Besides, I also wish to discuss how we can formulate new planning for Tin Shui Wai. I think it is most important to create more employment opportunities to revitalize the local economy. I have several proposals in mind. First, hotels should be built in place of public housing estates. This can reduce the number of public housing estates, and the construction of hotels will also bring forth more employment opportunities. Second, industrial and commercial buildings should be constructed. And, the construction of a water world should be included in the planning, so as to attract investments. The

reason is that there is no water world in Hong Kong now. Third, green industries and community child care services should be developed. This can also increase employment opportunities.

I still wish to make special mention of one more point — if we wish to focus on planning and accord special attention to Tin Shui Wai, we must make it independent. I am not advocating any "Tin Shui Wai Independence Movement". By "independence", I mean making Tin Shui Wai "independent" of Yuen Long. This will mean splitting the district currently under Mr James CHAN into two, one being Tin Shui Wai and the other Yuen Long. It is reported in the *Ming Pao* today that Tin Shui Wai is not the poorest district in Hong Kong. Well, such a viewpoint is largely the result of a failure to notice that if Tin Shui Wai is separated from Yuen Long, it will be a district as poor as Sham Shui Po. If Tin Shui Wai is taken separately, all the statistics will be different. In that case, is "independence" possible? The turning of Tin Shui Wai into an independent district will mean that we can then focus our attention on it. I am not advocating independence just for the sake of independence. Apart from this, there is also the need for a strong mayor. Tin Shui Wai really needs a strong mayor, one who has a Sword of Imperial Sanction¹. I do not know what point on the Directorate Pay Scale will make the mayor strong enough. Is D6 enough? I really do not know. The Government must promptly and seriously formulate good planning for the district and create the post of Tin Shui Wai Mayor, so as to let the public know that efforts are being made. I think that only this will do. If not, if departments cannot be drawn together for co-operation, and if community construction, welfare and transport projects cannot thus be properly implemented, resulting in delays in different areas, there can be no solution at all.

President, lastly, I wish to discuss another problem that must not be ignored. The problems in Tin Shui Wai are unique, but the district is at the same time a miniature of Hong Kong, in the sense that whenever impoverished families are concentrated in one area, similar problems will emerge. Therefore, rather than trying to solve the problems in Tin Shui Wai only, we must also attempt to solve the problems of working poverty and impoverished families in general. The parents of these families must be enabled to have

¹ The bearer of such a sword given to him by an emperor in ancient China was vested with absolute discretionary powers to act for the emperor.

more time for looking after their children. But it is a pity that the Government has all along been offering mere lip-service in this respect, instead of putting in place any concrete policies on helping families battered by working poverty. We have been advocating the introduction of a minimum wage, subsidy for low-income family or what is known in other countries as "negative income tax", in the hope of making their incomes high enough to support their families. As long as the problem of long working hours is not properly addressed, President, family problems cannot be solved. The Secretary should be well aware of this. If parents must work very long hours, even a family with two parents will be turned into a *de facto* single-parent family. The reason is that if both parents must work and only the father or the mother can stay home to look after the children at any one time, then the family will in a sense become a single-parent family. It is in fact faced with the problem of long working hours. In this regard, I hope that the Government can really make more efforts.

Finally, I wish to talk about the implementation of the recommendations made by the Review Panel on Family Services in Tin Shui Wai. The Government will certainly claim that the recommendations have all been carried out. But I must give the Government a counter-example. The Fatality and Serious Cases Review Standing Committee proposes to conduct cross-sectoral reviews, but the whole thing has been much reduced in scale. "Cross-sectoral" has ended up covering the Social Welfare Department only, and it is now said that reviews will only cover fatality cases, rather than any serious cases. All such work must be done immediately. We hope that the Government can adopt a multi-pronged approach to revitalize Tin Shui Wai.

Thank you, President.

MR ALBERT HO (in Cantonese): Madam President, Tuen Mun New Town is a classic planning blunder in the 1970s. It is a pity that the Government has never learnt any lesson from it. Some 20 years later, the same blunder was repeated in Tin Shui Wai.

Let me first go over some background statistics with Members again. There is now a total population of 270 000 in Tin Shui Wai, distributed in its southern and northern parts. In Tin Shui Wai South, there are four public housing estates, five Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) estates and a large private housing estate known as Kingswood Villas. But in Tin Shui Wai

North, while there are six public housing estates, there is only one small private housing estate. As many as 170 000 residents in Tin Shui Wai live in public housing units. Basically, Tin Shui Wai is a public housing community.

Why is there such a heavy concentration of public housing estates in this area? One direct reason is that following the abolition of the "85 000 housing units" policy, public housing units were constructed in place of HOS flats in Tin Shui Wai. And, many lands which were originally designated for private development were simply left idle, with the only exception of Kingswood Villas constructed in the early years. Owing to the sluggishness of the property market after the financial turmoil, the Government halted the construction of HOS flats in 2002. Tin Heng Estate, Tin Yat Estate and Grandeur Terrace were all HOS estates under the original planning, but they have all been converted to public housing estates. What is more, huge numbers of new immigrants and low-income families are allocated public housing units in Tin Shui Wai. At present, 85% of the 100 000 residents in Tin Shui Wai North live in public housing units.

The second point is that this area is also very odd in terms of planning. There are only two master landlords in the whole of Tin Shui Wai. One of them is the developer of Kingswood Villas, that is, Cheung Kong (Holdings) Limited, which I already mentioned just now. The other one is the Housing Authority. As Members also know, the Housing Authority has sold some of its shopping centres to The Link REIT, so there are now precisely three master landlords. And, at the same time, there are also a small number of owners who have purchased the HOS flats and public housing units in the area. Throughout Tin Shui Wai, there are no lands for small-scale private property development. For this reason, it is impossible for any small-scale commercial areas or markets with ground-floor shops similar to Tuen Mun San Hui and Yue Man Square in Kwun Tong to emerge. Small and medium enterprises and local residents are thus deprived of business and employment opportunities. Worse still, many kindergartens, churches and even small business operators intending to establish their presence in Tin Shui Wai are unable to find any suitable sites there.

As far as I know, since the recent eruption of problems in Tin Shui Wai, many voluntary agencies have expressed hopes of providing services in the area. But they have completely failed to find any suitable sites. I know that the Secretary is considering the possibility of converting some car parks for use

by these voluntary agencies. But the waiting list is still very long. And, as a matter of fact, such a hope has been expressed for quite some years already.

The third reason for such a huge problem is understandably the remote location of the area, which necessitates heavy expenditure on transportation. A resident wanting to work in another district may already have to pay dearly for transportation before he can even find a job. A resident may eventually get a job with a monthly wage of \$5,000 to \$6 000, but he may have to spend 10% to 20% of this income on transportation. Then, after also deducting the expenses on meals, there will not be too much money left. Therefore, it is actually very difficult for the residents in this area to support their families. Worse still, once they disclose to job interviewers that they live in Tin Shui Wai, they will be asked to leave immediately in most cases.

Another point is that the present situation in Tin Shui Wai may actually be attributable to its very odd population composition. Tin Shui Wai accounts for 4% of Hong Kong's total population, but it also accounts for 9% of all CSSA recipient families in Hong Kong. The population there can thus be described as impoverished. However, Madam President, this is not the only problem. There are still several other problems. The area is noted not only for a large number of CSSA recipient families but also for its unusual abundance of single-parent families, new immigrant families, bankrupt families and families owning negative equity assets. In many families there, husbands are old while wives are much younger. And, in many cases, the husband and the wife are forced to live apart. This is the background accounting for the problems faced by many families in the area.

With regard to the poverty problem, as Mr LEE Cheuk-yan already mentioned, Tin Shui Wai is undoubtedly one of the most impoverished areas in Hong Kong. Well, if Tin Shui Wai is considered together with Yuen Long — as a matter of fact, according to the map of district administration, Tin Shui Wai is indeed part of Yuen Long — the income level in Tin Shui Wai may appear higher at first glance. But when one looks at its number of CSSA cases, one must admit that Tin Shui Wai is one of the poorest areas in Hong Kong. Besides, owing to other factors, such as the factor of planning which I have mentioned, Tin Shui Wai seems to be quite unlike Sham Shui Po, Sha Tin or other districts, in the sense that it seems more lonely and helpless than others, just like an isolated and marginalized community. This has exerted psychological pressure on many local residents. We must squarely address this problem.

The Democratic Party has put forward a number of recommendations in its amendment, in the hope of improving the present situation in Tin Shui Wai. First, we propose the establishment of an investigation committee to conduct comprehensive studies on the problems faced by Tin Shui Wai as a community. I am of course aware that the Secretary has repeatedly told us that he will lead this task. But I still think that an inter-departmental committee must be set up, because the task will involve many different problems, such as those related to town planning, the family, labour and financial situations which I have just mentioned. The authorities must therefore gain a full understanding of all these problems and then seek to tackle them with an integrated approach. The backgrounds against which the past tragedies occurred must also be studied. There is an urgent need for such studies. The findings of the three-member panel have not been implemented properly in many ways. I maintain that we must set up a higher-level investigation committee, so as to re-examine this problem and avoid the recurrence of similar tragedies.

Second, I understand that the Government has already implemented some policies for this special community and committed huge additional resources to improving its situation. But many social workers have told us that they are still overloaded with serious cases and hard pressed by a huge backlog. One of the organizations, Caritas Hong Kong, has told me that all its social workers must each handle 200 cases a year. I really do not know how they can cope. The shortage of hotline services is an example. I can remember that three years ago, I once offered assistance to the four members of the family involved in the tragedy in Tin Heng Estate, Tin Shui Wai. When I did the cross-examination in the Coroner's Court, I was greatly saddened because I learnt that the victims actually had several chances of averting the tragedy. Had there been successful connection to the hotline, had their calls been answered, they would have avoided the fatal tragedy. When in the hospital and police station, they called the hotline and even social workers, but there was invariably no successful connection. The victims even wanted to call the refuge centre, but they did not have the telephone number. I therefore think that improvements must be made in many different areas. What is more, many cases must be handled with the assistance of several government departments, so if there are no case managers, the lack of central co-ordination will make it impossible to handle some particularly serious cases satisfactorily and achieve the desired results.

We propose to set up residents' organizations and enhance mutual aid among neighbours. This is the correct approach. However, in the past, the Government withdrew the funding for many grass-roots mutual aid schemes. I think the Government must now reconsider the provision of more funding and resources to such non-governmental organizations and mutual aid committees, so as to bring forth mutual aid among neighbours. Besides, we also propose to develop wetland resort hotels.

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, first of all, I must say that I am very thankful to Mrs Selina CHOW for moving this motion on strengthening the support for Tin Shui Wai and to Mr Albert CHAN, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan and Mr Albert HO for proposing their respective amendments.

The Government has always been extremely concerned about the needs of Tin Shui Wai residents, according priority to giving them support. Since the family tragedy in Tin Shui Wai on 11 April 2004, we have put in place a series of measures and allocated additional resources, with a view to implementing the recommendations made by the Review Panel on Family Services in Tin Shui Wai on strengthening the services and support for Tin Shui Wai. Over the past three years, as many as 12 new items of welfare services have been introduced. It is expected that in the coming one year, six more new types of services will be launched. They are a Creative Media Centre for Youth, a Clinical Psychology Unit, a Special Child Care Centre/Early Education and Training Centre, a District Elderly Community Centre, a Care and Attention Home for the Elderly and an Integrated Children and Youth Services Centre/Children and Youth Centre. A detailed account of these services was already given in the paper presented to the Panel on Welfare Services at its special meeting on Tuesday last week (30 October 2007).

In the past two weeks, I personally visited Tin Shui Wai twice and met with local figures, including officials of all relevant government departments, office-bearers of non-governmental organizations, front-line social workers, school principals and representatives of religious bodies, women's organizations and mutual committees, with a view to familiarizing myself with the situation in the district and gaining a fuller understanding of the problems there. I also conducted exchanges with more than 200 local residents and district figures, so as to listen to their aspirations and views. At the special meeting of the Panel

on Welfare Services last Tuesday, I also listened to the views expressed by Members and the representatives of the 20 or so deputations in attendance. All such direct and face-to-face exchanges can help me feel the pulses of Tin Shui Wai in the formulation of further improvement measures that can provide pertinent support and services.

In the following part of my speech, I shall first speak on the several welfare and employment assistance issues attracting the greatest concern of Members and Tin Shui Wai residents. Secretary for Home Affairs shall then respond to Members' concern about community, cultural and leisure facilities as well as the development of neighbourhood networks.

First, in regard to family service, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) currently operates three Integrated Family Service Centres in Tin Shui Wai. These centres provide local residents with a series of preventive, support and treatment services. They also organize special group activities tailor-made for families with new arrivals, divorcees and single parents. When compared with family service centres in the past, these Integrated Family Service Centres are markedly upgraded in terms of floor areas, facilities and interior design. They also operate extended opening hours in the evenings of weekdays and on Saturdays, with a view to providing local families with more appropriate support.

As for families battered by domestic violence, in April 2005, the SWD established a Family and Child Protective Services Unit in Tin Shui Wai. This is what we often call a "serious case unit". Comprising 18 experienced social workers and adopting a cross-profession approach, it aims to provide "one-stop" services to victims of domestic violence, their family members and even perpetrators of violence in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long. This "serious case unit" will also arrange for various services required by assistance-seekers, so as to help them tide over their difficulties, ease the trauma inflicted by violence and assist them in turning over a new leaf in life. As I mentioned earlier on, the SWD will launch a Clinical Psychology Unit in Tin Shui Wai early next year. Eleven clinical psychologists will be stationed at this unit to provide needy residents in Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai with psychological assessment and treatment services, so as to enhance the ability of individuals and families to cope with pressure or to deal with emotional troubles. Seminars and training sessions on mental-health related issues will also be organized for local residents.

Besides, in an attempt to offer early assistance to families which are either socially isolated or unwilling to approach our welfare units despite their need for support services, the three Integrated Family Service Centres and the Family and Child Protective Services Unit in the district launched a Family Support Programme in mid-2007. Under this programme, the Integrated Family Service Centres will recruit and train up volunteers who have gone through similar difficulties and crises. These voluntary workers will act as family support-givers who will build up mutual aid networks in the district. Through home visits, telephone contacts and outreach work, they will get in touch with needy families and connect them to appropriate assistance service providers, so as to prevent the deterioration of various personal and family problems.

I understand that Members are also very concerned about the workload of front-line social workers. Faced with an ever-increasing demand for services, front-line social workers are indeed under very heavy pressure. We have actively implemented various measures to relieve their pressure, including the development of "social capital", increases in manpower and enhancement of corporate governance and training of and support for social workers. In 2007-2008, the posts of Social Work Officer and Clinical Psychologist in the SWD are increased by 58, with a view to enhancing services and support. We will continue to monitor the work conditions and workloads of front-line social workers and provide additional funding according to needs.

Family service aside, the authorities have also launched a series of services in Tin Shui Wai for the needy elderly, children and youngsters as well as those in need of rehabilitation services. A full and detailed account of such services was already given at the special meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services last Tuesday.

Employment is the greatest concern of Members and Tin Shui Wai residents, and it is also a major emphasis of Mrs Selina CHOW's motion today. Tin Shui Wai is a rather remote district with not too many local employment opportunities. The revitalization of the local economy as a means of increasing local employment opportunities and facilitating the cross-district employment of Tin Shui Wai residents are therefore our most pressing tasks.

The Chief Executive points out in his policy address that during his term of office, he will push ahead with 10 major infrastructure projects. It is

roughly estimated that from commissioning to a mature stage, these projects will create some 250 000 additional jobs. Besides these major infrastructure projects, the Government will also launch some minor works projects to create jobs in the construction industry. I believe that job aspirants in Tin Shui Wai will certainly benefit from all these projects in the future. What is more, the Government will actively promote the development of social enterprises, with a view to creating jobs for the underprivileged. Secretary TSANG Tak-sing will speak more on this later on.

In order to assist Tin Shui Wai residents in seeking employment, the Labour Department operates a Job Centre in Yuen Long which provides a full range of employment services and facilities, and in addition to this, it has also installed three "Job Explorer" touch-screen Vacancy Search Terminals in Tin Shui Wai to facilitate resident's search for jobs and information. These terminals are installed respectively at Tin Shui Community Centre, Tin Shui Wai (South) Social Security Field Unit, and Tin Shui Wai (North) Social Security Field Office. Furthermore, the Labour Department also plans to install another terminal at Tin Ching Community Hall, which is scheduled for opening to public use next month. Job-seekers in Tin Shui Wai may also call the Telephone Employment Service Hotline of the Labour Department to make arrangements for job referrals, instead of visiting Job Centres in person for assistance.

The Labour Department also organizes district job fairs in the Yuen Long Job Centre on a regular basis. And, large-scale job fairs are also held in Tin Shui Wai. Members may still remember the large-scale job fair held recently on 16 October at Tin Yiu Community Centre. Eighteen employers participated in this job fair, offering some 1 370 posts, most of which being local vacancies. The job fair attracted some 2 400 job-seekers, and 122 of them were recruited on the spot.

With a view to enhancing the employability of job aspirants in Tin Shui Wai, the Employees Retraining Board has been providing funding to four training institutions for the organization of retraining programmes in Tin Shui Wai. The numbers of retraining places offered by these training institutions for the district in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 were respectively 1 563 and 1 463. Of these, the numbers of placement-tied training places were respectively 675 and 750. In the first half of 2007-2008, the four training institutions also provided 956 training places in the district. The Employees Retraining Board

will consider the provision of more retraining places in Tin Shui Wai according to needs.

In an attempt to assist the larger numbers of unemployed CSSA recipients and prospective CSSA recipients in Yuen Long in upgrading their employability and alleviating their financial pressure, we have launched 19 Intensive Employment Assistance Projects in Yuen Long, under which unemployed CSSA recipients and prospective CSSA recipients are offered pertinent employment assistance. From October 2003 to August 2007, that is, August this year, more than 6 300 unemployed CSSA recipients and prospective CSSA recipients participated in all these projects.

With the aim of providing young CSSA recipients aged 15 to 24 with more effective support, the SWD launched the pilot Special Training and Enhancement Programme (My STEP) in Tin Shui Wai in October last year. As at September 2007, 68 residents in the district were participants in My STEP. In view of the satisfactory result, in October this year, the SWD extended My STEP for a period of two years in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long, and the upper age limit is extended from 24 to 29 to enable more to benefit.

In October last year, the SWD launched the District Employment Assistance Trial Project in Tin Shui Wai, under which appropriate and focused employment assistance are given to the long-term CSSA unemployed, so that they can overcome their employment difficulties, re-enter the labour market and stand on their own feet again as soon as possible. As at August this year, there were 74 participants. The project is scheduled to run for two years until September next year.

To encourage unemployed persons and low-income earners living in remote areas to seek cross-district employment and jobs, the Government heeded the advice of the Commission on Poverty and launched the pilot Transport Support Scheme in June this year (as Members are also aware). The Scheme has operated for only four months, and so far, some 4 000 applications have been received. Of these, 1 300 are from applicants living in Tin Shui Wai. We are currently stepping up the publicity on the Scheme, in the hope of encouraging more needy residents to submit their applications. However, as I pointed out in this Chamber last week, in case the responses from the residents in the four specified areas remain unsatisfactory in the coming three months, I may consider the possibility of advancing the review of

the Scheme to the beginning of next year, so as to see what improvements are needed in the light of the experience and advice from society.

In regard to strengthening the external transport services for Tin Shui Wai, the proposed Tuen Mun Western Bypass and the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link will significantly shorten the distance from Northwest New Territories to Lantau Island and the airport. They will also serve to divert the traffic from Northwest New Territories heading for the urban areas, thus further improving the transport link for North West New Territories. These projects will take roughly nine years from detailed exploration and tentative design to eventual completion. The expected date of completion is 2016.

The Government is duty-bound to provide support for families at risk and caught in difficulties. But while the Government must make efforts, the co-operation of various social sectors and the extensive participation of all in the community are equally important. We will continue to enhance the co-ordination and communication among different government departments, so as to ensure that the services delivered are both pertinent and effective. At the same time, we will also strive to mobilize all in the community and promote mutual aid among neighbours. It is hoped that the district can thus be given fresh impetus, care and prospects.

Madam President, I so submit. After listening to Members' views on the motion, I shall give a further reply. Thank you.

SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, the speech delivered by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare just now was related to the services provided by the Government in a number of areas. I wish to add a few words concerning the efforts of the Home Affairs Bureau in promoting community building and providing leisure and cultural services facilities in Tin Shui Wai.

In order to support residents in Tin Shui Wai in meeting the challenges of life, the Government attaches particular importance to coalescing the forces in the community and strengthening the relationships between neighbours. To this end, Mutual Aid Committees (MACs) can play an important role. I reported to Members earlier on here that over the past two years, the Yuen Long District Office had provided assistance in setting up more than 40 MACs in Tin Shui Wai. At present, there are a total of 82 MACs in the district.

Some MACs also set up volunteer teams, organized caring visits and provided other volunteer services teams. Recently, I had a discussion with the chairmen of the MACs of the buildings in several housing estates in Tin Shui Wai and appreciated the fact that among residents in Tin Shui Wai, there are indeed enthusiastic people who care about their neighbours, prepared to serve the people in their neighbourhood. Through this platform of MACs, they liaise with their floor representatives and visit every household. The people in some households with difficulties, who are usually more socially withdrawn, are also willing to open their doors to disburden themselves since all these people belong to the same neighbourhood. After assisting in and promoting the establishment of these MACs, the Liaison Officers of the Yuen Long District Office will also continue to keep in contact with and support them.

After the establishment of various MACs, the Yuen Long District Office has also kick-started cross-sector co-operation in the district to beef up social capital. With the staunch support of trade associations and local organizations in the district, the active co-operation of various government departments in the district and the funding provided by Yuen Long District Council (YLDC), a variety of large-scale district activities under various themes have been organized each year since 2004 to promote the message of family harmony, neighbourhood support and a positive life. In addition, the Yuen Long District Office, YLDC and the Yuen Long District Social Welfare Office have also organized a variety of district activities to promote harmonious and caring neighbourhoods, such as the "Model Neighbour Competition" and the "Tin Shui Wai Neighbourhood Mutual Help Scheme". Residents have actively participated in these activities. This year, drama performances by professional theatre companies in community halls have also been organized for the public's enjoyment.

In order to enhance the community services and facilities in Tin Shui Wai, a Working Group on Planning and Community Building for Tin Shui Wai was set up by the YLDC in December 2004. The Working Group is convened by the Vice-Chairman of the the YLDC and includes as members the District Officer (Yuen Long), the District Social Welfare Officer (Yuen Long), members of the Yuen Long District Council and representatives from all concerned government departments.

Regular meetings are held to discuss and closely monitor the progress of service and facility improvements in Tin Shui Wai. Community facilities in Tin Shui Wai have been gradually improved through the concerted efforts of members of the Working Group, local stakeholders and concerned government departments. The improvements include setting up an additional library, speeding up construction works of a new community hall, a sports centre, basketball courts, a soccer pitch and leisure facilities. In addition, under-utilized car parks and flats for senior citizens are also utilized to provide new welfare services and community facilities, including Integrated Children and Youth Centre; District Elderly Community Centre; multi-service centre that offers various support services for socially disadvantaged groups and multi-purpose room and conference room for use by local residents. What is particularly commendable is that a number of schools in the district have also opened their school campus to the community by setting up reading rooms, multimedia self-access learning centres and reading centres for parents and children, and so on, for use by the residents.

Regarding cultural and recreation facilities, in the past few years, public resources have been skewed in favour of Tin Shui Wai. Since 2006, some \$200 million have been spent on leisure and cultural facilities. The major leisure and cultural facilities provided by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) for residents in Tin Shui Wai New Town include one public swimming pool complex, sports centres, sports grounds, football pitches, basketball courts, parks, sitting-out areas, one district library, one small library, mobile library stops and community libraries operated in co-operation with district organizations.

In the coming days, we will expedite the construction of new leisure and cultural facilities in Tin Shui Wai with an estimated total cost of some \$1.1 billion, including the Tin Shui Wai Public Library cum Indoor Recreation Centre in Tin Shui Wai South and the construction of a Sports Centre and Community Hall in Area 101 in Tin Shui Wai North. In addition, the LCSD is also actively reviewing the feasibility of providing a swimming pool complex in Area 107 in Tin Shui Wai North.

Apart from providing hardware, the LCSD also takes corresponding measures in terms of software. The LCSD makes use of the leisure facilities in the housing estates and schools in Tin Shui Wai to organize Sports Fun Days, Carnival-type activities and through the School Sports Programme,

subsidies are provided to national sports associations to organize various types of sports training and activities in Tin Shui Wai to encourage young people to participate in sports activities. In addition, major sports competitions in the Yuen Long District, such as those in athletics, badminton and table tennis, will also be held in Tin Shui Wai. In the past three years, the number of participants in these activities has increased by about 40% and it is estimated that the number of participants this year will also exceed 60 000 attendances.

On cultural and recreational activities, the LCSD organizes various free entertainment programmes in the parks and open areas of housing estates in Tin Shui Wai regularly for residents' enjoyment. In addition, through a number of programmes, the LCSD also cultivates an interest in culture and arts amongst members of the public and students in the district by organizing a number of music promotion and arts education activities in the schools, community centres and housing estates in the Tin Shui Wai district.

As regards community halls, in order to provide more venues for local residents and associations to organize district activities, there are already three community halls in Tin Shui Wai. Together with the community hall to be built in Area 101 in Tin Shui Wai, there will be a total of four community halls in Tin Shui Wai. Among them, the newly completed Tin Ching Community Hall in Tin Shui Wai North has the best facilities in the territory and is suited to the performance of drama by professional drama troupes.

Just now, Secretary Matthew CHEUNG mentioned the problem of employment in Tin Shui Wai. This is one of focuses of today's motion. The Chief Executive proposed in this year's policy address that the Government will co-operate with various parties in promoting the further development of social enterprises and creating more job opportunities. We will strive to promote tripartite co-operation among the public, the business sector and the Government. We are now identifying organizations with the capability to set up social enterprise projects in Tin Shui Wai in order to create more job opportunities and promote the spirit of "self-help, helping others", as well as establishing and strengthening a caring culture.

We will continue with our efforts to make improvements to the Tin Shui Wai community. We also hope that we can receive the support as well as the mental input and physical contribution of various sectors, so as to benefit the

public. Madam President, I so submit and look forward to hearing Members' views on this question.

MR RONNY TONG (in Cantonese): President, I believe people listening to the Secretary's speech on television just now would immediately think that all the Members in this Chamber must have nothing better to do. They would certainly wonder, "The situation in Tin Shui Wai is already perfect. There are so many leisure facilities, and the Government has made so many efforts. Why have they still been raising the issue of Tin Shui Wai again and again over the past three years?"

Sometimes, I cannot help thinking that we and the Government must be living in two different worlds. Practically every day, Members shout themselves hoarse, telling the Government that Tin Shui Wai is beset with two problems — the poverty of the present generation and inter-generational poverty. What Tin Shui Wai needs is immediate assistance and the promotion of social mobility. However, all mentioning of these issues seems to have fallen on deaf ears. The Government invariably claims that it has made many efforts, and that there are excellent facilities already. For how long did he speak just now? Some 20 minutes. Honestly speaking, President, the more I listened to him, the sadder I became. There is no doubt that when doing any self-examination, one should not unduly humble oneself or admit one's failure lightly. But this does not mean that one should thus turn totally unrealistic and boastful. Rather, one should regard self-examination as the basis of engineering reforms and formulating planning. Such is what President HU said in his address to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party.

Let me now turn to the practical situation. As mentioned by many Members just now, Tin Shui Wai is in a way a large public housing estate. There are 11 public housing estates with a total of 89 public housing blocks and 50 000 public housing units. The residents in these 50 000 housing units account for two thirds of the population of Tin Shui Wai. Most of them are low-income earners. Since the tragedy in 2004 in which all members of the victim family died, Sundays have been the days of tragedies in many cases. Why? On weekdays when people must toil and sweat to earn a living, they will have no time to think about the loneliness and suffering of life. But on Sundays, they will have the time.

But what assistance has the Government offered? The number of social workers dedicated to the handling of Tin Shui Wai cases and the protection of families and children has been increased from 27 to 48. This means that there is just one social worker for every 6 000 people or so. And, there is no hotline service on Sundays. President, several weeks ago, after another tragedy had occurred in Tin Shui Wai and when this tragedy was reported by all radio and television stations in Hong Kong, I personally rang up the hotline but there was no answer. Is it really so difficult to spend slightly more resources on employing more people to man the hotline? But it seems so very easy to hand back \$5 billion to the 20 000 "kings of employees"

President, as I mentioned just now, the present problem is about the provision of immediate assistance and the promotion of social mobility. Immediate assistance is required because the economy, the local economy, is in a state of imbalance. The opening of the Wetland Park is of course something very good. But the beneficiaries are just the shop owners in Tin Heng Estate and Grandeur Terrace. Members who have been to Tin Shui Wai all know that the "dawn market" may be the most appealing economic activity there. But this is of no help anyway. Because the dawn market is still the raiding target of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. We certainly cannot expect the Government to stop raiding unlicensed hawkers. But can the Government designate a special zone where people can operate some businesses to earn a life? Can it do so, just to give a small boost to the local economy?

Tin Shui Wai is the outcome of a very huge and serious planning blunder. But the Government has never faced up to this blunder. The victims are local residents and small shop owners, who must suffer the adverse consequences every day. And, there is something even more ironic. Among all shopping centres managed by The Link Management, Chung Fu Shopping Centre in Tin Shui Wai is the one that charges the highest rents. Why? The reason is that the flow of people there is the highest. What is the result of such high rents? Rather than staying in Tin Shui Wai, many local residents simply go to Yuen Long for consumption, even though this will mean that they must spend money and time on transportation.

What Tin Shui Wai needs most are social enterprises. The Chief Executive has also mentioned this point, only that he has not made any concrete proposals. Over the past few years, Members have been putting forward

numerous proposals here. But there have been no responses at all. We have requested the Government to accord preferential treatment to the area in terms of taxation and planning. We have also asked it to offer interest-free loans to the businesses in the area, so as to boost the local economy. So far, the Government has offered nothing but mere lip-service. How can we promote the local economy? How can we boost the development of social enterprises there? Are we supposed to depend on the kind-heartedness of business operators?

The Chief Executive mentioned in his policy address that businesses must be mindful of their social responsibility. But we think that the Government should bear an even greater responsibility. Not much time is left for me to speak, but I must still ask, "In regard to inter-generational poverty, what have we done so far?" At present, how much can a Form Three school-leaver in Hong Kong earn? By working in a fast-food shop, he can earn \$16 an hour. But meal expenses must be deducted. Have Members ever computed how much is his take-home pay? According to the Chief Executive, we have all grown up in the struggle for survival. Yes, when I was small, I lived in Wong Tai Sin but must attend Queen's College in Causeway Bay. However, can students living in Tin Shui Wai nowadays attend Queen's College? How can we help tackle the problem of inter-generational poverty? What proposals are there? President, sometimes, when it comes to this issue, I simply do not know what to say. And, time is now up anyway. *(The buzzer sounded)*

MR CHEUNG HOK-MING (in Cantonese): Madam President, the tragedy in Tin Shui Wai happened at a time when the economic situation in Hong Kong is at its best. This is lamentable and it also indirectly reflects the fact that the economic upturn has not benefited all people. The pop song *The Tin Shui Wai Walled City* has several lines that read, "Holed up the initial high expectations", "His parent came and went, traversing the land and the waters to move into this corner", "Who was in charge of the planning of this small piece of land" and "Without money to pay the fare, how can one find a way out". All these are the lyrics of this pop song. Geographically, Tin Shui Wai is located in a secluded corner and there are both major and minor problems relating to its demography and transport planning, so it can be seen that the factors contributing to the problems in Tin Shui Wai are very complicated.

I do not agree with the label of "a city of sadness" given to Tin Shui Wai by the outside world. On the contrary, I believe that it is necessary to give residents there spiritual support and advocate the idea of "a city of hope". The key lies in the provision of adequate community facilities and services and in capitalizing on the existing advantages of the investment environment in Tin Shui Wai. At the same time as we put in place hardware conducive to the creation of more job opportunities in the district, it is also necessary to attach importance to the software support, so as to raise the quality of life of the residents there.

At present, there is a serious imbalance in the composition of the population in Tin Shui Wai in terms of the number of people living in public housing and private housing. Over 60% of the residents there were not born in Hong Kong and more than 40% of them have resided in Hong Kong for less than seven years. This reflects the fact that there are quite a lot of new arrivals to Hong Kong in the district and they are mainly women. Moreover, instances of a young wife married to an old husband are commonplace.

There are a lot of new arrivals living in Tin Shui Wai, however, the Government has not provided adequate support facilities to them, so as to put in place community networks for them properly. After these female new arrivals came to Hong Kong, they have few friends in the district. In addition, due to the expensive transport fares, they have less contact with their friends and relatives outside the district. As a result, their relationship with their friends gradually becomes more distant and they can turn to no one to air their grievances. Consequently, they cannot withstand the pressures of life, thus leading to the occurrence of tragedies.

The population in Tin Shui Wai is close to 300 000 people, however, there are pitifully few jobs in the district, numbering at less than 20 000. In addition, Tin Shui Wai is more distant from the outside world and transportation is inconvenient. If one works outside the district and if one's wage is not high, little money will be left after paying for the high transport fares, meals and other expenses. As a result, many people are forced to depend on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) payments to get by.

Although CSSA payments can meet residents' material needs, such payments cannot meet their needs of spiritual life. Last week, a vice-chairman

of the DAB went personally to Tin Shui Wai to gain a deep understanding of residents' life there. A male resident on CSSA said that receiving CSSA was the only way out as there were no other options, however, what matters most was not the fact that one was receiving CSSA but that a man had lost his dignity. When he received CSSA payment for the first time, the thought of killing himself by jumping off a building really crossed his mind. In fact, in the past, there were quite a lot of cases in which people had to receive CSSA payments due to unemployment. With all family members staying at home, there were more clashes between spouses and more family problems developed as a result.

After Secretary Matthew CHEUNG had met with a number of local groups on 30 October, he made an undertaking to make improvements in three areas to ameliorate the problems in the Tin Shui Wai community. We agree with the Government's direction, however, we urge the Government to honour its undertaking as soon as possible. In addition, we believe that there are also other feasible ways to strengthen the support for Tin Shui Wai.

Madam President, here, I call on the Government to allocate more resources and raise the level of community support services. Apart from providing additional integrated family services, it should also raise the quality of such services. I also hope that when following up cases, the family can be adopted as the unit, so as to make efforts to promote the establishment of a support network comprising residents in the housing estates in the district and bring into play the spirit of mutual care and help among neighbours.

The investment environment in Tin Shui Wai is quite desirable and it has the basic conditions. For example, there is a larger proportion of young people, so there is great latent spending power; the markets of entertainment and consumption are as yet unexploited; there is a high concentration of labour; labour and land costs are comparatively low; there is a certain amount of internal demand; there are large areas of usable land; it is close to Shenzhen and is the first stop in Hong Kong for visitors coming from the Mainland, and it is home to the globally-renowned Hong Kong Wetland Park.

On solving the problem of inadequate employment opportunities in the district, I urge the Government to seize the opportunity of implementing the 10 major infrastructure projects, which were announced recently, to encourage companies undertaking such infrastructure projects to establish precast factories

and environmentally-friendly industries in the district to provide employment opportunities there. Social enterprises should be developed in Tin Shui Wai and bazaars with special characteristics should also be organized there in the form of social enterprises. On job creation, at the same time as we stimulate economic activities in the district, it is also necessary to improve the facilities in the district and do a proper job in developing community networks, so as to raise the quality of life of its residents. The proposals in this regard include government initiatives to encourage the provision of courses to new arrivals; the provision of an additional low-fare bus route connecting with transport interchanges in the urban area; the construction of a hospital in Tin Shui Wai and a public clinic in Tin Shui Wai North; the construction of more covered outdoor playgrounds and other recreational facilities; boosting the support for Mutual Aid Committees so that they can perform the function of establishing community networks more effectively, as well as the organization of government-funded mural painting competitions using the external walls of public housing estates, with a view to fashioning Tin Shui Wai into a landmark called "a city of hope".

Madam President, I so submit.

MR BERNARD CHAN: Madam President, in the debate on the Motion of Thanks two weeks ago, I made the point that Tin Shui Wai was a place no one ever went to — unless they lived there, or they absolutely had to visit it for some reasons. And for most of us, there is no such thing as a reason to visit Tin Shui Wai.

Since then, we have heard quite a few ideas about how we could encourage more economic activities in the area. Social enterprises are an obvious example — maybe in recreational, leisure or cultural activities. Some people have called for the Government to locate some of its own offices there. There are also suggestions to change the social mix of residents.

One aim must be to get more outsiders coming in — whether it is to have fun, or to work, or maybe to live. The residents of Tin Shui Wai have an average household income significantly below the Hong Kong average. They cannot support many local businesses. And without local businesses, there are no jobs. It is a vicious cycle.

We should, wherever possible, rely on market forces and free enterprise to stimulate wealth creation. But in the case of Tin Shui Wai, I believe we can justify some direct government intervention. That is because — if we are honest — the Government has created many of the problems in Tin Shui Wai in the first place.

We are talking about decisions made many years ago, going back to the 1980s. The policymakers and planners were good men and women, dedicated to doing their best for the community. But we can now see that the plans and the forecasts have not worked out as expected.

This applies to some other new towns in the New Territories, but Tin Shui Wai is an extreme example. It is physically out of the way. Few businesses have ever invested in the area. There is not much of a middle-class population with any spending power. The cost of transport to other parts of Hong Kong makes it harder for people to find work. Housing is very dense, and there are not enough communal facilities. On top of that, it has a high concentration of residents from the Mainland, who suffer discrimination from employers. Many — not all, but many — of these things are ultimately the result of government policy and planning.

The Government therefore has a duty to act. The emphasis should be on economic stimulation, not on hand-outs. But I think we need to be open-minded about this. For example, the location of Tin Shui Wai is a real disadvantage. You could argue that giving special subsidies to public transport serving the town would be justified as a way to level the playing field. You could also argue that it would be removing a disadvantage, rather than giving a free lunch.

Some issues divide our community and divide this Council. But there are some of the things that I think we all agree on, and one is that Tin Shui Wai is a matter of shame to Hong Kong. I believe the Government will have very broad and strong support for any measures that will be effective in regenerating that sometimes tragic town.

Thank you.

DR JOSEPH LEE (in Cantonese): Madam President, some people believe that the spate of incidents of domestic violence and family tragedies that occurred in Tin Shui Wai is the result of the poverty problem in Hong Kong, while others blame them on problems with urban planning for this community, for example, inconvenient transportation, the lack of job opportunities in the district, and so on. In fact, the emergence of a social problem is the result of a number of factors, so similarly, in order to solve a social problem, it is also necessary for the Government to approach it from a number of angles. In order to turn around the fate of Tin Shui Wai as "a city of sadness", members of the public have put forward a number of constructive proposals, including the provision of additional community facilities, promoting mutual help among neighbours and providing more job opportunities. This is why we can find two Secretaries attending today's meeting. However, I wish to look at this problem from another angle. When considering this problem, we must understand that a community will not be free of problems even if its poverty and employment problems are ameliorated. In fact, the health of its residents is also very important. It is a pity that Secretary Dr York CHOW is not present today. I believe that many tragic incidents of domestic violence are related to mental health, therefore, the Government has the responsibility to allocate additional resources to improve the existing manpower shortage in psychiatric services and it should also promote the mental health among the Hong Kong public.

Take the tragedy that happened recently in Tin Shui Wai as an example, the woman involved was suffering from psychiatric illness and her husband was hospitalized due to cancer. It will not be difficult for us to imagine that this tragedy happened because the woman concerned was in an unstable mental condition and made a mistake due to the whim of the moment. The woman concerned had a history of mental illness and in theory, health care workers and social workers were following up her case, so why did this tragedy still happen? Obviously, this is because the existing health care policy cannot cater to people with mental health problems, as a result, they cannot receive appropriate assistance.

Although the Hospital Authority (HA) currently offers a psychiatric out-patient service, the service on offer is highly inadequate. The waiting time for patients in follow-up cases for a follow-up consultation is several months and patients in new cases have to wait for more than a year for consultation. One can imagine the huge number of cases that doctors, nurses and social workers have to handle every day. I suggest that the Government use Tin Shui Wai as

a test point. As the policy address points out, Tin Shui Wai can be used as a test point for public-private partnership. Patients with emotional illness can undergo triage so that they can purchase primary care from private practitioners. I believe that this idea will be able to help our friends in Tin Shui Wai. Should they develop mental problems, they will be able to receive treatment as soon as possible, so that the likelihood of the occurrence of serious incidents can be reduced.

In addition, although at present the HA also provides community psychiatric nursing service through home visits by community psychiatric nurses and the outreaching service, so as to assist discharged mental patients in adapting to life in local communities, due to the prevailing resource constraints, the services provided really cannot meet the demand. I have pointed out on various occasions that there are presently only 110 psychiatric nurses throughout Hong Kong. Take New Territories West, in which Tin Shui Wai is located, as an example, there are only 25 nurses. Since they have to take care of so many people, it is very difficult for them to provide a good service. In fact, most of the people suffering from depression in local communities would not take the initiative to seek help. In view of this, they hope very much that someone could help them. After assistance is provided to them, their suicide rate will be reduced. We hope that the authorities can provide more resources to the community psychiatric nursing service because this kind of service is very important to them.

Another function of community psychiatric nurses is to assist patients in overcoming the obstacles they encountered in communicating with their family members and carers. A press report says that close to 70% of the family members of mental patients are suffering from various degrees of depression. Family members living together with mental patients are worried about the condition of their mentally ill family members, or they are feeling unhappy due to the problems in communicating with their mentally ill family members. This group of family members of mental patients is at high risk of suffering from depression or mental illness. Community psychiatric nurses can use their professional knowledge to explain the relevant illnesses and symptoms to mental patients and their family members and give audience to their innermost feelings and thoughts as well as to the problems encountered by them, so as to render appropriate guidance. This will help ease the pressure borne by these people at high risk.

Therefore, I urge the authorities to allocate more resources to the HA, assist it in actively promoting community psychiatric nursing service and enhance the role of community psychiatric nurses, so as to reduce the chances of similar tragedies happening.

In addition, according to sections 35A and 71A of the existing Mental Health Ordinance (that is, Chapter 136 of the Laws of Hong Kong), community psychiatric nurses are not empowered to apply for a warrant to enter the premises of a mentally incapacitated person or apply for what we call Forms I and II to transfer the person concerned to hospital for treatment. Therefore, when dealing with or handling patients in an extremely unstable mental condition, they have to turn to social workers or other people for help. This greatly compromises the ability of community psychiatric nurses to handle the crisis at the scene. I propose that the authorities amend such outdated legislation as soon as possible, so that they can enter the premises of a mentally incapacitated person to directly carry out examination and assessment on people requiring such service and perhaps, to refer patients to hospitals for appropriate treatment as quickly as possible. Doing so can also fully implement the concept underlying the Community Mental Health Intervention Project proposed by the Government in this year's Budget and avoid delays in treating patients suspected to be suffering from such illnesses.

In the long run, I propose that the Government establish community psychiatric health care teams as soon as possible. Such teams should include such professionals as psychiatric doctors, community psychiatric nurses, clinical psychologists, occupational therapists and social workers. Such community psychiatric health care teams should promote the prevention of mental illness using their professional knowledge, carry out mental health assessments on people requiring them and identify potential mental patients at an early stage, so as to make early intervention and help them regain their mental health.

Finally, I hope that the authorities can implement as soon as possible the health care policy of "prevention is better than cure". In fact, I have already pointed out a number of times that at present, the mental health policy in Hong Kong obviously places too much emphasis on treatment and has overlooked prevention, so less resources have been committed to this area. Be it in resource allocation or in the allocation of new resources, I hope that the authorities will attach greater importance to services geared towards the

prevention of mental illness and education. It is only through enhancing public understanding of mental health and boosting their ability to solve problems that the mental well-being of the Hong Kong public can be maintained in a good state and the future demand for psychiatric treatment can be reduced. If members of the public have healthy bodies — I believe the same applies to residents in Tin Shui Wai — coupled with more job opportunities in the local community, it will be possible to raise the overall productivity. This will also be conducive to promoting the development of the Tin Shui Wai community.

Madam President, I so submit.

MR LAU WONG-FAT (in Cantonese): Madam President, all along, Tin Shui Wai has been given the appellation of "a city of sadness". Coupled with the recurrence of family tragedies there in recent years, the situation in Tin Shui Wai has aroused great concern.

The major cause leading to the host of problems in Tin Shui Wai is the planning blunder. The planning has departed from the two principles of paying attention to "internal balance" and "self-sufficiency". As a result, community facilities and services have lagged behind population growth. The lack of employment opportunities in the district also exacerbated poverty in the community, thus leading directly to various family problems. In addition, the blunder in planning also makes Tin Shui Wai isolated. When problems are encountered, it is difficult for the community to get appropriate support.

On another front, in order to make a living, the great majority of residents in Tin Shui Wai have to spend more than two hours each day on travelling and over \$1,000 on transport fares monthly. If we use the average household income of 80% of the families living in public housing in Tin Shui Wai, which is about \$9,000, for calculation, transport fares alone account for one tenth of the wages. The remainder has to go towards the three meals for the whole family, the rent, the school expenses of the children, and so on, so one can understand how heavy the burden of living and how great the pressure are.

In order to remedy the mistakes in planning and that of marginalizing New Territories West, the Government must approach the issue by way of planning afresh. I hope that the Government can carefully consider ways to create economic development opportunities in Tin Shui Wai and the nearby

areas, revitalize local communities and create job opportunities. I am convinced that if residents in Tin Shui Wai can find work in nearby areas, the problem of poverty and various other problems in the community will be significantly alleviated.

The Government should also consider providing retraining or skills enhancement training to people with lower academic qualifications or lower skills in Tin Shui Wai to increase their competitiveness when looking for jobs. In fact, the fastest and most effective approach is to encourage school sponsoring bodies to use their secondary school buildings as evening vocational training centres and provide support to such bodies.

On releasing the labour force of women so that they can also join the job market and supplement the income of their families, apart from the aforementioned training opportunities, it is also necessary to provide adequate child care and after-school care services in Tin Shui Wai, so that women can be free from worries and have the peace of mind to devote themselves to working.

In addition, the Government must also increase the manpower of the social worker profession to ease the workload of social workers, so as to improve the quality of service. At the same time, additional family service centres should be established at the ground level of residential blocks and their service hours should be extended to 9 pm. In this way, people wanting to seek assistance can be catered to more effectively.

In fact, in a family requiring assistance, a number of problems can be found simultaneously, including those relating to finance, employment, marital relationship, child rearing, chronic illness, care for the mentally ill, child delinquency and even involvement in criminal offences. The problems will probably be followed up by social workers responsible for various areas, however, when individual social workers handle a case relating to a family, the situation of failing to see the whole picture will arise. As a result, the service will become fragmented and there will be a lack of overall attention. In view of this, it is indeed necessary for the authorities to improve the approach in managing cases in family services, including the establishment of a central information system for family cases, so that social workers providing services to the same family but responsible for different areas can exchange and share information, so as to provide more comprehensive and appropriate services to their clients.

Madam President, in sum, in order to make improvements to and invigorate the Tin Shui Wai community, the primary tasks should be to carry out active planning, provide additional resources, provide all-round support services to families in the district and provide employment and vocational training opportunities.

With these remarks, Madam President, I support the motion.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): Madam President, just now, after several Members had moved the motion and presented the amendments, I listened carefully to the speeches delivered by the two Secretaries. As an Honourable colleague put it, it seems we are talking about different things. Whereas Members pointed out how Tin Shui Wai was neglected by the Government, the two officials spent some 30 minutes talking about how the Government had paid attention to and cared about Tin Shui Wai. However, I invite Members to look at some figures.

In 2007-2008, there were 101 government projects awaiting approval, but, only one of them was related to Tin Shui Wai. Concerning the health care complex, soccer pitches, swimming pools and recreation centre that residents in the district have all along been lobbying for, the Government has not done anything practical. Of course, we heard the Secretary say just now that all these projects would be implemented, however, they all had to be re-examined and reconsidered. Members all know that re-examinations and reconsideration are probably only a delaying tactic employed by the Secretary. In future, we probably will not remember whether the projects have been delivered.

Today, a press report says that Members are jumping on the bandwagon in vying to talk about Tin Shui Wai, that doing so is not at all desirable. On this point, I wish to express some dissenting views. As Members all know, in fact, since November 2004, when a family tragedy struck in Tin Shui Wai, the Legislative Council and many members of the representative council in that district have had discussions on more than one occasion and they have also requested that the Government provide assistance. However, in reality, in the three years from 2004 to now, the Government has done very little. It was never Members' intention to wait until a tragedy had struck before they raised this subject matter again. This is how the mass media are like. Earlier on, when we talked about the plight of socially disadvantaged groups, including

mental patients, in Tin Shui Wai, the mass media were totally indifferent. It was not until they saw that blood had been spilt that they covered this topic. We hope that the Government and the mass media will not be both so short-sighted. Of course, we also hope that this tragedy in Tin Shui Wai is the last one.

The problems exposed by this incident in Tin Shui Wai can be solved, however, having heard the comments made by the two Secretaries, I believe that we will only be trying to get blood out of a stone if we want to solve the problems. I heard the Secretary say that the most important issues were those relating to planning and the structural ones, including the employment problem and ways to solve the problems relating to transport. In fact, the Secretary cannot help the residents in the district by merely talking about the problems in these areas. After the construction of new railway lines, it is true that there will be better railways, however, the problem that residents have to overcome is that they have to pay a fare of some \$10 to \$20 per trip every day to go to work in the urban area. Even if railways have been put in place, still, this problem cannot be solved.

Besides, we have mentioned problems relating to employment. The Secretary said just now that they were developing social enterprises. However, Members must not forget that when we discussed the issue of social enterprises in this Chamber last week, it turned out that with all the social enterprises approved by the Government last year, only 200 jobs had been created, and it was the territory-wide situation. There are 270 000 people in Tin Shui Wai and as we all know, it is a disaster zone in terms of employment. I believe that these 200-odd job opportunities, even if the number were doubled to 400, amount only to a drop in the ocean. Some Honourable colleagues said that it was necessary for the Government to review its planning, including planning on land and the creation of job opportunities, but the comments made by the two Secretaries, including those they made earlier on, have not addressed this problem. In fact, in order to make society harmonious, it is necessary to take complementary measures in many areas. But residents in the district are helpless in face of the structural changes.

As Members have said, regarding the relationships among neighbours, we hope that their problems can be solved with the co-operation between Mutual Aid Committees and the local community, however, doing so will not solve the problem at root. To the majority of residents in Tin Shui Wai, the

greatest problem lies in their low income and the lack of job opportunities. Some people say that more activities can be organized, for example, by organizing a Tin Shui Wai fest, however, these activities are in fact only transient. Doing so is tantamount to putting the district on saline drip and these are only occasional activities which cannot help in any way.

I did not hear the Government mention how it can help residents in Tin Shui Wai in such fundamental areas as planning and job creation. As regards Members' discussion on how to make it easier for residents to go to the new airport to work there, I really find this laughable because at present, the unemployment rate is in fact also very high in Tung Chung. Even many residents in Tung Chung cannot find a job in the new airport, but we are harbouring the fond hope that residents in Tin Shui Wai can spend 10-odd dollars on transport fares to go and work in the airport. I think the existence of the Government is really too far-removed from the actual world that residents live in. It is perhaps useless for the Secretary to make a single visit. If he moves to that district and lives with residents there, it will perhaps help a little bit. However, if he basically only makes one or two visits, to put it more unkindly and as the press put it — Madam President, I dare not offend the Secretary — this is just like putting on a show and in fact, this cannot help in any way. I really hope that the Government can come down to earth and make some undertakings in respect of planning by telling us how residents in the district can solve such specific problems as those relating to employment and transport fares.

Finally, I wish to talk about health care services, in particular, mental health services. Despite a wait of many years, a specialist clinic in Tin Shui Wai North is still under consideration. This is in fact most unfair to them. There are a lot of mental patients in the district but the durations of the treatment they receive are quite short and the medication is also inadequate. In Tin Shui Wai, they cannot even get a follow-up consultation within a short period of time. All that the Government said just now is in fact of no help to them. To provide another 11 psychologists or some police officers from the Regional Crime Unit is in fact a drop in the ocean for them.

I have this instruction for the Government, for I hope it will offer actual assistance to residents in the district in terms of planning, infrastructure, employment and transport fares. All people hope that when they talk about

Tin Shui Wai again, it will be a city full of hope and brightness, instead of being "a city of sadness".

I so submit. Thank you, Madam President.

MR TOMMY CHEUNG (in Cantonese): Madam President, it is true that the problem of inadequate hardware exists in Tin Shui Wai and there is a need to improve its community services. We have to urge the Government to take actual action to allocate resources and provide additional services. Mrs Selina CHOW of the Liberal Party pointed out just now that apart from relying on the Government to commit more resources, more importantly, the way out for Tin Shui Wai is to assist residents there in channelling "water" to the district, that is, to introduce suitable economic activities, so as to create more job opportunities for it.

First, let me talk about the geography of Tin Shui Wai. In the east, there is the marshy countryside called Nam Sang Wai, which is a haven for birds. In the Yuen Long Kau Hui in the southeast, heritage sites can be found everywhere. Lau Fau Shan in the northwest is well known for its seafood. In Pak Nai in the west, one can watch the most beautiful sunset in Hong Kong. With the hills and the sea, it is really a picturesque place. In addition, in Tin Shui Wai, there is a Wetland Park which has become a very popular sightseeing spot in Hong Kong. It has also received a number of international awards and close to 2 000 people visit it every day. During the holidays, the number of visitors is as high as 7 000. Since its opening in May last year, the number of visitors has reached 1.4 million. Tin Shui Wai really possesses quite a lot of tourism resources.

However, we can take a look at the present situation. Although an exodus of people has been drawn to the Wetland Park, this flow of people has not been transformed into a flow of money. It seems that even the catering industry, which is capable of creating more job opportunities, is unable to benefit much. Only the flow of vehicles to the nearby car parks has become greater because most of the visitors go to and leave the park by coach, so they do not spend any money in the district and there is no economic benefit for the district.

In addition, the sightseeing spots in the vicinity of Tin Shui Wai, which I mentioned just now, are all isolated and it is not possible to connect them, nor

is there any attempt to make them and the Wetland Park, which attracts hordes of people, mutually complementary. Since there are no other complementary items, visitors may beat a hasty retreat after visiting the Wetland Park to have their meals in the urban area or to look for other forms of entertainment. Naturally, the Wetland Park has become a single sightseeing spot.

Madam President, the Liberal Party is of the view that the Government should carry out planning immediately to examine how these tourism resources, being individual spots, can be linked up to form lines and how these lines can then be zoned into a large area. For example, many tourists actually like to go to Lau Fau Shan because they can eat seafood, shop in the seafood street for dried seafood and look at the mangroves. However, there is a dearth of car park in Lau Fau Shan, so it is very difficult to find a parking space for private cars and it is all the more difficult for coaches to find a hold. In addition, there is not enough room for restaurants — we people who operate restaurants often say that it is necessary to derive benefit from the effects of aggregation, so that even if one finds a certain restaurant not to one's liking, there are still others to choose from. We can see that in places like Lan Kwai Fong, the Soho and the Knutsford Terrace, there are a lot of interconnected and large-scale complementary facilities — precisely because there is a lack of space there, not many tour groups will go there for a visit and visitors do not go there in droves.

The Liberal Party believes that the authorities can make improvements to the transport facilities in Lau Fau Shan by making available vacant lots for the provision of car parks for coaches. They can also streamline the processing of restaurant licences and even consider turning some Government land into barbecue sites or making it available for the operation of restaurants or cafeterias, so as to enhance the appeal. The authorities can also encourage local people to draw on the experience of the private museum in Tai O to establish a museum of oystering, which is a special characteristic of Lau Fau Shan, to present the development of oyster farms, various oystering tools and oyster products, so that visitors can enjoy the food, have fun and sightsee. In that case, they will naturally be willing to spend generously. In that event, Lau Fau Shan will certainly be restored to its former glory, the restaurants will do brisk business and the economic activities in the district will be vibrant. There will then be a lot of job opportunities and it will no longer be difficult for residents of Tin Shui Wai to find work.

Madam President, in fact, Tin Shui Wai also holds another advantage, that is, after the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Corridor, the first place that mainland visitors coming from western Shenzhen come into contact with in Hong Kong is Tin Shui Wai. The Liberal Party believes that Tin Shui Wai can certainly be developed into the first stop or last stop for mainland visitors in Hong Kong.

At present, there is already a hotel in the district. The Government can consider allowing planning applications for the construction of small-scale resort hotels. Together with the flea market, bazaars with special characteristics, which was mentioned by Mrs Selina CHOW just now, the heritage sites in Yuen Long, bird-watching in the marsh countryside of Nam Sang Wai, the sunset in Pak Nai, fishing ground and the expedited construction of cycling paths, not only will it be absolutely possible to make mainland visitors stay an extra day or two in Hong Kong, it will also be possible to attract residents from other parts of Hong Kong to visit the district.

We also believe that as long as the Government can adopt flexible policies to encourage and support the development of tourism in the area and fashion Tin Shui Wai into a small town for leisure activities targeting mainland visitors, what we have proposed is not a castle in the air. In that event, the shops in the district will also do thriving business.

Madam President, we hope that the Government can show greater concern and take complementary measures properly, as well as knocking heads together with us to identify new sightseeing spots and new ways to channel "water" into Tin Shui Wai. In that way, we will certainly be able to attract more visitors, including visitors from overseas, Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, to spend their money in Tin Shui Wai and the nearby areas, so that the local economy can be invigorated and an "all-win" situation thus created. I believe that with the sound of footsteps of visitors, we will be able to hear the laughter of the residents there and it is hoped that the label of sadness for Tin Shui Wai can be consigned to history.

Madam President, I so submit.

MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): President, ever since a number of family tragedies have happened in Tin Shui Wai, some people have called Tin

Shui Wai "a city of sadness". After this name of "a city of sadness" has emerged, everyone is feeling very unhappy. In fact, the mention of sadness will invariably induce some negative feelings and one will have the impression that a most unhappy or unsatisfactory condition prevails in this town.

President, several weeks ago, I went to Tin Shui Wai to attend a residents' meeting. During the meeting, one resident told me that when a young person applied for enrolment in a course and when putting down his address in a form, he did not put down his address in Tin Shui Wai but one in Yuen Long. This action reflected a phenomenon, that is, people want to deny that they are living in a "city of sadness" or that they have anything to do with this "city of sadness". In fact, their behaviour shows that they do not want to see such a situation and they hope dearly that such a situation will not recur.

Several weeks ago, the movie star, Donald CHOW Yun-fat, visited the Wetland Park. At that time, he said that it would be better to change the name "Tin Shui Wai" because he found that several places fared quite well after their names had been changed. For example, Lok Fu used to be called Lo Fu Ngam (Tiger's Den) but after the name was changed to Lok Fu, the whole place was transformed. Concerning such a course of action, if we discuss this issue from a rather superstitious perspective, if changing the name of a place can really transform a place, this is of course desirable. However, can doing so really solve the problem? If the answer is in the affirmative, of course, this would be very desirable. However, after changing a name, could all of the problems really be resolved instantly? I have doubts about this.

In addition, both Mr Tommy CHEUNG or Mrs Selina CHOW tried to put a positive spin on Tin Shui Wai by pointing out some very desirable and beautiful places tucked away in it, and that there are many sightseeing spots. However, can we surely solve the problems just by talking about the positive side? President, I am a bit worried because even if we stress those aspects, such an approach may just be an "ostrich" approach if we do not identify the crux of the problem. In other words, we are just putting aside the crux of the problem, then give it a positive spin, thinking that this will settle the matter.

However, we all know that many problems exist in Tin Shui Wai. As a number of colleagues said just now, there are problems with planning,

transportation, community facilities, and so on, in the district. However, I think that there are also a lot of problems that Honourable colleagues have not mentioned. What are they? The greatest problem is that our Government thinks that there is nothing wrong with Tin Shui Wai. President, why do I say so? If Members have listened really carefully to the speeches of the two Secretaries, they will find that they made it sound as though there were not any problem with Tin Shui Wai, saying that they had made a great deal of efforts and that there were adequate community facilities. In particular, Secretary TSANG said that they had done a lot and organized this kind and that kind of activities, that they had done practically everything. However, the question is: Have they ever thought about why so many lamentable and unhappy incidents happened even after they had done so much? They did not acknowledge earnestly that problems really exist. They just kept saying that they had done a lot. At the most, they have only said in concession that there is room for improvement in some areas and that more could be done, offering this as a response of sorts. President, I think herein lies the crux of the problem because, if our Government is unwilling to admit to the existence of the problems, how can solutions be found for them?

Therefore, having heard the two Secretaries speak, I really feel very unhappy. It turns out that the Government is so very intransigent. Despite the wide array of problems we have set out before them, they still keep putting up a defence for themselves, keep praising themselves for their past efforts, instead of admitting to their shortcomings and mistakes. How can such an attitude solve the problems? If the Government is responsible, it should immediately review with the entire community what is wrong, then tell us today what the problems in such and such an area are and what those in other areas are. After the Government has admitted to the presence of the problems, it should then say how it will deal with them. Only this is the right approach.

However, this is not what the two Secretaries did. When they spoke just now, they kept talking about what efforts they had made in the past and what a good job they had done. On hearing what they said, I thought that we were just somewhat like playing the lyre to the cows and what we said was useless. This is because they just kept defending themselves. I think such a practice is really dangerous. President, why is it dangerous? Although the subject matter of the debate today is related to Tin Shui Wai, in fact, it is relevant not only to Tin Shui Wai because there are many districts similar to Tin Shui Wai

in Hong Kong. These problems exist in many districts, but unfortunately, our Government is not even willing to admit that problems exist in Tin Shui Wai. So how would it admit that problems also exist in other districts? How possibly can it solve these problems? Therefore, if we allow such a situation to persist, I am very worried that more family tragedies will occur.

President, I have said to you in this Chamber before that in fact, in Kwai Chung, a district that I am more familiar with, several similar family tragedies also occurred in the past. But what was the outcome? Our Government did not devote any resource to solving the problems and it just let them persist. Therefore, if our Government continues to adopt such an attitude, such an approach and such a mentality in dealing with the problems, I am very worried about how the problems can be solved.

Therefore, today, I can only advise the several officials that in fact, President, I think the Government's attitude today shows that they take this problem rather lightly. As a number of Honourable colleagues said just now, this question involves a number of areas, however, today, it turned out that only two Secretaries are present. Do they mean that the problems are only relevant to welfare, labour and home affairs? What about the problems in transportation? What about the problems in housing? Are other issues not considered to be problematic? Does the issue of leisure facilities not amount to a problem?

If the Government attaches importance to this problem, at the very least, the Chief Secretary for Administration should be present today. Why? Because it will be possible to get to the core of the problem and solve it only if the Chief Secretary for Administration heads a number of departments in dealing with it. Otherwise, how can the problem be solved?

Secretary Matthew CHEUNG often says that their approach is holistic. I do not quite understand it. Can his Bureau alone deal with the matter holistically? Can he deal with the problems in transportation? Therefore, President, I hope that they can deal with this problem seriously.

DR FERNANDO CHEUNG (in Cantonese): President, instead of describing Tin Shui Wai as "a town of sadness", I think it had better be called a town

being bullied, because this is an obvious fact. Tin Shui Wai has a population of close to 300 000 but in many aspects, as Mr LEE Cheuk-yan has said, the Government has only provided it with "substandard goods". Over the years, the library has been a temporary one; the swimming pool is just a leisure pool; and there is no proper out-patient clinic but only one health care centre where out-patient service is not provided at night. In such a district with a concentrated population and located in the very remote part of the territory where so many poor people and disadvantaged groups are put together, the facilities and all the other support services provided are, however, obviously substandard, and if we do not call this bullying, I really do not know how I should describe it. I do not know why Secretary TSANG said earlier that the Government is already slanted towards Tin Shui Wai. I am afraid that they are slanted in a wrong direction.

The situation in Tin Shui Wai is actually very clear. A number of colleagues have mentioned some fundamental problems earlier. I would like to cite the editorial of *Wen Wei Po* on 31 October which gave a very clear account of the situation. It said that Tin Shui Wai is home to one tenth of households receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance; it is a place with the most cases of family tragedies, the most unemployed workers, the most new arrivals, the most low-income earners and the most children, and a community with the most public housing estates, but at the same time, it is a community with the least job opportunities, the least public and recreational facilities and the least social services. Caught in poverty, unemployment, loneliness, stress and problems in adaptation to society and in bringing up children, the residents, without channels for relieving pressure, have had negative or pessimistic sentiments accumulated in them and this explains the frequent occurrence of family tragedies. If the overall planning in Tin Shui Wai is not thoroughly improved, the cycle of tragedies would only recur endlessly. Therefore, the Government must start with planning for Tin Shui Wai afresh.

President, if friends who like to surf on the Internet look up the Wikipedia, they will find that the Wikipedia has the following descriptions of Tin Shui Wai: "In the process of development, the planning of Tin Shui Wai has long aroused criticisms. In the early stage of development of Tin Shui Wai North, the Government originally planned to provide in the district a large number of flats under the Home Ownership Scheme and so, car parks were

built based on the 8:1 population-to-parking space ratio. But after the conversion of a large number of flats into public rental housing flats, the car parks have been left unused for a long time. Meanwhile, the plan to provide a police station in Tin Shui Wai North was also called off due to the financial crisis faced by the SAR Government, and other basic facilities such as parks have long been lacking in the district. In response to the residents' demand, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) — the Secretary is in this Council today — made concessions by carrying out site formation works at the space between Grandeur Terrace and Tin Yat Estate to provide a place for residents to take a leisure walk. But the HAD responsible for the construction works said that parks are managed by the Leisure and Cultural Service Department (LCSD) and so, it only agreed to call this place a 'paving', and refused to provide street lamps on it due to budgetary constraints. It was only after repeated applications from the District Council that the LCSD planted 20 trees there and yet, they refused to water the trees. The residents, therefore, organized on their own initiative a tree planting campaign to plant and water the trees by themselves."

President, there are too many cases of such absurdities. They have been passing the buck to each other even for tree planting works and the provision of street lamps. The planning and co-ordination work carried out by government departments in Tin Shui Wai is just like the cycle tracks in Tin Shui Wai which are fragmented. Many residents of Tin Shui Wai rely on bicycles in their living or going to the market to buy food since food in Tin Shui Wai is far more expensive than in Yuen Long and so, they will ride on bicycles to go out buying food. As transport services are monopolized, transport fares are expensive and they can only take the West Rail — sorry, I mean the Light Rail, and if they wish to go to the urban areas expediently, the West Rail is their only option. But the expensive transport fares have deterred them from going out. This situation is also reflected in a song: Without a ticket to ride, how do you find a way out?

Tin Shui Wai now faces three major difficulties: Employment, transport and health care services. In respect of employment, I think about 150 000 of its population of 300 000 are employable, but only 20 000 residents in Tin Shui Wai have a job. Even if we ask the Government to really do something for Tin Shui Wai in terms of employment, transport and health care services, I am afraid that the two Bureau Directors who are in this Council now can do very little to help.

President, this is very interesting. We know only too well that this is a problem with planning. We know only too well that the entire system of supporting transport service has problems, and we know only too well that job opportunities are lacking and that there is a huge demand for health care services. When the elderly people want to seek medical consultation, they face the problem of having to make an appointment, and as night-time consultation service is not provided, they can only take a taxi to Tuen Mun Hospital. The residents told me that even the Light Rail will close after midnight and in the event of emergency, they can only take a taxi to Tuen Mun Hospital. These are the fundamental problems but in this Council there are only the Secretary for Labour and Welfare and the Secretary for Home Affairs whose policy purviews are totally irrelevant to these problems.

Given such a response of the Government, tragedies will still occur again and again. In my impression, there have already been two cases of women riding on bicycles to work and being killed in traffic accidents, and there are also numerous cases of suicide and family tragedies. How many people have to die and how many tragedies have to occur before this Government will learn the bitter lesson? Or, should we continue to "put on a show" by keeping on providing a little more facilities or more cycle tracks which can hardly address the core of the problem, thinking that this would be enough to help Tin Shui Wai?

President, I hope that our Government can really show us its determination and start with planning and treat Tin Shui Wai as a disaster area, rather than bullying Tin Shui Wai anymore. Thank you, President.

MR TAM YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): President, the successive occurrence of family tragedies in Tin Shui Wai has caused great concern in the community. Relevant discussions have also been held in large and small meetings in this Council. Today, a motion debate on this issue is once again conducted here. Last week, I attended two residents' meetings held in relation to this issue. One of the meetings was attended by the Secretary and the other one was organized by a television station. In these two meetings, a lot of Tin Shui Wai residents told us their views, their living conditions and the areas requiring improvement.

Last week, a vice-chairman of the DAB was sent to Tin Shui Wai to conduct a week-long investigation cum study and contact the residents there to

listen to their more in-depth views and find out the causes of the problems plaguing Tin Shui Wai. Subsequently, a number of solutions, including short-, medium- and long-term ones, were proposed by our vice-chairman to the Secretary. Of the numerous views expressed, some attributed the problems to such factors as remoteness of Tin Shui Wai, transport inaccessibility to places outside the district, exorbitant transport fares, the Government's faulty planning (a lot of examples have been cited earlier), inadequate community facilities, improper housing policies, an imbalanced population structure, concentration of the socially disadvantaged, a lack of community support, and so on. I believe Members can also cite a lot of examples and views.

Furthermore, two fundamental causes have been identified in the study conducted by the DAB. They are, first, serious underemployment in the district and second, inadequate support for new arrivals. At present, Tin Shui Wai has a population of more than 270 000, and yet the number of jobs available in the district is less than 20 000. Though the Government has been found to have made frequent mistakes in designing new towns in the past, the mistakes made in Tin Shui Wai are particularly serious. For instance, when Tai Po was developed as a new town, it was estimated that the district could be developed to provide more than 30% of its population with job opportunities. At present, we can see that the number of residents who can work in Tin Shui Wai is less than 10%, which is really very small. Calculated in terms of the labour force, the ratio is only around 10% at the most. While factory buildings can still be found in Tuen Mun, there is none in Tin Shui Wai. Tung Chung is better, for it has an airport, the Disneyland, the cable car system and various facilities, private buildings and a number of shopping malls. In Tin Shui Wai, however, none of these can be found. Such a design has contributed to the high unemployment rate in Tin Shui Wai. As residents cannot find jobs there, they must travel outside to look for jobs, and yet the transport fares are exorbitant. Hence, many residents have some grievances about this. The fact that they have to spend more than \$1,000 on transport fares, coupled with long travelling hours due to the long distance, has directly affected their health and family life.

In my opinion, it is vital to find out ways to provide more job opportunities in the district. After the study, the DAB finds that Tin Shui Wai should have an edge due to its own investment environment. We have also concluded that it has eight major investment advantages. First of all, despite

its less satisfactory economic environment, there are a large number of young people with potential spending power in Tin Shui Wai. Second, the entertainment market there is not yet fully developed, and it is therefore relatively quiet in the evenings. Third, the labour force, standing at around 150 000, is highly concentrated. There is no cause for worry in any recruitment exercise. Fourth, the labour force and land premium, which are vitally important, are relatively cheap. Fifth, the internal demand is huge because Tin Shui Wai has a population of more than 270 000. Sixth, there is plenty of land the size of which is large. Seventh, because of its proximity to Shenzhen, some tourists will visit Tin Shui Wai and the Wetland Park there as their first destinations. Eighth, major tourism events are available. Due to a lack of other support facilities, tourists may have to travel to other districts after visiting the Wetland Park to have their meals. Without other complementary facilities, this area is inadequate. It is worth considering how these favourable conditions of Tin Shui Wai can be further exploited.

Lastly, I still wish to point out that the support for new arrivals is inadequate, and I hope the Government can keep this in view because, compared with other people, new arrivals might have difficulty in integrating into society. In particular, the problem might even be more serious for non-users of government services. We have referred to relevant information and found that the number of new arrivals in Tin Shui Wai is quite large. Therefore, we hope the Government can help them integrate into society by, for instance, organizing appropriate retraining programmes to ensure that they are aware of the channels of airing their grievances and ways to resolve their other problems, and so on.

As regards the proposal of setting up an investigation committee to find out the causes, I think there is no such urgency. On the contrary, I agree that an inter-departmental working group should be set up to study this issue in particular.

MS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): Madam President, the often negative press coverage of Tin Shui Wai gives one the impression that it is a different kind of community and "a city of sadness". However, if we have the time to pay a visit to Tin Shui Wai, we will find that there is a lot of open space there, the greening is well done and most importantly, the air is fresh, so it is in fact superior rather than inferior to other communities.

Even so, just like other remote communities, Tin Shui Wai also faces the problem of inadequate transport facilities, and the problem there is more serious than that in other communities. The reason is that Tin Shui Wai is located in a secluded corner, so comparatively speaking, if residents travel to other areas, the distances they have to cover are longer and the fares payable by them are also higher. To low-income families, if its members have to go out of the district to work or study, transport fares will constitute a heavy burden. To address the problem encountered by residents who have to work outside the district, it is necessary to review whether the Cross-District Transport Allowance provided by the Government is adequate, and the Government should consider lowering the application threshold, so that more people in need can benefit from it.

Apart from the Cross-District Transport Allowance, I believe that it is possible to do something about the railway fares to help residents in Tin Shui Wai, a district with inherently inadequate transport facilities. As we all know, the Light Rail is the major external and internal means of transport in Tin Shui Wai, however, after the merger of the two railway corporations, the Light Rail was not included in the fare reduction exercise. I believe that although the Light Rail is still making a loss, after the merger of the two railway corporations, the MTR Corporation Limited can consider this matter from the perspective of the entire railway network and see if there is room for a reduction in the fares of the Light Rail. Similarly, in future, the corporation should also review the fare concession arrangements for student fares of the West Rail because students taking the West Rail will still not be offered half-fare concession. Even if these students transit from the West Rail to the MTR, in general, they will only be offered concessions equivalent to about 60% or 70% of the existing fares. The MTR Corporation Limited should consider standardizing the student fare concession and no matter if students take the West Rail or transit from the West Rail to the MTR, they should all be offered half-fare concession. Probably due to the inadequate transport facilities or the more expensive transport fares, a situation has developed in Tin Shui Wai whereby many residents use bicycle as the means of transport in the district or when travelling to nearby areas. But it is a shame that the road network in Tin Shui Wai does not cater to this means of transport. In this regard, there are two things that the Government can and should do. First, the Government should study whether it is possible to introduce other types of transport service to Tin Shui Wai to meet residents' transport needs and to lower transport fares through competition; and second, the Government should actively examine the

provision of additional cycling tracks or the improvement of existing cycling tracks, so that residents can use these cycling tracks safely.

Madam President, although the location of Tin Shui Wai is relatively remote, its unique geographical location has bestowed two kinds of precious resources on Tin Shui Wai not found in other communities. As long as the Government fully utilizes these two kinds of precious resources, it is possible to instill vitality into Tin Shui Wai, create a large number of job opportunities, reduce the need for residents to work outside the district and ease the burden of transport fares on them.

The first area is land for the logistics industry. With the commissioning of the Western Corridor and the Deep Bay Link and the rapid development of the Pearl River Delta Region, it is anticipated that cross-boundary traffic will become increasingly heavy, and as a result, the demand for logistics facilities and port back-up land in Northwest New Territories will also rise accordingly. If we take a look at Northwest New Territories, we will find that the only place that can provide additional large pieces of land for the logistics industry and back-up land for container transportation is Ha Tsuen, which is about 2 km from Tin Shui Wai. In fact, the Government already has a plan to provide an additional 115 hectares of land at Ha Tsuen for open storage and port back-up purposes. The Government can speed up the pace of planning and offer attractive terms to make some logistics and back-up businesses move into Ha Tsuen as soon as possible, so as to provide more job opportunities to residents of Tin Shui Wai.

In addition, with the relocation of factories across the boundary, the vacancy rates of the Yuen Long Industrial Estate and the Tung Tau Industrial Estate are quite high. However, the locations of these two industrial estates are in fact highly favourable to the operation of the logistics industry. Not only are they close to the check points, they are also close to Route 3 and the Tuen Mun Highway, which lead to the terminals in Kwai Chung. The Government can adopt an appropriate concessionary policy to gradually transform Yuen Long into an area offering high value-added logistics services and facilities. As Tin Shui Wai is close to Yuen Long and the distance between them is only about 2 km, it can provide abundant manpower to such logistics services.

The second kind of precious resources is tourism resources. Apart from the Wetland Park, there are beautiful natural sceneries in the vicinity of Tin

Shui Wai, such as Pak Nai, Lau Fau Shan and the Deep Bay. There is also an abundance of heritage sites in the surrounding area, for example, along the Ping Shan Heritage Trail. Mrs Selina CHOW also showed Members a lot of beautiful photos just now. If the Government promotes the development of tourism in the district, I believe the development of local economic activities in Tin Shui Wai can be stimulated. Moreover, a large number of job opportunities will become available, thus reducing the need for residents to go out of the district to make a living.

As long as all of us adopt a positive attitude in dealing with Tin Shui Wai and take active measures to address the problems confronting Tin Shui Wai, it will no longer be "a city of sadness" but a community with unique characteristics, liveliness and vitality.

Madam President, I so submit.

MR WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): Madam President, the topic of today's debate is "Strengthening support for Tin Shui Wai". Many say that Tin Shui Wai is a "city of sadness", but I do not subscribe to such a description, because many of the residents living in Tin Shui Wai are just like any ordinary Hong Kong people who share the common qualities of being hard-working, resilient, possessing the spirit to excel and full of aspirations. They worked diligently every day with the objective that, through working hard, they can improve their living conditions as well as those of their families. Therefore, the problems of Tin Shui Wai are actually caused by "the city", instead of "the people". And problems of this town were caused by the Government's improper planning as well as the imbalance of matching facilities provided there. As such, in providing support to Tin Shui Wai now, we must not only provide support in terms of social welfare, but we should also conduct a comprehensive review, so as to adopt some drastic measures in economic, employment, transport, population structure, recreational and cultural aspects in an emergency bid to tackle the "town" problems of Tin Shui Wai.

In fact, Tin Shui Wai had already been developed into a new town since 1990s. Serious community problems emerged only after the Government's adoption of the "85 000-flat policy". It was because, with the implementation of this policy, Tin Shui Wai has become the production centre of public

housing. Now, for housing estates in Tin Shui Wai North, which is the remotest part with the most acute problems, such as Tin Heng Estate, Tin Chak Estate and Tin Yat Estate, and so on, the residents had all started moving into such estates during this period of time. As we all know, families living in public housing estates are usually grass-roots people with limited incomes, and some are even people living in poverty. Therefore, the Government had gathered them together by allocating them with public housing flats in a new town faraway from the urban area. Such a practice has, first of all, created difficulties arising from expensive transport expenses, to be followed by a serious shortage of community facilities and matching facilities.

There is a serious imbalance, both internally and externally, in planning and matching facilities in Tin Shui Wai. For example, in the aspect of employment, there is no planned commercial area in Tin Shui Wai, nor is there any street economy or industrial area. So it is difficult for residents to find jobs in the district. As a result, many working residents have to travel to other districts for work. In fact, the inadequate economic activities and the absence of large-scale consumption venues in Tin Shui Wai have made it impossible to provide certain types of jobs in the district which are originally suitable for the grass-roots people, such as retail salespersons and security guards, and so on. In the face of such a predicament, some residents have organized among themselves some dawn markets and hawker stalls to sell second-hand goods and petty items. However, such self-reliant and self-supporting moves are not tolerated by some out-dated government policies which are rigid and intended for stamping out hawkers. Some years ago, an old hawker was drowned to death after he had jumped into the river in a bid to flee from the arrest by some staff of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. This tragedy only served to illustrate the authorities' suppression of the people who hoped to strive for self-reliance and self-help and to find a viable way of survival for themselves. In the face of such a predicament, what does the Government think?

(THE PRESIDENT'S DEPUTY, MS MIRIAM LAU, took the Chair)

Deputy President, since Tin Shui Wai is far away from the urban area, residents have to shoulder expensive travelling expenses. This has made it difficult for Tin Shui Wai residents to find jobs. In fact, a resident has to

spend over \$1,000 a month on travelling expenses if he needs to travel to work in the urban area. For grass-roots workers earning \$5,000 to \$6,000 a month, this is quite a heavy burden. It has also undermined the determination of the unemployed to go out of the district to find jobs because they feel that, after deducting the travelling expenses, the wages they can earn absolutely cannot support their living. Besides, in order to save travelling expenses, many grass-roots people will, instead of going out, choose to stay in the district even on holidays. As time goes by, they seem to be completely "cut off" from others in their way of living as well as their social lives. Deputy President, the transport fares for Tin Shui Wai residents are really very expensive. Let us take the trip between the Legislative Council and Tin Shui Wai as an example. The fare for a one-way bus trip is \$20.7, whereas the fare for a round trip is over \$40. Such an amount could well be sufficient to meet the cost of one or two meals for a grass-roots family. So, under such circumstances, how can they make their way out of this "walled" town?

As it is such a long way and so expensive to go out, so they may simply choose to stick around in the district. But it is not any better for them to stay in Tin Shui Wai either. Deputy President, Tin Shui Wai is a community with a population of over 300 000. However, there is an acute shortage of cultural, recreational and sports facilities. We have long since discussed this subject in various committees of the Legislative Council, and we have also urged the Government to expeditiously build the community facilities in Tin Shui Wai North. However, the construction projects of all such facilities are still repeatedly delayed. For example, the construction of a larger central library in Tin Shui Wai has been delayed until 2011. For Tin Shui Wai North, which is the hub of many public housing estates, there were even fewer recreational facilities. Deputy President, Tin Shui Wai is one of the communities with the largest youth population. If matching facilities are not provided properly, and the young people will have nowhere to go, consequently, they may become "young people at risk" or "young night drifters", thus leading to more social problems. Therefore, on the occasion of today's debate, I would like to put forward the following suggestions for the consideration of the Government:

1. More industrial and commercial elements should be injected into Tin Shui Wai. For example, enterprises should be encouraged to set up companies and factories in the district of Tin Shui Wai, so as to provide more employment opportunities there. Meanwhile

more social enterprises should be encouraged to develop their business in Tin Shui Wai.

2. The natural ecology and the walled village culture of Tin Shui Wai should be better exploited for the development of tourism and other related industries, so that more employment opportunities can be provided;
3. With government planning and management, community bazaars should be developed and hawkers should be allowed to conduct business there;
4. Efforts should be initiated to bring down the transport fares for Tin Shui Wai, so as to benefit the residents there;
5. Community, cultural and recreational facilities should be constructed expeditiously in Tin Shui Wai North;
6. More resources should be allocated to support the provision of social services in Tin Shui Wai; and
7. The allocation of public housing flats in Tin Shui Wai North should be suspended until improvement has been adequately made to the matching facilities in the district.

The Chief Executive has said recently that the Government has not done enough for Tin Shui Wai. I hope the Government can rectify the problem and adopt remedial measures in the district as soon as possible.

Thank you, Deputy President.

PROF PATRICK LAU (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I very much support the original motion which advocates "strengthening support for Tin Shui Wai". However, the amendments have attributed all the problems of Tin Shui Wai to improper planning. This has reflected that the movers of such amendments absolutely do not understand the entire issue.

There is no single reason that can really account for the occurrence of a series of family tragedies in Tin Shui Wai. They are triggered by many

factors. Most important of all, actually there is rather ideal planning for Tin Shui Wai, which unfortunately has not been properly implemented. Therefore, all the ideals are in vain. Now, there is a common allegation that there is a shortage of community facilities. In fact, it is not true that such facilities were not planned. It is the Government that has failed to put in place the facilities that have already been planned. Actually this is the greatest problem.

In fact, this problem has not only occurred in today's Tin Shui Wai. As early as the 1970s and 1980s, the same problem had already emerged in Tuen Mun, which consequently was beset by many different types of issues. What has happened now is just a repeat of the history of Tuen Mun. In fact, at that time, I had already pointed out that matching facilities in the communities must be co-ordinated with the implementation of the relevant planning, and that efforts must be made wherever possible to solve such co-ordination problems. However, after so many years, not only have the problems remained unsolved, they have even become increasingly serious. Consequently, Tin Shui Wai is now even described as "the city of sadness". It is very miserable indeed.

What do I mean by "the lack of co-ordination"? Let me cite an example. In the past, the ground floors of all public housing estates in Tuen Mun were originally planned for such uses as community services and kindergartens, and so on. Such facilities could soon be open for use by the public once the renovation works were completed. However, the Social Welfare Department (SWD), responsible for approving the applications, decided that the various funds would only be scrutinized and approved one by one after the residents had taken up residency in these public housing estates. As a result, the relevant services were not available to residents even after the latter had taken up residency in these public housing estates. We all know that, if such services were not available to residents after they had moved into such estates, they would have to look for kindergartens in other districts. This had caused great inconvenience indeed. The then Director of Social Welfare, Mrs Carrie LAM, now Secretary for Development, allocated a lump sum to such community services soon after she had learned about the issue and started the renovation works for such kindergartens, thus shortening the relevant procedure substantially. After the operation has got on the right track, the problem can then be solved.

Apart from hardware, of course there must also be software to complement it. I think the greatest difficulty lies in the very long time

required by the approving department. The problem was not caused by the lack of planning; instead, it was caused by the absence of a suitable department responsible for co-ordination. Consequently, the completion dates of community facilities could not meet the needs of the residents. At a time when hardware is still unavailable, naturally there will not be the provision of services by software. Therefore, I very much hope that the Government can co-ordinate the construction projects of community facilities, and that it can expedite the approving procedure. If so, we shall not have to wait in vain for 10 years for the completion of a community centre or a swimming pool.

In fact, the construction of supporting community facilities should not commence only after the residents have moved into the estates. On the contrary, the various matching facilities should first be properly completed and manned by adequate manpower for the provision of services, so that residents can enjoy the services immediately after moving into the estates — this is the true people-based approach. If there are inadequate matching facilities and thus cannot attract other people to move into these estates, then the Government will have no other option but to force some disadvantaged, who are too weak to put up any resistance, to take up residency there. As a result, local residents in the district will have a lower *per capita* income, thus the local economy cannot be properly developed, and employment opportunities cannot be created there. In the end, the people cannot become self-reliant through working, and the people living in the district will become increasingly poor. There is virtually no new way of bringing new opportunities into the economy of the district. The vicious cycle will only lead to the growing disparity between the rich and the poor among the communities. The above factors, coupled with the negative labelling effect, are reasons leading to the outbreak of so many family tragedies in the same district.

Therefore, in conducting planning for new development areas, and in implementing the planned facilities, we must pay attention to this issue and try not to commit the same mistakes. And please do not make the same old mistakes again by continuing to create more districts that are simply the duplicates of Tuen Mun and Tin Shui Wai. The authorities should seriously review the current mentality of building public housing first and providing matching facilities later. In addition, it should consider attracting people from different walks of life to move into the district by improving the community facilities there, thereby promoting the local economy, providing more job opportunities in the district, and helping to narrow the gap between the rich and

the poor. Only in this way can we provide a long-term solution for tackling the social problems.

Thank you, Deputy President.

MR FREDERICK FUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I have a lot to say. If I am allowed to speak freely, I can go on speaking for several days. Now, I can only speak on several main points and I hope I can deliver the gist of what I want to say.

Deputy President, in the 1970s, I was studying in Britain. Britain also has its own experience of building up new towns. As far as I understood it, it took them 50 years to build a new town. We only need 10 to 15 years to do the same. We build new towns much faster than they do. According to my own understanding, when the British people build a new town, they would first build the local facilities before moving people there. Of course, if the people are willing to go there to buy or build their own houses, they can go there any time they like. However, if they move into the district through certain government processes, the government would provide them with assistance in finding jobs and schools in the district before they actually move into the new town. What is the situation in Hong Kong? We would first build the residential housing to enable the people to move into the new town, and then we would go ahead building new facilities, to be complemented later on by the provision of transport facilities.

Not only Tuen Mun was developed in such a way, so was Shum Shui Po. At the very beginning, the Hoi Lai Estate was served by only one minibus route and one bus route. Why was there so sparse service? "Sorry, you do not have a population that is large enough. Are we supposed to drive empty vehicles around and incur deficits?" This was the case in Shum Shui Po, and the same had happened in Tin Shui Wai. It is all because we consider everything from a commercial perspective. Looking for jobs? It is none of the business of the Government. The people should go ahead looking for jobs on their own. It is fine if they can find jobs. If not, it is their own business.

Tin Shui Wai was built up at the time when the "85 000-flat policy" was implemented. Basically, the planning was entirely housing-based, instead of people-based. For this reason, it has led to so many problems. I do not wish

to compare Britain's 50 years to Hong Kong's 15 years. In fact, 50 years or 15 years are not the point here. What matters most is whether the people moving in are given proper attention. Has the Government attached great significance to these people at the time of planning? Are they given humane treatment?

A newspaper has made a comparison between Shum Shui Po and Yuen Long — because Tin Shui Wai is in Yuen Long. The newspaper points out that Shum Shui Po is even poorer than Yuen Long. But why are there not so many tragedies in Shum Shui Po? Why does Shum Shui Po not catch the attention of the people? In fact, it is not true that nobody pays attention to Shum Shui Po. In earlier meetings of the Commission on Poverty, there were discussions on the situation of Shum Shui Po. People turn their attention to Tin Shui Wai just because some family tragedies and suicides of people jumping from buildings have taken place in the district in recent years.

I had tried to compare the conditions of Shum Shui Po and Tin Shui Wai. Both districts are equally poor, but why are their circumstances so different? Which factors are responsible for bringing about such a situation? I am not saying that since such factors are not present in Shum Shui Po, this district must be very good. I do not mean to say that. I just try to make a comparison.

I am not going to mention the figures because everyone can read them in the newspapers. I would first of all try to examine the issue from the planning perspective. At the planning level, Shum Shui Po is an old district. It had its prime in the 1950s, but now it has become very old. Many buildings have a history of 50 years, pending redevelopment. All public housing estates there have been redeveloped. And the redevelopment process has already started with private buildings. In this district, usually there are not too many flats in public housing estates, but the population is very large. So, in other words, many people have to live in the same flat. What kind of phenomenon will emerge? Everyone seems to know each other in the neighbourhood. I wonder if Members still remember the resettlement estates. Each floor consisted of 40 flats; and for H-type blocks, there were 80 flats on each floor. If there were four to seven persons living in a flat, we can work out that one single floor could house 300 to 400 persons. But there were no self-contained toilets for individual flats, nor was there self-contained water supply. The

people living on the same floor knew each other very well. Be they babies or the elderly, all of them knew each other very well. If there were any celebrations, everyone would be very happy. But at times, there were also quarrels and scuffles among them.

Tin Shui Wai is very new, and there are many flats. If we calculate the area occupied by each person, the standard is rather lenient. But all the households have their doors tightly closed, and it seems that the residents do not know each other at all. And the residents are relocated to this district from different parts of the territory — this is the background. What is so different about such a background when compared to that of Shum Shui Po? In the past, Shum Shui Po had undergone a redevelopment process. Since the district was under the flight path, the earlier redeveloped estates are small estates, such as Lai On Estate and Lai Kok Estate, both of which being situated in my geographical constituency. Lai On Estate only consists of five blocks, each of which comprising 13 floors. The Estate has a population of 2 000 only. After redevelopment, all the residents of Lai On Estate know each other — residents from all the five blocks know each other because there are only 2 000 of them. They know each other very well. But if Members go to Tin Shui Wai, what they can see are buildings with 40 floors and 800 flats. One single block already houses more than 5 000 persons, which is even more than that of the entire Lai On Estate. How can people living in the neighbourhood come to know each other? So, the residents cannot cultivate any sense of community belonging among themselves.

There is one similarity between China and Britain. Deputy President, in ancient China, we would have an ancestral hall in each village, and villagers of the entire village would gather happily there for celebration on birthdays and god-worshipping occasions. People would meet happily in such a venue. In Britain, people conduct such affairs in churches. A church can usually be found at the strategic point of each town. A church is the venue for people getting married, holding tea receptions, chatting and meeting happily. After leaving a small town, I would always remember the church there. After leaving a village, I would always remember the ancestral hall. In fact, are there any such similar places in a housing estate? It must be our community halls. I have always said that our community halls can become our ancestral halls. We must strive to develop our communities in this way.

The second issue is employment. There are a lot of jobs in Shum Shui Po; the work types are rather diversified, but the wages are quite low. Some odd jobs may offer as little as several dollars an hour. But it is very easy for people living there to work in other districts. If I cannot find a job in the district, I can always walk to Mong Kok to look for other job opportunities, and it takes only 15 to 20 minutes for me to do so. I may also walk to Yau Ma Tei as well. On the other hand, there are very few jobs in Tin Shui Wai, but all the jobs are rather centralized. But if the residents cannot find any job in the district, they will face a very major problem. Can they walk to another district? They have difficulties in even walking to another housing estate. What shall we do in order to solve these problems? I think it is necessary for us to consider the issue from two perspectives, in which I have drawn reference from the experience of Spain, that is, we should make good use of the market. We should contemplate how we can make use of our market to absorb the existing labour force.

I suggest that, on the premise of a minimum wage, the Government may offer the incentive that, if people living in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai can find a job, the Government would top up their wages by a certain amount. For example, if a person can find a job with a monthly salary of \$5,200, he could receive an additional \$300 or \$500. If an employer chooses to employ a resident of the relevant district, he can enjoy a profit tax remission. Social enterprises can do it, but how effective will it be? Please take a look at the facts. A social enterprise can only take on five to 10 persons. How many social enterprises do we have to establish? In order to set up a large-scale social enterprise, we must have government assistance. One of the methods adopted by Spain is to allow the Association of the Blind to sell lottery tickets and this has enabled the Association to employ 7 000 persons. Only by adopting such measures can the problem be solved. So government intervention is indispensable.

On the issue of transport expenses, I have just said that people living in Shum Shui Po can go anywhere they like, whereas people living in Tin Shui Wai can go nowhere. Can the Government give all the residents some transport vouchers all in one go? For example, a resident is given four transport vouchers every day, and they can use such vouchers to go anywhere they like. If the Government wishes to impose a lot of restrictions on them, what should we do? The Government should first of all enliven the community and make the residents ready to move around. After the

community has eventually become enlivened and its residents have become ready to move around, then the Government may reduce the provision of such transport vouchers.

Finally, what I wish to say is: We must strive to build up a community with love. In a heartless society, even if the community hall can provide the whole venue for people to book and play badminton games, people still do not know each other. But we still need to have our own ancestral hall or chapel (The buzzer sounded)

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): The speaking time is up.

MR FREDERICK FUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President.

MISS CHAN YUEN-HAN (in Cantonese): Deputy President, the topic under discussion today is this district called Tin Shui Wai. In fact, poverty situations similar to that in Tin Shui Wai could also be found in districts we are familiar with, such as Kwun Tong and Tze Wan Shan. These districts do share some common characteristics. For example, at Tze Wan Shan in the Wong Tai Sin district, poor people living on the hill are discouraged to go down the hill to some other places. Why? Because transports are required for them to go down the hill. They could take the bus, but buses are over-crowded, and as far as the elderly are concerned, going downhill is a formidable chore. Take Po Tat Estate on the hill of Kwun Tong as another example — I visited Po Tat Estate just last night — it is difficult to go down the hill from Po Tat Estate. Residents have to pass through Sau Mau Ping Estate before they can go downhill. Unless they travel by cars, they have to walk all the way down the hill. To some, walking down the hill is very difficult.

As we can see, the same is true of Tin Shui Wai. Every time I go to Tin Shui Wai — I visit Tin Shui Wai at least once a year, because usually I would go there in the New Year, and of course I would also visit Tin Shui Wai on other days of the year — I always lose my sense of direction there, confused in the maze of roads; I always have problems finding my way.

A characteristic of the district is the fact that it is populated by over 300 000 people. In other similarly large districts, such as Wan Chai, where I work, or Shum Shui Po, which Frederick discussed just now, it is easy to identify common links and connections at the community level, and there are many places that are accessible on foot. If we look at the planning of Tin Shui Wai or other similar places, such as Tuen Mun, we will find that those districts are divided into northern and southern parts by roads. A person needs to make strenuous efforts in going from a place to another part of the district, and it would be even more difficult for small vendors who wish to conduct small business there, would it not? These districts do not have enough pedestrian flow or facilities, which makes it all the more harder for people to make a living there.

I have been working at the community level for more than a decade now, and I have noticed that during urban renewal or city development, the Government always relocates the poorest people to Tin Shui Wai. Residents of Tai Hum Village were relocated to Tin Shui Wai, so were residents of Sau Mau Ping. Residents living in certain districts affected by clearance were also relocated to Tin Shui Wai. The poorest people, especially new immigrants who have just come to Hong Kong to live in certain areas, and when such areas have to be redeveloped, and if these people do not have any connections at the community level, they would be relocated to Tin Shui Wai. In addition, to the grass-roots people who have a pressing need for housing, moving to Tin Shui Wai is the quickest way of addressing their needs.

The district now has amassed hundreds of thousands of these people, and basically they are poor. Therefore, we can see that Tin Shui Wai tops the chart in a number of areas, including: The highest number of families whose household income is below the average income of CSSA families for five consecutive years; the highest proportion of families with no employed persons; the highest number of reported case of child abuse for five consecutive years; the highest number of reported case of spouse abuse for three consecutive years; and the highest number of juvenile delinquency cases involving adolescents aged 10 to 15. Reading out these figures alone already makes me feel uneasy. However, if the Government would conduct more studies on the district, the more it will find that, as the community is segregated, it is very difficult for the people in the district to develop close links with each other.

Some may argue that the emphasis on roads in the district has been disadvantageous to the residents and has thus hindered the development of mutually beneficiary economic activities. In the past, when clearance projects in the urban area took place, the poor people were resettled, or "banished", to the district. Many residents previously living in my constituency had also been relocated to the district. Residents who stayed to the end of clearance operations and thus were not taken care of by anyone were eventually relocated to the district as well.

Deputy President, given such circumstances, it is evident that the overall planning and policy are not balanced. In addition, there are generally no large-scale economic activities in the district. There are private residential buildings and Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) blocks in the district, but they are segregated from the public housing estates. Under the circumstances, coupled with the adoption of a popular layout nowadays which sees the district being surrounded by roads, it has therefore become rather difficult for residents to go to other parts of the district. Basically, the southern and northern parts of Tin Shui Wai can be distinguished as districts of the well-off and the poor. Given such circumstances, I would like to tell the Secretary that I agree that we may help Tin Shui Wai by making use of social enterprises and through promoting mutual assistance in accordance with the specific needs of the community. However, these measures alone cannot resolve the problem altogether.

I agree that in a poor district, residents from different housing estates should help each other; that is to say, residents from HOS blocks and private residential buildings might offer help to residents living in other housing estates through certain public housing organizations. However, in order to take forward such work, it should be initiated by some policy changes in a top-down manner, should it not? For instance, I have raised a question today in which I asked if the Government had other support policies to assist their development. For example, residents from a poor housing estate can take care of the children of other residents. In this aspect, even if it is about taking care of children and the elderly, certain hardware has to be supplied, and this calls for some policy changes. Sometimes, the Government will provide millions of dollars in the form of a kick-start fund, but they may stop the fund allocation once the project is finished or after two or three years. As I remarked earlier this afternoon, there are similar examples in the urban areas too. In Shun Tin Estate, we have

organized a group of unemployed women to provide services to residents living in HOS courts and police quarters in the vicinity. There are job opportunities like this in the market. Yet in the absence of resources for the development of these services, how can they be made available in the first place?

Besides, if the Government only introduces some piecemeal patch-up to existing policies, it can never tackle the problems of Tin Shui Wai. 80% of the population of Tin Shui Wai are public housing residents, so there is a labour force in the district. The observation made by Ann CHIANG of the district is correct. The population of the district is largely young, and many residents have to care of children. However, the problem is, given the current circumstances of the district, small-scale economic activities may help a little, but they would not be able to solve the employment problem of such a large number of people with working ability.

I think if the Government intends to address the issue properly, it should implement large-scale infrastructure projects in Tin Shui Wai. I told the Secretary just yesterday that, in view of the plan to build a stadium with a seating capacity of 45 000 in Southeast Kowloon, perhaps this 45 000-seat stadium could instead be built in Tin Shui Wai, then it could function not only as a stadium, but also as a centre for providing training activities, or even a multi-functional centre. If facilities like this can be built in Tin Shui Wai, people will certainly be attracted to the district. Regrettably, even at the planning stage, members of the sector were of the opinion that Tin Shui Wai was far too remote and they were unwilling to work there. Under such circumstances, the Government must create ample opportunities for development, so that people will find employment in the district.

I consider some suggestions quite good, such as developing large-scale markets similar to big markets in overseas countries, where certain brand name merchandises are sold. However, the merchandises being sold must be merchandises with brand names. If such markets can be organized, people will naturally drive to shop at such outlets. Even at the initial planning stage, the Government must at least formulate a business approach. In my opinion, if the Government simply relies on its own thinking, it will not be able to come up with anything. I would advise the Government to collaborate with the business sector to figure out some special approaches and to offer some concessionary terms to members of the trade. For example, if large shops in the form of outlets are opened in Tin Shui Wai or if certain facilities are

suggested for the district, the Government would offer certain tax concessions to members of the trade. Only in this way will it be possible to (*The buzzer sounded*)

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (In Cantonese): The speaking time is up.

MISS CHAN YUEN-HAN (in Cantonese): bring new development to the district.

Thank you, Deputy President.

MR ALAN LEONG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, from today's motion debate, we can see that it has become a consensus among different political parties in this Council and different sectors of society of Hong Kong that we should be concerned about the development of the Tin Shui Wai community. In fact, not only Hong Kong people are concerned about Tin Shui Wai. Deputy President, the feature report of the latest issue of the *Newsweek* on the poverty problems of Asia has specifically mentioned Tin Shui Wai, and it also included the coverage on the recent occurrence of the family tragedy and the visit to the district by some senior officials. The article has also mentioned Secretary Matthew CHEUNG. It reported that when Secretary Matthew CHEUNG visited the community of Tin Shui Wai, a pregnant woman, in an emotional outburst, threw a bag of coins onto the ground as she accused the Government of granting funds to Tin Shui Wai residents in a very mean manner, just like treating them as beggars. I believe Secretary Matthew CHEUNG must still have very fresh memories of this.

(THE PRESIDENT resumed the Chair)

President, in the *Newsweek* article, there is a comment which is most concise and succinct, "The income gap is indeed political". I can tentatively interpret it as "the income gap between the rich and the poor is in fact a political issue." For a government that has the real mandate of the people and be responsible to public opinions, it would definitely try its best to respond to

the needs of the socially disadvantaged groups. In comparison, although tragedies in Tin Shui Wai had taken place one after the other, officials kept saying that they were concerned about, would consider, follow up and study the situation, but still they could not put forward a set of new ideas which could enable Tin Shui Wai to really get out of its present predicament.

Frankly speaking, the Government has really implemented some policies in Tin Shui Wai, and it has even gradually managed to grasp the core of the problems. Mrs Carrie LAM, now Secretary of Development, had visited Tin Shui Wai extensively when she was Director of Social Welfare. She had described this community as "lacking the cohesion and atmosphere of a community". We also recall that the two Secretaries, Mr Frederick MA and Mr Stephen LAM, had held religious music activities in Tin Shui Wai in the past. I believe officials will also realize that, in really tackling Tin Shui Wai's problems, the key lies in rebuilding mutual assistance and hope in this community, which is no easy task at all.

However, President, can we see any traces of "mutual assistance" and "hope" in the Government's "emergency remedial policies"? We can see that the Government plans to deploy more dedicated serious case units against domestic violence for stationing in Tin Shui Wai. We can see that the Government intends to step up the provision of retraining for women in Tin Shui Wai. We can also see that the Government would review the effectiveness of the cross-district transport subsidies. May I ask all the officials and colleagues who are present in this Chamber to answer this question from your own conscience: What kind of assistance will these measures bring, apart from further entrenching the label of "city of sadness" and further trapping the working people of Tin Shui Wai within the restrictions of "low-skill" and "low-income"? Can the residents see any hope in such measures? Can they find care and concern?

President, perhaps government officials may say: If we are asked to do more, then we shall have to spend more public funds; actually what the Government can do is rather limited. In my opinion, if we care to set our eyes on the wider world, we can definitely see that there are many places that are in greater difficulties than Tin Shui Wai with even much worse community conditions and that the resources their communities can mobilize may even be less than a fraction of that in our Treasury; but their governments, their business sectors or even the aspiring people in their non-government sectors can

make use of their determination and creativity to assist more and more people to get rid of poverty.

One of the most well-known examples, which I mentioned in last week's motion debate, is the Nobel Peace Prize winner, a Bangladeshi economist, Muhammad YUNUS. He stressed that the crucial point of assisting the local people to get rid of poverty lied in assisting the poor people to build up mutual help networks among themselves. For this reason, he established the "Poor People's Bank". He asked residents to first of all organize themselves into mutual support units, each of which comprising several persons, and then engage in negotiations with the Bank. The Bank formulated some simple repayment methods which could boost the incentives for the borrowers to make repayments. On the other hand, the borrowers made use of this amount of capital, together with their expertise and experience, to give full play to their creativity and enthusiasm, and thus established some small businesses one after the other, and eventually they succeeded in assisting the entire family to get rid of poverty.

President, it is by no means difficult for us to visualize that the social conditions in Bangladeshi are far more difficult than those in Hong Kong. But YUNUS had done something better than the rigid government assistance measure, namely compulsory training, which hurt the people's pride on the one hand and was unpragmatic on the other. Despite derision from the business sector, he achieved great success in assisting the socially disadvantaged groups. This is because YUNUS and his followers believe that no matter how poor a person is, and no matter how socially disadvantaged a person is, he still has the will and motivation to fight for his own livelihood. As long as we are prepared to abandon our superiority mindset, and allow the poverty alleviation initiative to change from the uncaring top-down planning approach to a kind of sincere reform that starts from the grass-roots people, there is really no reason for us to do worse than Bangladesh, given that Hong Kong possesses much richer resources and a much wider vision than Bangladesh.

President, we do not deny that the SAR Government has gradually realized where its mistakes lie: Wrong community planning, patch-up proposals with negative labels and poverty alleviation policies that do not have the participation of the community. The SAR Government knows all too well about such mistakes. This is time for the SAR Government to bid farewell to the old way and abandon the outdated concepts. It must identify ways of

mobilizing Tin Shui Wai residents, so as to enable them to really take part in the community self-rescue process. If the officials still regard Tin Shui Wai's problems as only one of their many pending files, and still keep dreaming up solutions behind closed doors for dealing with problems, it will just further accumulate the grievances and sadness of the district. If so, mutual assistance, hope and friendship will never be able to emerge and prosper in this community.

MR ALBERT CHENG (in Cantonese): Today's motion debate is indeed very timely because all the four colleagues, who either moved the motion or proposed amendments, come from this geographical constituency. They would naturally be particularly concerned about or well versed in the affairs of this constituency. Another family tragedy has taken place recently in Tin Shui Wai, which has caught the attention of everyone in society. Co-incidentally, the District Council Election is imminent, so they seized the opportunity to raise this subject in this Council, I certainly think that they have acted in a very timely fashion.

Originally, I had not planned to speak. However, a recent survey conducted by the Catholics in Hong Kong shows that I ranked third on the table of Members who had voted the least number of times in this Council Regarding the voting mechanism in the Legislative Council, the President of course knows it very well, that is, voting for, voting against and abstaining. But actually abstention means "voting against". Very often, for example, if the Civic Party has moved a motion which the Democratic Party does not agree to, Members of the latter would not vote against it; instead, they would abstain. So abstention actually means "voting against". So, given such a voting mechanism, I have all along thought that, if I have to vote on some issues which I neither agree nor disagree, I would then choose not to vote at all.

Today, after hearing so many Members' speeches, if I am not a Member of this Council, or if I am not concerned about the Legislative Council, or if I have not paid any attention in my daily life to the Legislative Council's motion debates or Members' stances and past comments, I would definitely be moved. Because I have seen that Members are so sympathetic and kind-hearted. They do show that they care a lot about the socially disadvantaged groups. However, I am one of the Members, and I have served in this Council for three years; and prior to that, I used to be a current affairs commentator who had

kept a close watch on Legislative Council affairs for at least eight to 10 years. Motions are moved every year on, for example, the attempt to fight for the interests of the socially disadvantaged groups, which include requests made to the Government for increasing the amounts of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA), disabilities allowance and transport subsidies, or opposing bus fare increases. All such motions were negated, and none of such motions or amendments was passed. As such, we can see that they are hypocrites. These people can advocate one thing, but they actually practise another substantially different. How can I cast my votes under such circumstances? I really do not understand it at all. So I am not going to cast my vote today either. It is all the fault of the Government.

Regarding this motion, I very much agree with what Miss CHAN Yuen-han and Mr Alan LEONG have said just now — that this is not a problem unique to Tin Shui Wai. It is because the entire Hong Kong is undergoing economic restructuring, so the problem of disparity between the rich and the poor exists in all the various parts of Hong Kong, and it also exists in Shum Shui Po and the constituency to which I belong. So this is not a problem unique to Tin Shui Wai. If someone is to label Tin Shui Wai After hearing Members' speeches, it seems to me that Tin Shui Wai is "a city of sadness" or a ghetto. What kinds of people are living there? They are psychiatric patients, poor people, people with family problems, people with a tendency of domestic violence and irresponsible parents. Are all people living in the district poor? Friends, what is wrong with you? If I am living in Tin Shui Wai, I would certainly feel helpless and ridiculous. It is all the Government's fault. Suppose all of a sudden our Government becomes very caring and sympathetic and tables a bill to the Legislative Council tomorrow to the effect that all those living in Tin Shui Wai can get a transport subsidy to enable them to travel by bus free of charge and their rents are waived as well, may I ask Members: Can this motion be passed? I can say this: Do not pin any hope on this; it is out of the question.

Therefore, regardless of whether we are Legislative Council Members, citizens, middle-class people or professionals, we are all leading a rather cozy life. Should we really be concerned about the socially disadvantaged groups? Although we hold different stances and represent the interests of different sectors, when we look at these poor people, and if you do believe in what you have said today — President, Members have all described the situation as so miserable — in future when some motions are presented to this Council, such

as those proposing to increase the amounts of disability allowance, transport subsidies, free bus rides, increase in the amount of CSSA and the provision of more assistance to the socially disadvantaged groups, and so on, please cast your votes to show your support — not abstaining or voting against them. If you have spoken today what your conscience dictates, please prove this with your own actions.

Of course, the Government does have its responsibility in this, but most important of all, do we, Members of this Council, also have our responsibility? As the people of Hong Kong, we have all benefited. I believe all those who are present in this Chamber today must have benefited from this society, including the chance to receive education here. For those middle-class or rich people, they can lead an affluent and cozy life — driving luxurious cars, drinking red wines or expensive wines, and they may not even raise an eyebrow at ordering a meal that costs \$10,000. This is because Hong Kong is a capitalist society. We are not jealous of the rich and we do not despise the poor. Why are there people who can lead such an affluent and comfortable life? Why are there people who have never seen several million dollars in their lives, whereas someone can drive a car on the road that is worth several million dollars? Because this society has protected your safety, and our poor people would not throw stones at you. But can they be protected from oppression? Please do not tell me this After hearing what you have said today, I really want to cry. If I do not know you, I cry because you are such nice persons — you really think in the interests of the poor people, and you are willing to speak for them. However, I am also going to cry today because I know all too well that many of you are just paying lip-service. How easy it is to just say something.

The District Council Election will soon be held, and the Legislative Council Election will be forthcoming next year, and since I am a representative of New Territories West, why do I not speak up? There are a lot of poor people in Tin Shui Wai, but as Frederick FUNG has said, there are also a lot of votes in Tin Shui Wai.

Today, I have not picked out anyone by their names as the targets of my criticism, nor have I condemned anyone as shameless or something else. I just wish to make one point. Members, everyone is going to remember what you have said today. Next time when you are asked to cast your votes, I shall be monitoring you closely and I shall bear this in mind. Therefore, I hope you

can remember what you have said — not today's voting result. In future, when there are motion debates involving the interests of the socially disadvantaged groups, please remember what you have said today and raise your hands according to your conscience. I so submit. Thank you, President.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): Whenever discussions are drawn to the socially disadvantaged or the poor, many people would show their sympathy for them. In order to show their sympathy for others, some people may go and live in a public housing flat for a night in order to get the relevant experience. This is the "old trick" played by a former Director of Aviation. It was because at that time someone complained about the noise from the Kai Tak Airport, so he went to a flat in the vicinity and stayed there for a night. Members, this kind of tactics is very poor. I think if a person does not admit his mistakes, he will not be able to make any improvement. If a government does not admit its mistakes, it will be absolutely impossible for it to rectify its past mistakes. I live in a public housing flat myself, of course I know the situation of public housing, so I do not need to stay in a public housing flat for a night in order to get the experience. Why should I ask the reporters to come and take photographs of me? When I go home, no reporters will come. Instead, the paparazzi will come and wait for the chances to take some photographs to frame me up with false accusations that I have done something nasty. They would only take photographs of me for that purpose.

People should be held responsible for things done in the election campaign. The Government should also assume its responsibility. I know, and I have also said that, if former high officials are irresponsible, and the Government allows them to act in that manner, it would surely lead to very serious consequences. On the issue of the enactment of legislation to implement Article 23 of the Basic Law, no one has ever come forward to assume any responsibility. Today, I have cited a very good example in this Chamber. I hope all the secondary school students can understand that a person must assume responsibility for his own mistakes, and a person must make corrections for characters that have been written wrongly. When I was small, my command of Chinese was not so good. Whenever I had written a character wrongly, I had to write the correct one for 10 times. That was the way I was taught by my teachers. In the leaflet prepared by a certain former high official, four characters out of a total of 500 were wrongly written. Yet

no one had ever mentioned this fact. The mass media did not report this. Instead, they only featured reports on this former high official's meeting with a certain Director of Bureau. This certain Director of Bureau had the time to meet with this former colleague and to assist her in her election campaign, so how can he have the time to visit Tin Shui Wai? Fortunately, Secretary Matthew CHEUNG did not have any appointment with this candidate; otherwise, he might not be able to visit Tin Shui Wai on that day.

The Government often says that it would rectify its own mistakes and be responsible to the poor people. However, in this leaflet consisting of 500 characters, four characters were wrongly written. Still, she claimed (and I quote), "I have imposed very high requirements on myself since I was very young. I have always done my best in pursuit of excellence in whatever I do. After starting my career, I have been working in a dedicated manner to serve the people. This is my maxim at work." This is the culture of high officials. They always say something that does not bear any relevance to the realistic world.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, you had better talk about what kind of support Tin Shui Wai needs.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): Regarding what Tin Shui Wai needs, many people have talked about that. And while many people say that they have fulfilled their responsibilities, in my opinion, all of them, including Secretary Matthew CHEUNG, who had visited Tin Shui Wai, have not really fulfilled their responsibilities. I think this is all caused by problems related to the civil service culture. A certain person said that she had always done her best in pursuit of excellence and on such a ground she took part in the election in the hope of serving Hong Kong people. But I had pointed out in this Chamber that she should apologize, but she refused. As in the case of Donald TSANG who had refused to apologize, do Members think that he can make any improvement? I heard that after that incident, that batch of 100 000 leaflets were discarded in a bid to cover up the mess

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, I do not wish to hear you making comments on the election platform of any candidates as today's

motion topic is the situation of Tin Shui Wai. Please do not discuss other issues in such great detail.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): President, I hope my brain can work in the same way as yours, but my brain keeps focusing on the high officials

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): How my brain works is not your concern. I am just enforcing the Rules of Procedure.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): The terrible high official culture has reflected exactly the irresponsible attitude of the Government. Therefore, if I do not criticize this Government as being irresponsible, I cannot do justice to the people living in Tin Shui Wai.

Members, we have been discussing Tin Shui Wai every day because the mass media devoted massive coverage to the sad happenings in the district. But may I ask Members: Are there no poor people in To Kwa Wan? Are there no poor people in Shum Shui Po? Or are there no poor people in Tung Chung? Therefore, if we exaggerate the sad happenings in Tin Shui Wai — of course I know how miserable Tin Shui Wai is. I had visited the district once, and I soon found myself at the receiving end of lots of complaints as I walked in the streets and my name cards were snapped up by the residents there — then we are actually helping the Government to shirk its responsibility. In fact, our poverty problem is as universal as the sunshine. There is really nothing new under the sun. We keep discussing Tin Shui Wai just because the media have resorted to sensationalism in their reports, making us forget that the key factor responsible for all these is the policy of the Government — as what we had said in our past criticism of Mr TUNG — spending \$200 billion to rescue the market, while only very minimal money is earmarked for helping the poor.

Today, we can see that Donald TSANG is all puffed up with pride and confidence. He has allocated \$250 billion to the nurturing of new Hong Kongers and the building up of a new Hong Kong. But he does not know anything about the old Hong Kong because he became rich in the old Hong Kong. However, with regard to the problems left by old Hong Kong, has he

tackled them? To Kwa Wan and Shum Shui Po have been poor for the past 30 years. Members, in a bid to safeguard the consortia, the Government has implemented the Application List system, but have we highlighted any poverty-stricken districts and see how we can help the poor people in those districts and help solve their problems? We have gathered so many prominent people here, scholars, experts, artists, and so on, to discuss how to turn the West Kowloon into an artificial Project Hope which will never perish. TUNG Chee-hwa had failed, but Donald TSANG can do it. Have we thought of how to save the poor people? We asked him for the money, but he said there was no money for that. But he has granted tax concessions and rates waivers. I asked him to introduce an increase in stamp duty. If he introduces an increase of just 0.01%, he can already pocket \$80 billion in revenue every year. Why should he worry about the lack of money? Will the additional 0.01% of stamp duty kill the rich people? Why can we not make use of the \$80 billion to improve the livelihood of people living in Tin Shui Wai, To Kwa Wan, Tung Chung and Shum Shui Po?

President, the Government will not provide any answer. Just like the former high official, she had made some mistakes with certain characters but she refused to admit it, and the action she had chosen to take was to discard all the 100 000 leaflets. Members, the lesson we can learn from this incident is "When you have made a mistake, you should go ahead rectify it." I hope Donald TSANG will admit his mistakes, and I also hope the former high official Mrs Regina IP will admit her mistake. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any other Member wish to speak?

MRS SOPHIE LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, whether we are compassionate or not cannot be seen by anyone in the world. Nor should we be criticized or assessed by anyone in the world. I think each one of us should do what should be done according to our conscience.

Quite a number of Members have expressed lots of views today. If they are capable, I believe they are happy to devote their efforts for any district. Here I would like to stress "if they are capable of doing so". In fact, everyone is capable and I strongly believe that we can achieve our target if we really make an effort.

Some colleagues spoke in a most excited manner. But it reminded me of a teaching by Jesus in the *Bible*. When some people wanted to cast a stone at Mary Magdalene, Jesus said that he who wished to cast the first stone at her should reflect on his own conduct and conscience. Sometimes, we should read the *Bible*. Although I am not a Christian, I consider it worthwhile to read it. What I mean is that we should not only bend our efforts to criticize the others. As Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung just said, each one of us should reflect on ourselves.

Sometimes Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung will make some enlightening remarks, the logic of which, however, is hard to understand when they are combined. Occasionally, some enlightening remarks are found in his speeches and I highly appreciate that.

President, just now I heard some colleagues say that the Government should do this and that. It seems that we Legislative Council Members are not part of the constitutional set-up. Sometimes I am really puzzled about this. In fact, when we were sworn in as Legislative Council Members, the Oath taken by us includes a pledge that we will serve Hong Kong and we are part of the constitutional set-up. This is my understanding. Everyone has deficiencies and there is room for improvement and so does the Government. I am not shielding the Government. But concerning the Government's deficiencies, we can discuss them so as to make improvement. We should not blast the Government and give no encouragement for this will be difficult to motivate a person who has already done a job short of being perfect to exert himself further. This is my point of view.

Regarding the problems of Tin Shui Wai, many colleagues just now said that these could not be solved by the Government simply by implementing some measures. No matter it is Tin Shui Wai or any old district, what the Government can do is to mobilize the whole community so that all the people can work together. This is the only feasible way. In my opinion, the Government should really need to consider what can be done to mobilize the whole community so that all people can work together.

In early 2006, the Women's Commission submitted a report recommending a lot of suggestions which were feasible for implementation by the Government, in addition to a chapter on the need of legislation. However, it is equally important that there are many things that the community or other

stakeholders can do. However, I find it incomprehensible that the Government does not pay any attention to the report. It seems that the Government considers that the report cannot be disclosed. I wonder whether the Government considered that the Commission has done a poor job.

In fact, the Legislative Council has discussed the issue on numerous occasions, and if the Government really wishes to be a "small government", it should introduce all these good proposals for the consideration of the people in the community so that they can find the right point of involvement. The Government should do so expeditiously for I consider this the right approach.

Whenever I meet with the Government, in particular, at meetings of the Welfare Services Panel President, as I said many times, our Welfare Services Panel meetings turned into public hearings. Last time during the election of the Panel Chairman, I asked the colleague who intended to be the Chairman whether he could first of all answer my question and that is: Was he holding a panel meeting or convening a public hearing? However, he evaded my question and continued to be the Chairman presiding over a public hearing. Why should this be done? I consider this an internal attrition.

I hope those who has assumed the office of Chairman or those who are holding the relevant positions can dedicate themselves and do not waste resources. In fact, the people who came to the Legislative Council were always the representatives of the 10-odd organizations. Please do not tell me that you do not discover this fact. Even our security guards know that representatives of these 10-odd organizations are the frequent visitors who would repeat the same things. However, those who should do something concrete are the stakeholders, in particular, the stakeholders in the community. They really should do something. They should raise the issue for discussion by us so that we can decide how to deal with them. If no agreement can be reached, we can hold discussions again. This is much better than criticizing the Government whenever the issue is raised.

Today, I would like to tell the Government sincerely that it should not be content with being criticized. Rather, it should let the stakeholders do what they should do, particularly in areas which need the efforts of social workers. I hope the Secretary will, after the meeting, reconsider all the contents of this report.

Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any other Member wish to speak?

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): If not, Mrs Selina CHOW, you may now speak on the three amendments. You have up to five minutes to speak.

MRS SELINA CHOW (in Cantonese): First of all, I would like to talk about the Liberal Party's view on Mr Albert CHAN's amendment. We certainly agree with him that a number of works projects have been delayed, resulting in a deterioration of the local residents' quality of life. We agree to that. After hearing the speeches of many colleagues, I believe we all agree to that. But regarding the setting up of the so-called "grass-roots livelihood improvement fund" proposed by Mr CHAN, we have reservations and cannot support it because we think that this is equivalent to issuing a blank cheque without laying down any definition or details. It is appealing to the ear but the burden is doubtful and not clear. So, we cannot support it just because it is called "grass-roots livelihood improvement fund". Please pardon me for not doing do.

Regarding Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's amendment, we also strongly agree to it. As I said in my speech just now, concerning the recommendations of the panel report, we consider full implementation necessary. Regarding the co-operation of all quarters so as to improve the facilities and ameliorate the poverty problem, we also strongly agree to it. It is, however, a pity that because of the addition of these few items, the original item (d), which should account for one half of the weight and is considered crucial and one of the solutions to the problem, that is, to revitalize the economy, has dwindled to 25% of the total weight. However, it does not matter and the most important thing is that we all agree to these basic ideas and this should be the proper direction for improvement. We therefore will support it.

Regarding Mr Albert HO's amendment about the setting up of an investigation committee, our only reservation is the word "investigation" in the name of the committee. But we will not disapprove of it on this ground because, on the whole, we very much agree to the content of his amendment. We think we can support the idea of finding out the causes of the problems in

Tin Shui Wai because, in our opinion, the Government should find out the causes in trying to solve a problem as a whole. However, if an investigation is to be conducted and the depth of which is unknown in the past there was such a committee which was similar to a seminar and I consider it more suitable. However, this is only the view of the Liberal Party. While we support his amendment, we have reservations too. Concerning his other proposals, we think that there is no conflict with ours and we are therefore willing to support his amendment. Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Madam President, I am grateful to Members for tendering their practical and useful advice and suggestions on strengthening the support for Tin Shui Wai. I shall give a concise reply to the main issues raised by Members.

As I pointed out at the beginning of this motion debate, the Government is duty-bound to provide support for families at risk and facing difficulties. I also wish to stress that the Government really attaches very great importance to the problems in Tin Shui Wai. We have never turned a blind eye to these problems, nor have we ever tried to evade them. As a matter of fact, we have been trying to squarely address the problems with a pragmatic attitude, doing our utmost and making active efforts to tackle the difficulties and challenges faced by the district. In the past three years, additional resources were already deployed to implement the various improvement recommendations made by the Review Panel on Family Services in Tin Shui Wai, with a view to enhancing the support for families in dire need of assistance. As I mentioned earlier on, these measures include increases in the number of social workers assigned to Family and Child Protective Services Units and Integrated Family Service Centres, the strengthening of district welfare planning and cross-profession co-operation, the establishment of a new Crisis Intervention and Support Centre, enhancing the functions of women's refuge centres, improving the 24-hour hotline of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and stepping up child care and clinical psychological counselling services. In the light of actual needs, we will continue to inject more resources and flexibly adjust our measures and strategies, in a bid to ensure that our services can be more effective and pertinent.

Mr Albert HO raised the issue of case management. I wish to give a concise reply here. At present, family cases are handled on the basis of "one social worker for one family". If a certain case has to involve more than one

social worker, a principal worker will take charge of liaising with the rest of the social workers and co-ordinate the services provided, so as to ensure that all the needs of the family concerned can be fully met. For some more complicated cases involving, say, abuses of children, spouses and elderly persons, the principal worker will, depending on the needs of the case concerned, liaise with other professionals and co-ordinate a cross-profession meeting during which assessments are made from different perspectives to solve the family's problems and formulate a follow-up plan.

As Members mentioned just now, in addition to government support, mutual aid among neighbours is also very important. We will continue to make use of the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) as a means of helping communities to build up safety nets based on neighbourhood spirits. Since its inception, the CIIF has provided funding for 147 projects. One successful mode adopted by these projects is the mobilization of residents' support in appointing a building co-ordinator for each housing block to liaise with needy families and provide them with timely assistance. Another mode is the establishment of a partnership with various district organizations such as Mutual Aid Committees. Through various activities and functions, residents are helped to build up their support networks for overcoming the various difficulties they face in their daily life. In Tin Shui Wai, there are a number of successful projects, such as Project to Promote Family Cohesion and a More Colourful Family Life, Heart to Heart - Mutual Help Project in Tin Shui Wai and Building a Community Network in Tin Shui Wai. We will widely publicize and promote the modes adopted by these successful projects financed by the CIIF, so that organizations intending to launch similar projects can follow suit. It is hoped that with the support and promotion efforts of the CIIF, community support networks in Tin Shui Wai can be further strengthened.

According to the 2006 Population By-census, the population of Tin Shui Wai is roughly 267 000, while the planned population size is 306 000. The Government has reserved sufficient lands for the provision of various community, cultural and leisure facilities in the district under the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. The development of most of the sites in Tin Shui Wai planned for residential and commercial uses has already been completed. In regard to the remaining sites, public housing construction is underway in Areas 103 and 104. Besides, a private residential development over the Light Rail terminus in Area 33 is also under construction. In Area

108A, a site measuring 0.65 hectare and planned for commercial uses has been included in the Application List for hotel and commercial purposes. Upon their completion, the aforesaid development projects will help improve the population structure of Tin Shui Wai and increase the employment opportunities there.

With respect to community facilities, there are the current district open space project in Area 107 and the public library and indoor games hall near Tin Shui Wai Station of the West Rail. In addition, the Planning Department has also altered the planned uses of five sites in Areas 27, 33A, 108A, 122 and 123 measuring more than 6 hectares in total. These sites have been redesignated as district open spaces to provide more lands for active and passive community leisure activities. In case of necessity, the Planning Department will also respond to the needs of other Policy Bureaux and departments and identify suitable sites for the construction of additional clinics and other community development facilities.

As I said at the beginning of this motion debate, the revitalization of Tin Shui Wai's local economy as a means of increasing local employment opportunities and facilitating the cross-district employment of Tin Shui Wai residents are our most pressing tasks. Members have put forward many innovative and constructive proposals. The Government will certainly consider them carefully.

The Hong Kong Wetland Park is the main tourist attraction in Tin Shui Wai. In conjunction with the District Council and the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Government has been marketing the Hong Kong Wetland Park and nearby scenic spots, such as the Kam Tin Tree House, the Ping Shan Heritage Trail and Lau Fau Shan with the dual themes of "heritage tourism" and "gourmet tourism". This publicity strategy has achieved some tentative results. In the market, tour groups with routes covering the Hong Kong Wetland Park and nearby scenic spots are already available. The Government is happy to explore the development of more scenic spots and tour routes in Tin Shui Wai.

Besides, to capitalize on the proximity to the Hong Kong Wetland Park, the Planning Department is currently working with other relevant Policy Bureaux to explore the feasibility of designating parts of Areas 112 and 115 in Tin Shui Wai as Comprehensive Development Areas for diversified development, so that new employment opportunities and fresh impetus can be

created for Tin Shui Wai within the development parameters of the Outline Zoning Plan.

I now wish to respond to Mr Albert HO's proposal of establishing an investigation committee on the causes of the problems in Tin Shui Wai. Actually, last week, in this very Chamber, I already stated very clearly in the special meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services that since all relevant Policy Bureaux and government departments are already striving to explore how we can provide Tin Shui Wai with further and more effective support, there is no need for any such investigation committee at this stage. As for the proposal on an inter-departmental task force, we have actually commenced our work. The Secretary for Labour and Welfare will act as the "locomotive", and we have been working side by side with the Home Affairs Bureau. We will also work with other relevant government departments and Policy Bureaux to study this issue. Therefore, Members need not worry about any fragmentation of tasks. As a team, we will certainly work with co-ordination.

Madam President, finally, I wish to reiterate that the Government will certainly do its utmost to provide integrated support for Tin Shui Wai. As Mrs Sophie LEUNG said earlier on, we must co-operate fully with Members, society and all stakeholders, so as to pool our strength and ideas together for solving the problems in Tin Shui Wai, thus giving the district fresh impetus, care and hope.

Madam President, I so submit. Thank you.

SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): Madam President, I thank various Members for offering their valuable opinions on how to boost the support for Tin Shui Wai. Just now, several Members pointed out that it was necessary to expedite the construction of leisure facilities in Tin Shui Wai. In fact, the allocation of public resources has been deliberately skewed in favour of Tin Shui Wai in recent years. Since 2004, six new leisure facilities at a total cost of about \$260 million have been completed in Tin Shui Wai, including a sports centre, basketball courts, a soccer pitch and a public library.

Just as I said in my first speech, in the coming days, we will also speed up the construction works for leisure facilities in Tin Shui Wai, for example, by

expediting the provision of open space in Tin Shui Wai North and the construction of a public library cum indoor recreation centre with an indoor heated swimming pool in Tin Shui Wai South, as well as the construction of a sports centre and community hall in Area 101 in Tin Shui Wai North.

Earlier on, I also mentioned the establishment of a neighbourhood network using Mutual Aid Committees (MACs) as the platform in the Tin Shui Wai community. With this established platform, we will provide further support to MACs and assist residents in strengthening the ties among them. I have also exchanged views with representatives of MACs taking part in the Neighbourhood Mutual Help Scheme and learned about the support needed by them in taking forward the work in this area. Of all the resources, the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund is a useful resource for organizations engaged in strengthening the support network in conjunction with the MACs.

The Yuen Long District Council (YLDC) is also very concerned about the needs of the community. Last year, it allocated funds for the "Forging a Better Tomorrow — A Self-help and Mutual-help Project", so as to promote a caring culture and mutual help and strengthen community networks. This year, the YLDC funded the organization of the "Colourful Life in Yuen Long" Programme to promote the concept of harmonious family through roadshows and group sharing with new arrival families.

Each year, the Government allocates funds to various district councils (DCs) to organize various community involvement projects. From next year onwards, the funding for DCs will be increased to \$300 million. I will encourage DCs to co-operate more often with other sectors and initiate proposals with district characteristics aimed at achieving a wide spectrum of social objectives, including building up social capital, helping people to help themselves and enhancing self-reliance and developing programmes or social enterprises targeted at socially disadvantaged groups and leading to job creation in the district, so as to cater to the needs of people in the district.

Some Members mentioned the provision of more services to new arrivals. The Yuen Long District Office has all along co-operated with local groups in providing support services to new arrival families from the Mainland,

for example, the learning of traditional Chinese characters, employment counselling and the implementation of various kinds of social inclusion projects. This year, the Home Affairs Department commissioned an experienced social service organization to organize a series of activities for new arrivals, in particular, for families living in Tin Shui Wai, including camps for parents and their children, pre-employment counselling and emotional support groups, so as to assist new arrivals in integrating into Hong Kong society early.

Madam President, the various problems in Tin Shui Wai that we have discussed, such as relative poverty, social integration of new arrivals and the difficulty in finding jobs, are in fact also the problems of our society. Due to certain peculiar temporal and spatial factors, they emerged *en masse* in Tin Shui Wai at the same time. This is not because Tin Shui Wai is inherently destined to be like this. Now that all of us have become concerned about Tin Shui Wai, this is the opportunity for us to co-operate and make efforts to solve this kind of social problems together beginning with Tin Shui Wai. With everyone's support, we can adopt a special and more targeted support policy for Tin Shui Wai. I hope that various sectors can make efforts and join hands with the Government and transform themselves into the capital for supporting this district. Recently, some charitable people have expressed their willingness to provide resources to the Home Affairs Department, so as to contribute to improving the situation in Tin Shui Wai. Tin Shui Wai is a young community with a wealth of latent vitality and hope. In view of this, the one-sided and negative label given to it by the outside world cannot reflect the true potential of Tin Shui Wai. Through our joint efforts, I believe we will surely be able to promote the active development of this community, just like other places in Hong Kong.

Madam President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now call upon Mr Albert CHAN to move his amendment to the motion.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mrs Selina CHOW's motion be amended.

Mr Albert CHAN moved the following amendment: (Translation)

"To add "this Council expresses deep regret at the Government's disregard for the needs of Tin Shui Wai residents over the years and its delay in making progress in a number of public works projects in that district, resulting in a deterioration of the local residents' quality of life; moreover," after "That,"; and to add "and set up a grass-roots livelihood improvement fund to improve the life of the grass-roots people," after "a harmonious community,"."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Mr Albert CHAN to Mrs Selina CHOW's motion, be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you as stated. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

Mrs Selina CHOW rose to claim a division.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mrs Selina CHOW has claimed a division. The division bell will ring for three minutes.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Will Members please proceed to vote.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Will Members please check their votes. If there are no queries, voting shall now stop and the result will be displayed.

Functional Constituencies:

Ms Margaret NG, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, Mr SIN Chung-kai, Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Dr KWOK Ka-ki, Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr KWONG Chi-kin voted for the amendment.

Dr Raymond HO, Dr LUI Ming-wah, Mr Bernard CHAN, Mrs Sophie LEUNG, Mr Howard YOUNG, Mr LAU Wong-fat, Ms Miriam LAU, Mr Timothy FOK, Ms LI Fung-ying, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Mr Vincent FANG and Dr Joseph LEE abstained.

Geographical Constituencies:

Mr Albert HO, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, Mr James TO, Miss CHAN Yuen-han, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Dr YEUNG Sum, Ms Emily LAU, Mr Albert CHAN, Mr Frederick FUNG, Ms Audrey EU, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung and Mr Ronny TONG voted for the amendment.

Mrs Selina CHOW, Mr Jasper TSANG, Mr LAU Kong-wah, Miss CHOY So-yuk, Mr TAM Yiu-chung, Mr LI Kwok-ying and Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming abstained.

THE PRESIDENT, Mrs Rita FAN, did not cast any vote.

THE PRESIDENT announced that among the Members returned by functional constituencies, 19 were present, seven were in favour of the amendment and 12 abstained; while among the Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, 20 were present, 12 were in favour of the amendment and seven abstained. Since the question was not agreed by a majority of each of the two groups of Members present, she therefore declared that the amendment was negatived.

MS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): President, I move that in the event of any further divisions being claimed in respect of the motion on "Strengthening

support for Tin Shui Wai" or any amendments thereto, the Council do proceed to each of such divisions immediately after the division bell has been rung for one minute.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Ms Miriam LAU be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any Member wish to speak?

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you as stated. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority respectively of each of the two groups of Members. I declare the motion passed.

I order that in the event of further divisions being claimed in respect of the motion on "Strengthening support for Tin Shui Wai" or any amendments thereto, the Council do proceed to each of such divisions immediately after the division bell has been rung for one minute.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, you may move your amendment.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mrs Selina CHOW's motion be amended.

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan moved the following amendment: (Translation)

"To add "the Government's faulty planning has caused" after "That, as"; to add "to" after "family tragedies"; to add ": (a) expeditiously implement the various recommendations put forward in the Report of Review Panel on Family Services in Tin Shui Wai and" after "urges the Government to"; and to delete ", and at the same time" after "a harmonious community" and substitute with "; (b) co-operate with the stakeholders, such as the residents, community organizations, non-governmental organizations and relevant professional bodies in the locality, to map out the town planning and community development strategies for the district afresh, improve its population structure, better the neighbourhood relations and perfect the transport support, medical services, and arts, recreational and sports facilities for the area; (c) solve the problem of working poverty and formulate a family-friendly labour policy to alleviate the troubles faced by grass-roots families in the district due to work and financial pressure; and (d)". "

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Mr LEE Cheuk-yan to Mrs Selina CHOW's motion, be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you as stated. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority respectively of each of the two groups of Members, that is, those returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, who are present. I declare the amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Albert HO, as Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's amendment has been passed, I have given leave in advance for you to revise the terms of your amendment, as set out in the paper which has been circularized to Members. When you move your revised amendment, you have up to three minutes to explain the revised terms in your amendment, but you may not repeat what you have already covered in your earlier speech. You may now move your revised amendment.

MR ALBERT HO (in Cantonese): President, I move that May I know which page of the Script?

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Page 13 of the Script.

MR ALBERT HO (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mrs Selina CHOW's motion as amended by Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, be further amended by my revised amendment.

President, we have had a very long debate. In fact, Members already know the relationships among those amendments. There is no need for me to explain in detail again. I hope Members will support my amendment.

Mr Albert HO moved the following further amendment to the motion as amended by Mr LEE Cheuk-yan: (Translation)

"To add "; and (e) set up an investigation committee to find out the causes of the problems in Tin Shui Wai; recruit more social workers to clear case backlogs and strengthen the coordination mechanism, and create Family Service Case Manager posts; establish Community Practice Centres to support residents' organizations and enhance mutual aid among neighbours; develop wetland resort hotels, 'riverside markets' and recovery parks; enhance employment counselling service and relax restrictions on the cross-district transport allowance to allow a family to be a unit in making applications; assist social enterprises in real terms, and suggest that the Housing Department provide rent concession to social enterprises" immediately before the full stop". "

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That Mr Albert HO's amendment to Mrs Selina CHOW's motion as amended by Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you as stated. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority respectively of each of the two groups of Members, that is, those returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, who are present. I declare the amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mrs Selina CHOW, you may now reply and you have one minute 12 seconds.

MRS SELINA CHOW (in Cantonese): President, first of all, I would like to thank the 22 Members for speaking on this motion. It is most unfortunate that the official responsible for economic planning is not present today, but I hope the two Bureau Directors who are present will relay our views to him.

The Liberal Party always holds that despite our many dissatisfactions, the most important thing is that we have to look forward and stimulate employment with diversified commercial activities and enterprises, in a bid to reach the ultimate goal of lifting people out of poverty. To solve the prevailing problems in Tin Shui Wai, the Government has to take the lead to create the environment, provide the incentives and join force with the community to revitalize the economic potentials within and outside Tin Shui Wai, in a bid to

remove its label of "city of sadness" and bring new hope to the residents in the district.

Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mrs Selina CHOW, as amended by Mr LEE Cheuk-yan and Mr Albert HO, be passed. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority respectively of each of the two groups of Members, that is, those returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, who are present. I declare the motion as amended passed.

NEXT MEETING

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now adjourn the Council until 11:00 am on Wednesday, 14 November 2007.

Adjourned accordingly at four minutes past Eight o'clock.

Appendix I

WRITTEN ANSWER**Written answer by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare to Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's supplementary question to Question 2**

As regards supplementary information on the average monthly salaries of lower-income occupations, attached at Annex is Table 8 of the "Quarterly Report of Wage and Payroll Statistics" issued by the Census and Statistics Department on December 2007¹, which lists the "Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation", for Members' information.

¹ The Census and Statistics Department conducts "Labour Earnings Survey (LES)" regularly and used the data collected to compile the "Quarterly Report of Wage and Payroll Statistics", which is published in March, June, September and December each year.

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

Annex

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
正常工作時數與平均標準工作日數

Table 8 Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
衣物縫製業						
Garments						
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	*	15,688	15,699	8	24
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	*	11,983	11,956	8	24
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	*	12,312	12,257	8	24
紡棉紗及梭織棉布業						
Cotton spinning and weaving						
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	13,911	*	13,703	8	26
其中：	within which:					
監督/管工	Supervisor/foreman	14,432	*	14,297	8	26
保養技術員	Maintenance technician	13,496	-	13,496	8	26
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	10,262	10,009	10,074	8	25
其中：	within which:					
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	11,117	11,170	8	25
普通文員	General office clerk	*	8,874	9,289	8	25
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	8,212	7,092	7,525	8	26
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	8,164	7,091	7,396	8	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	11,581	8,577	10,119	8	26
漂染業						
Bleaching and dyeing						
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	*	*	13,490	9	26
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	*	*	10,271	8	25
其中：	within which:					
普通文員	General office clerk	*	*	10,006	8	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	11,953	10,222	11,254	9	26
紙盒及紙袋製造業						
Paper boxes and bags						
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	*	10,500	10,415	8	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	12,203	10,328	11,095	8	25

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
 正常工作時數與平均標準工作日數 --- 續頁
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 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)†† Average monthly salaries(\$) ^{††}			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
印刷、出版及有關行業	Printing, publishing and allied industries					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	15,878	15,627	15,761	8	24
其中：	within which:					
監督/管工	Supervisor/foreman	17,557	*	17,417	8	25
辦公室主任/行政主任	Office/administrative supervisor	*	16,542	16,486	8	24
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	*	15,488	15,384	8	23
推銷員/營業代表	Salesman/sales representative	14,576	15,530	15,049	8	24
生產策劃員/管理員	Production planner/controller	*	*	17,344	8	25
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	10,399	10,494	10,472	8	24
其中：	within which:					
貨倉/採購文員	Stock/purchasing clerk	*	10,904	10,428	8	24
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	10,903	11,445	8	24
普通文員	General office clerk	*	9,932	9,897	8	24
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	*	13,393	13,203	8	23
接待員/電話接綫生	Receptionist/telephone operator	*	9,352	9,187	8	24
校對員	Proof reader	*	10,248	10,369	8	24
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	9,142	7,163	8,470	8	25
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	7,754	*	7,340	8	26
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	7,568	7,347	7,448	8	24
司機	Driver	12,037	*	11,995	8	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	12,688	11,877	12,248	8	24
電器用具及配件製造業	Electrical appliances and accessories					
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	12,166	*	11,790	8	25
電子製品業	Electronics					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	13,060	12,843	13,006	8	24
其中：	within which:					
監督/管工	Supervisor/foreman	14,207	*	13,057	8	25
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	*	9,662	9,420	8	23
其中：	within which:					
普通文員	General office clerk	*	*	8,167	8	24
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	*	*	8,693	9	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	12,264	10,390	11,488	8	24

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)†† Average monthly salaries(\$) ^{††}			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
攝影及光學用品製造業	Photographic and optical goods					
文員級及秘書級人員	Clerical and secretarial workers	*	8,873	8,879	8	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	*	9,299	10,730	8	25
鐘錶及其零件製造業	Watches, clocks and parts					
督導級及技術員級人員 其中：	Supervisory and technical workers within which:	*	16,819	16,407	8	24
監督/管工	Supervisor/foreman	*	*	15,897	8	24
文員級及秘書級人員	Clerical and secretarial workers	*	11,490	11,608	8	24
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	14,062	12,527	13,053	8	24
珠寶首飾及有關物品 製造業	Jewellery and related articles					
督導級及技術員級人員	Supervisory and technical workers	15,956	*	15,329	8	25
文員級及秘書級人員 其中：	Clerical and secretarial workers within which:	*	10,377	10,357	8	24
普通文員	General office clerk	*	9,676	9,732	8	24
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	13,224	11,157	11,928	8	24
製造業	Manufacturing					
督導級及技術員級人員	Supervisory and technical workers	15,032	15,083	15,053	8	24
文員級及秘書級人員	Clerical and secretarial workers	10,260	10,743	10,643	8	24
其他非生產級工人	Miscellaneous non-production workers	8,932	6,657	7,966	8	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	12,555	11,371	11,917	8	24
批發業	Wholesale					
督導級及技術員級人員 其中：	Supervisory and technical workers within which:	15,798	15,155	15,584	8	25
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	*	16,559	16,736	8	25
推銷員/營業代表	Salesman/sales representative	15,374	14,247	15,088	8	25
商品/採購主任	Merchandiser/buyer	*	*	13,604	7	25
營業主任	Sales supervisor	21,826	*	20,411	8	25

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
 正常工作時數與平均標準工作日數 --- 續頁
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		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
批發業(續)	Wholesale (Cont'd.)					
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	9,850	9,866	9,859	8	25
其中：	within which:					
貨倉/採購文員	Stock/purchasing clerk	9,402	*	9,240	8	25
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	6,929	10,671	9,004	7	26
普通文員	General office clerk	12,353	10,321	10,809	8	24
售貨員	Sales clerk/shop assistant	10,615	8,515	9,523	9	26
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	9,195	7,566	9,086	8	26
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	7,756	7,296	7,687	8	26
司機	Driver	10,472	-	10,472	9	26
送貨員	Delivery man	9,089	-	9,089	9	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	10,835	10,831	10,834	8	25
零售業	Retail					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	11,929	11,798	11,859	8	25
其中：	within which:					
營業主任	Sales supervisor	11,203	10,983	11,088	9	26
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	9,173	8,704	8,815	8	25
其中：	within which:					
收銀員/出納員	Cashier	*	9,410	9,230	8	25
售貨員	Sales clerk/shop assistant	9,192	8,350	8,563	9	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	9,909	9,148	9,393	8	25
食品進出口貿易業	Import/export of foodstuffs					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	14,666	17,225	16,099	8	24
其中：	within which:					
推銷員/營業代表	Salesman/sales representative	14,260	*	13,933	8	24
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	9,189	11,971	11,344	8	24
其中：	within which:					
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	10,181	9,858	8	23
普通文員	General office clerk	*	10,617	10,223	8	24
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	8,415	6,958	8,018	8	26
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	*	*	7,035	8	26
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	*	*	7,056	8	23
司機	Driver	9,576	-	9,576	8	26
送貨員	Delivery man	8,687	-	8,687	8	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	9,880	12,218	11,023	8	24

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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**Table 8 Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average
 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.**

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
衣物、鞋類及有關製品 進出口貿易業	Import/export of clothing, footwear and allied products					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	17,425	15,996	16,432	8	23
其中：	within which:					
電子資料處理主任/系統 分析員/程序編製員	D.P. supervisor/system analyst/ programmer	20,755	23,837	20,918	8	23
儲物室/貨倉主任	Store/godown supervisor	15,049	*	14,992	8	24
辦公室主任/行政主任	Office/administrative supervisor	*	19,058	18,949	8	23
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	19,682	20,211	20,093	8	23
品質控制/保證技術員	Quality control/assurance technician	21,421	17,809	20,284	8	23
推銷員/營業代表	Salesman/sales representative	15,657	13,047	14,367	8	24
商品/採購主任	Merchandiser/buyer	16,610	16,976	16,907	8	23
營業主任	Sales supervisor	*	21,767	20,897	8	23
船務主任	Shipping supervisor	23,017	18,828	20,085	8	23
設計員	Designer/pattern maker	14,688	15,103	14,953	8	23
業務聯絡員	Business co-ordinator	*	11,510	12,233	8	23
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	11,053	11,633	11,516	8	23
其中：	within which:					
貨倉/採購文員	Stock/purchasing clerk	10,326	10,743	10,583	8	23
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	13,701	12,220	12,377	8	23
普通文員	General office clerk	11,214	10,162	10,411	8	24
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	*	18,273	17,573	8	23
接待員/電話接線生	Receptionist/telephone operator	-	9,099	9,099	8	23
進出口文件處理/船務 文員	Documentation/shipping clerk	10,909	12,534	12,361	8	23
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	10,235	7,240	9,059	8	24
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	8,730	7,001	7,792	8	24
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	7,801	7,364	7,521	8	23
司機	Driver	12,805	*	12,618	8	24
送貨員	Delivery man	8,874	-	8,874	8	24
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	14,689	13,931	14,158	8	23
雜項消費品進出口 貿易業	Import/export of miscellaneous consumer goods					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	17,165	15,372	16,187	8	23
其中：	within which:					
電子資料處理主任/系統 分析員/程序編製員	D.P. supervisor/system analyst/ programmer	19,131	*	19,452	8	23
儲物室/貨倉主任	Store/godown supervisor	14,457	*	14,185	8	24
辦公室主任/行政主任	Office/administrative supervisor	*	20,303	19,533	8	24
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	20,920	18,555	19,229	8	23
電子工程技術員	Electronic engineering technician	18,254	*	17,462	8	23
機械工程技術員	Mechanical engineering technician	18,255	*	18,108	8	23

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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**Table 8 Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average
 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.**

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
雜項消費品進出口 貿易業(續)	Import/export of miscellaneous consumer goods (Cont'd.)					
品質控制/保證技術員	Quality control/assurance technician	19,345	*	16,816	8	24
推銷員/營業代表	Salesman/sales representative	15,200	13,618	14,424	8	24
商品/採購主任	Merchandiser/buyer	15,578	15,841	15,755	8	23
營業主任	Sales supervisor	24,240	18,932	21,452	8	23
船務主任	Shipping supervisor	*	16,862	16,935	8	23
設計員	Designer/pattern maker	17,869	14,872	16,412	8	23
業務聯絡員	Business co-ordinator	13,267	12,616	12,818	8	23
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	11,616	12,054	11,960	8	23
其中:	within which:					
貨倉/採購文員	Stock/purchasing clerk	11,323	12,056	11,650	8	24
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	13,076	11,966	12,159	8	23
普通文員	General office clerk	11,042	9,880	10,128	8	24
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	*	17,758	17,687	8	23
接待員/電話接綫生	Receptionist/telephone operator	-	9,251	9,251	8	23
出入口文件處理/船務 文員	Documentation/shipping clerk	11,395	12,661	12,497	8	23
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	10,508	7,139	9,453	8	24
其中:	within which:					
雜工	General worker	8,278	7,152	7,607	8	24
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	7,782	7,124	7,386	8	23
司機	Driver	13,421	-	13,421	8	24
送貨員	Delivery man	8,526	-	8,526	8	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	14,958	13,495	14,087	8	24
機械、設備及其零件 進出口貿易業	Import/export of machinery, equipment and parts					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	18,697	16,766	18,303	8	23
其中:	within which:					
辦公室主任/行政主任	Office/administrative supervisor	*	21,111	22,748	8	23
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	*	*	19,628	8	23
機械工程技術員	Mechanical engineering technician	14,477	*	14,471	8	25
推銷員/營業代表	Salesman/sales representative	21,038	*	20,543	8	24
營業主任	Sales supervisor	*	*	23,780	8	22
業務聯絡員	Business co-ordinator	*	*	14,230	8	22
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	12,984	13,688	13,539	8	23
其中:	within which:					
貨倉/採購文員	Stock/purchasing clerk	14,825	*	13,607	8	24
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	15,472	15,332	8	24
普通文員	General office clerk	*	10,533	10,270	8	23
出入口文件處理/船務 文員	Documentation/shipping clerk	*	*	11,787	8	23

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
機械、設備及其零件 進出口貿易業(續)	Import/export of machinery, equipment and parts (Cont'd.)					
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	11,897	8,112	11,098	8	24
其中：	within which:					
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	*	*	8,838	8	23
司機	Driver	12,491	*	12,441	8	24
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	17,447	14,525	16,399	8	23
雜項耐用品進出口 貿易業	Import/export of miscellaneous durable goods					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	17,343	17,110	17,260	8	23
其中：	within which:					
電子資料處理主任/系統 分析員/程序編製員	D.P. supervisor/system analyst/ programmer	24,724	30,077	25,678	8	22
儲物室/貨倉主任	Store/godown supervisor	15,118	*	16,115	8	23
辦公室主任/行政主任	Office/administrative supervisor	*	19,135	20,064	8	22
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	18,012	18,616	18,489	8	23
電子工程技術員	Electronic engineering technician	17,801	*	17,812	8	23
機械工程技術員	Mechanical engineering technician	13,285	*	13,579	8	22
品質控制/保證技術員	Quality control/assurance technician	15,346	*	12,380	8	23
推銷員/營業代表	Salesman/sales representative	18,470	19,102	18,672	8	23
商品/採購主任	Merchandiser/buyer	14,799	13,474	13,835	8	24
營業主任	Sales supervisor	28,880	22,518	25,997	8	23
船務主任	Shipping supervisor	*	18,681	18,148	8	23
設計員	Designer/pattern maker	*	*	19,277	8	23
業務聯絡員	Business co-ordinator	*	15,584	14,858	8	23
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	11,540	12,392	12,179	8	23
其中：	within which:					
貨倉/採購文員	Stock/purchasing clerk	10,426	10,950	10,569	8	23
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	11,915	12,328	12,261	8	23
普通文員	General office clerk	12,511	11,258	11,436	8	23
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	*	18,481	18,254	8	23
接待員/電話接綫生	Receptionist/telephone operator	*	9,531	9,533	8	24
出入口文件處理/船務 文員	Documentation/shipping clerk	10,470	12,950	12,265	8	23
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	9,917	6,749	8,855	8	24
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	8,414	6,482	7,536	8	24
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	9,266	7,142	7,677	8	23
司機	Driver	13,103	*	12,826	8	24
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	15,779	14,366	15,126	8	23

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)†† Average monthly salaries(\$) ^{††}			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
原料及半製品進出口 貿易業	Import/export of raw materials and semi-manufactures					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	18,694	17,611	18,143	8	23
其中：	within which:					
電子資料處理主任/系統 分析員/程序編製員	D.P. supervisor/system analyst/ programmer	22,836	25,417	23,099	8	22
儲物室/貨倉主任	Store/godown supervisor	15,276	*	15,278	8	23
辦公室主任/行政主任	Office/administrative supervisor	18,851	19,107	18,987	8	23
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	21,671	21,521	21,552	8	23
電子工程技術員	Electronic engineering technician	21,739	*	22,415	8	22
機械工程技術員	Mechanical engineering technician	15,957	-	15,957	8	24
品質控制/保證技術員	Quality control/assurance technician	17,322	*	17,846	8	23
推銷員/營業代表	Salesman/sales representative	17,163	17,038	17,118	8	23
商品/採購主任	Merchandiser/buyer	22,486	21,975	22,224	8	23
營業主任	Sales supervisor	24,039	22,546	23,407	8	23
船務主任	Shipping supervisor	*	17,200	17,313	8	23
業務聯絡員	Business co-ordinator	*	13,350	13,355	8	22
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	9,738	11,776	11,297	8	23
其中：	within which:					
貨倉/採購文員	Stock/purchasing clerk	9,209	11,067	9,970	8	23
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	11,435	11,967	11,935	8	23
普通文員	General office clerk	*	10,061	10,179	8	23
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	*	17,283	16,861	8	23
接待員/電話接綫生	Receptionist/telephone operator	-	9,617	9,617	8	23
出入口文件處理/船務 文員	Documentation/shipping clerk	10,355	12,260	11,979	8	23
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	10,805	7,285	10,168	8	24
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	9,885	7,114	9,273	8	24
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	8,721	7,202	8,090	8	24
司機	Driver	12,778	*	12,740	8	24
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	14,787	14,096	14,400	8	23
一般貨品進出口貿易業	Import/export of general commodities					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	16,858	*	17,363	8	23
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>		*	11,631	8	23
其中：	within which:					
出入口文件處理/船務 文員	Documentation/shipping clerk	*	*	13,574	8	23
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	10,687	*	10,258	8	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	13,287	13,719	13,536	8	23

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
中式餐館及酒樓業	Chinese restaurants					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	14,573	10,653	13,054	10	26
其中：	within which:					
樓面部主任	Maitre D'	12,078	11,617	11,971	10	26
總廚師	Chief cook	19,583	-	19,583	10	26
領班	Captain	10,834	10,457	10,610	10	26
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	9,080	8,093	8,189	9	26
其中：	within which:					
貨倉/採購文員	Stock/purchasing clerk	8,990	*	8,619	9	26
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	9,983	9,891	8	25
收銀員/出納員/ 帳單處理文員	Cashier/chit clerk	*	6,908	6,925	9	26
接待員	Receptionist	*	9,706	9,642	10	26
服務人員	<i>Service workers</i>	12,354	7,155	9,964	10	26
其中：	within which:					
調酒員	Bartender	11,498	*	11,294	10	26
制服及布草房侍應生	Uniform and linen room attendant	-	6,105	6,105	10	26
廚師	Cook	13,377	9,034	13,055	10	26
初級廚師	Junior cook	8,533	8,338	8,479	10	26
管事	Steward	*	*	9,207	10	26
男/女侍應生	Waiter/waitress	8,743	7,734	7,997	9	26
點心員	Refreshment server	-	5,575	5,575	9	26
初級侍應生	Bus boy	*	6,422	6,424	10	26
海鮮料理員	Aquarium attendant	10,911	-	10,911	10	26
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	6,656	6,555	6,576	10	26
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	6,374	6,586	6,506	10	26
保安員	Guard	6,046	*	6,084	10	26
洗碟工	Dishwasher	*	6,541	6,593	10	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	12,415	7,589	9,854	10	26
非中式餐館業	Restaurants, other than Chinese restaurants					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	14,727	10,681	13,499	9	26
其中：	within which:					
樓面部主任	Maitre D'	13,774	11,192	12,398	9	26
總廚師	Chief cook	18,428	-	18,428	9	26
領班	Captain	11,790	9,534	10,940	9	26
酒吧主管	Bar supervisor	11,860	*	11,054	9	26
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	8,894	8,440	8,500	9	26
其中：	within which:					
收銀員/出納員/ 帳單處理文員	Cashier/chit clerk	8,457	7,882	7,951	9	26
接待員	Receptionist	*	9,470	9,386	9	26

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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**Table 8 Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average
 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.**

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
非中式餐館業(續)	Restaurants, other than Chinese restaurants (Cont'd.)					
服務人員	<i>Service workers</i>	9,762	7,652	9,067	9	26
其中：	within which:					
調酒員	Bartender	10,231	*	9,923	9	26
廚師	Cook	10,995	8,492	10,819	9	26
初級廚師	Junior cook	8,429	7,411	8,196	9	26
男/女侍應生	Waiter/waitress	8,156	7,638	7,847	9	26
初級侍應生	Bus boy	*	6,493	7,050	9	26
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	6,799	6,508	6,526	9	26
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	*	5,889	6,102	9	26
洗碟工	Dishwasher	*	6,559	6,556	9	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	10,631	7,752	9,394	9	26
快餐店業 ‡	Fast food shops ‡					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	12,204	11,786	12,010	8	24
其中：	within which:					
領班	Captain	12,160	11,677	11,937	8	24
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	7,231	7,110	7,178	9	26
其中：	within which:					
收銀員/出納員/ 帳單處理文員	Cashier/chit clerk	*	6,998	7,094	9	26
服務人員	<i>Service workers</i>	5,861	4,269	5,037	8	23
其中：	within which:					
廚師	Cook	10,519	*	10,420	10	26
初級廚師	Junior cook	4,535	4,299	4,394	7	22
顧客服務員	Customer services worker	4,734	4,197	4,438	7	23
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	6,052	5,663	5,905	10	26
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	*	5,637	5,567	9	26
洗碟及清潔工	Dishwasher/cleaner	6,071	5,671	5,940	10	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	6,693	5,218	5,958	8	23

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
 正常工作時數與平均標準工作日數 --- 續頁
**Table 8 Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average
 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.**

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)†† Average monthly salaries(\$) ^{††}			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
酒店業	Hotels					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	13,808	14,779	14,160	8	25
其中：	within which:					
儲物室/貨倉主任	Store/godown supervisor	13,172	*	13,084	8	25
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	16,731	14,951	15,703	8	24
藝術設計師	Artist	*	*	13,933	8	24
營業主任	Sales supervisor	17,952	15,978	16,444	8	24
收入核數主任	Income auditing supervisor	15,026	*	15,479	8	24
人事主任	Personnel supervisor	*	15,036	15,429	8	24
行李主管/行李領班	Bell superintendent/bell captain	11,204	-	11,204	8	26
房口監督員/房口部領班	Floor supervisor/floor housekeeper	13,783	13,711	13,765	8	25
保安主任	Chief security officer	14,452	*	14,488	8	25
電話部主任	Telephone supervisor	*	14,675	14,602	8	25
大堂款接主任	Front office supervisor	14,816	14,653	14,723	8	25
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	11,135	11,442	11,340	8	25
其中：	within which:					
貨倉/採購文員	Stock/purchasing clerk	9,746	*	10,069	8	25
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	10,132	10,242	10,192	8	24
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	*	14,916	14,989	8	24
出納員	Cashier	*	12,835	12,744	8	24
接待員/電話接綫生	Receptionist/telephone operator	11,409	11,036	11,104	8	25
人事文員	Personnel clerk	*	*	10,474	8	24
訂房文員	Reservation clerk	12,159	11,672	11,741	8	25
大堂款接員	Front office clerk	10,918	10,934	10,927	8	25
機場代表	Airport representative	12,356	-	12,356	8	25
房口部文員	House-keeping clerk	*	10,177	10,334	8	25
服務人員	<i>Service workers</i>	10,198	9,822	9,958	8	25
其中：	within which:					
保安員	Security officer	10,307	*	10,311	9	25
房間侍應生/房間服務員	Room attendant/houseman	10,238	9,924	10,011	8	25
制服及布草房侍應生	Uniform and linen room attendant	*	9,109	9,259	8	26
布草修補員	Upholsterer	*	*	11,289	8	25
洗衣及乾衣部侍應生/ 衣服整理員	Laundry and valet attendant/ sorter	*	10,117	9,966	8	25
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	8,625	8,401	8,551	8	25
其中：	within which:					
司機	Driver	10,249	-	10,249	8	25
行李生	Bell boy	7,936	*	7,950	8	25
大門侍應	Doorman	9,247	*	9,125	8	26
公眾地方清潔工	Public area cleaner	8,535	8,434	8,471	8	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	10,739	10,662	10,697	8	25

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
 正常工作時數與平均標準工作日數 --- 續頁
 Table 8 Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average
 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
批發、零售、進出口 貿易、飲食及酒店業	Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels					
督導級及技術員級人員	Supervisory and technical workers	16,655	15,487	16,060	8	24
文員級及秘書級人員	Clerical and secretarial workers	10,496	11,016	10,896	8	24
服務人員	Service workers	9,741	6,476	8,253	9	25
其他非生產級工人	Miscellaneous non-production workers	9,373	6,794	8,275	9	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	12,518	11,122	11,753	8	24
貨櫃裝卸及貨櫃租賃 服務業	Haulage of containers and containers leasing					
督導級及技術員級人員 其中：	Supervisory and technical workers within which:	11,452	*	11,665	8	26
調度/裝載策劃員	Despatcher/load planner	*	*	11,530	8	26
文員級及秘書級人員 其中：	Clerical and secretarial workers within which:	9,108	8,953	9,027	8	25
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	10,393	10,469	8	25
普通文員	General office clerk	9,020	8,119	8,445	8	25
其他非生產級工人	Miscellaneous non-production workers	9,045	*	9,002	9	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	9,485	9,272	9,408	8	25
航空公司	Airline companies					
督導級及技術員級人員	Supervisory and technical workers	21,160	20,574	20,813	8	22
文員級及秘書級人員 其中：	Clerical and secretarial workers within which:	13,587	14,334	14,146	8	22
會計文員	Accounting clerk	*	*	16,113	8	22
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	-	21,435	21,435	8	22
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	16,811	15,978	16,228	8	22
旅行社及票務代理	Travel agents and airline ticket agents					
督導級及技術員級人員 其中：	Supervisory and technical workers within which:	15,370	15,198	15,265	8	24
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	*	16,461	16,403	8	24
營業主任	Sales supervisor	*	*	12,501	8	25
業務主任	Operation supervisor	*	13,046	14,082	8	25

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
 正常工作時數與平均標準工作日數 --- 續頁

Table 8 Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
旅行社及票務代理(續)	Travel agents and airline ticket agents (Cont'd.)					
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	11,620	10,239	10,544	8	24
其中：	within which:					
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	9,419	9,779	8	24
普通文員	General office clerk	*	9,420	9,699	8	24
旅行社文員/定位員	Travel agency clerk/reservationist	11,548	10,461	10,720	8	24
服務人員	<i>Service workers</i>	8,904	9,077	9,003	8	25
其中：	within which:					
旅遊顧問	Travel consultant	*	11,685	11,868	8	24
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	5,490	6,797	5,869	9	25
其中：	within which:					
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	*	6,787	6,800	8	24
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	9,785	10,507	10,232	8	25
航空貨運代理業	Air cargo forwarding services					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	15,486	17,049	15,917	8	24
其中：	within which:					
儲物室/貨倉主任	Store/godown supervisor	13,163	*	13,426	8	24
辦公室主任/行政主任	Office/administrative supervisor	*	*	17,000	8	24
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	*	17,643	17,702	8	24
推銷員/營業代表	Salesman/sales representative	15,965	*	16,423	8	24
營業主任	Sales supervisor	19,376	*	18,717	8	24
貨運主任	Air freight operation supervisor	15,821	*	16,029	8	25
運輸主管/交通事務 控制員	Transport supervisor/traffic controller	13,427	*	14,062	8	25
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	9,751	10,859	10,247	8	24
其中：	within which:					
貨倉/採購文員	Stock/purchasing clerk	10,024	*	9,924	8	25
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	10,802	10,693	8	24
普通文員	General office clerk	*	9,538	8,165	8	24
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	-	15,080	15,080	8	24
接待員/電話接綫生	Receptionist/telephone operator	-	9,387	9,387	8	24
出入口文件處理/收發 文員	Documentation/receiving clerk	10,729	11,092	10,878	8	24
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	8,573	7,357	8,347	8	25
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	*	7,274	7,652	8	25
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	8,466	7,415	7,933	8	24
司機	Driver	10,621	-	10,621	8	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	11,079	11,686	11,305	8	24

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
運輸服務業	Transport services					
督導級及技術員級人員	Supervisory and technical workers	19,007	17,710	18,721	8	25
文員級及秘書級人員	Clerical and secretarial workers	10,705	11,354	11,094	8	24
服務人員	Service workers	8,904	9,077	9,003	8	25
其他非生產級工人	Miscellaneous non-production workers	8,076	7,500	7,952	8	25
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	14,101	11,994	13,225	8	25
銀行業	Banks					
督導級及技術員級人員	Supervisory and technical workers	20,947	19,930	20,309	8	22
其中：	within which:					
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	22,248	22,806	22,604	8	22
授信/放款主任	Credit/loans supervisor	*	20,262	20,018	8	22
往來部主任/存戶部主任	Cash supervisor/deposit account supervisor	20,135	18,892	19,290	8	22
出納主任/總出納員	Cashier/head teller	*	19,931	20,920	8	22
客戶服務主任	Customer services officer	16,570	16,458	16,491	8	22
市場發展主任/營業代表/ 業務發展主任	Marketing officer/sales representatives/business development officer	20,751	21,837	21,443	8	21
財務顧問代表/私人顧問	Financial adviser representative/ personal consultant	23,187	23,000	23,075	8	22
文員級及秘書級人員	Clerical and secretarial workers	12,304	14,440	13,831	8	22
其中：	within which:					
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	*	26,338	26,304	8	21
接待員/電話接綫生	Receptionist/telephone operator	*	13,749	13,671	8	22
往來部文員	Cash clerk	*	12,701	12,749	8	22
櫃檯員	Teller	11,675	12,197	12,080	8	22
其他非生產級工人	Miscellaneous non-production workers	11,252	9,127	10,601	8	22
其中：	within which:					
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	9,490	9,500	9,495	8	22
司機	Driver	13,668	-	13,668	8	22
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	16,842	17,017	16,955	8	22

WRITTEN ANSWER — *Continued*

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
正常工作時數與平均標準工作日數 --- 續頁

Table 8 **Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.**

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
投資及控股公司	Investment and holding companies					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	23,746	21,246	22,454	8	23
其中：	within which:					
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	*	19,913	21,532	8	23
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	11,453	15,488	15,080	8	23
其中：	within which:					
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	11,705	11,731	7	23
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	-	20,926	20,926	8	23
接待員/電話接綫生	Receptionist/telephone operator	*	10,921	10,901	8	23
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	*	*	8,468	8	23
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	19,388	16,215	17,046	8	23
保險業	Insurance					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	19,893	19,956	19,932	8	22
其中：	within which:					
電子資料處理主任/系統 分析員/程序編製員	D.P. supervisor/system analyst/ programmer	22,775	22,799	22,781	8	22
辦公室主任/行政主任	Office/administrative supervisor	*	17,476	17,169	7	22
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	16,044	19,437	18,632	8	22
推銷員	Agents/salesman	18,969	18,668	18,779	8	22
核保監督	Underwriting supervisor	21,073	23,418	22,952	8	22
索賠監督	Claims supervisor	18,101	18,685	18,544	8	22
精算師助理	Actuarial assistant	18,643	*	19,299	8	22
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	12,946	13,683	13,528	8	22
其中：	within which:					
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	12,055	13,086	12,910	8	22
普通文員	General office clerk	11,052	11,450	11,372	8	22
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	-	19,844	19,844	8	22
接待員/電話接綫生	Receptionist/telephone operator	-	13,553	13,553	8	23
核保文員	Underwriting clerk	13,088	13,326	13,258	8	22
索賠文員	Claims clerk	11,684	12,617	12,386	8	22
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	11,168	7,610	9,698	8	23
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	-	7,361	7,361	7	22
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	7,666	8,323	7,936	8	23
司機	Driver	15,139	*	13,706	8	22
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	16,755	16,105	16,305	8	22

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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 Table 8 Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average
 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
地產租賃業	Real estate leasing					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	17,606	18,668	17,971	8	24
其中：	within which:					
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	*	23,351	23,106	8	23
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	17,918	12,816	14,079	8	23
其中：	within which:					
會計文員	Accounting clerk	*	13,353	16,039	7	23
普通文員	General office clerk	*	12,566	12,862	8	23
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	8,657	6,831	8,023	9	26
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	*	*	6,961	9	24
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	13,779	12,629	13,214	8	24
地產保養管理服務業 (一般亦稱為物業管理業)	Real estate maintenance management (more commonly known as property management)					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	12,192	13,694	12,401	9	25
其中：	within which:					
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	17,075	16,402	16,568	8	23
保養技術員	Maintenance technician	13,481	*	13,506	8	25
屋邨主任/屋宇事務主任	Estate officer/building services officer	13,450	14,046	13,627	8	24
樓宇主任/保安主任	Building/security supervisor	10,730	10,304	10,707	10	26
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	9,458	9,729	9,650	8	24
其中：	within which:					
會計文員	Accounting clerk	*	10,303	10,289	8	24
普通文員	General office clerk	9,385	9,602	9,534	8	24
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	7,561	7,028	7,463	10	26
其中：	within which:					
樓宇管理員/保安員	Building attendant/guard	7,548	6,970	7,447	10	26
其中：	within which:					
以二更制(12小時一更) 受聘的管理員/保安員	those employed under 2-shift system (12 hours per shift)	(7,641)	(7,384)	(7,606)	(11)	(26)
以三更制(8小時一更) 受聘的管理員/保安員 (請參閱第71頁的註釋1及2)	those employed under 3-shift system (8 hours per shift) (see notes 1 and 2 on page 71)	(7,160)	(6,282)	(6,927)	(8)	(26)
園丁	Gardener	8,751	*	8,381	8	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	8,504	8,316	8,467	10	26

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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**Table 8 Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average
 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.**

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
建築/測量/工程策劃 服務業	Architectural/surveying/ engineering firms					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	18,632	15,288	17,923	8	23
其中：	within which:					
辦公室主任/行政主任	Office/administrative supervisor	*	21,210	21,846	8	22
會計主任	Accounting supervisor	*	19,573	20,406	8	22
繪圖員	Draughtsman	19,566	17,151	19,387	8	22
監工(建築師或工程師 所僱用)	Clerk of works/inspector/foreman (Architect's/engineer's)	24,049	*	23,999	8	23
土地測量員/工料測量員 /產業及城市設計 測量員	Land surveying/Q.S./ valuation and planning technician	14,544	*	14,175	8	22
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	9,125	12,550	12,249	8	22
其中：	within which:					
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	11,552	11,671	8	23
普通文員	General office clerk	8,599	10,169	9,805	8	23
私人秘書/速記員	Personal secretary/stenographer	-	15,003	15,003	8	22
接待員/電話接綫生	Receptionist/telephone operator	-	11,101	11,101	8	22
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	9,096	7,389	8,386	8	23
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	*	7,226	7,777	8	23
信差/辦公室助理	Messenger/office assistant	7,719	7,523	7,644	8	23
司機	Driver	11,490	-	11,490	8	24
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	17,879	13,414	16,267	8	23
保安及偵探服務業 (請參閱第72頁的註釋4)	Security and detective services (see note 4 on page 72)					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	9,425	9,593	9,449	10	26
其中：	within which:					
保安主任	Security supervisor	9,416	9,470	9,424	10	26
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	*	9,794	9,636	8	24
其中：	within which:					
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	9,452	9,735	8	24
普通文員	General office clerk	*	8,595	8,749	8	25
服務人員	<i>Service workers</i>	7,279	6,865	7,169	10	26
其中：	within which:					
保安員	Guard	7,208	6,864	7,115	10	26
其中：	within which:					
以二更制 (12小時一更)	those employed for non-airport work under 2-shift system (12 hours per shift)	(7,019)	(6,551)	(6,948)	(11)	(26)
受聘的非機場保安員	(12 hours per shift)					
以三更制 (8小時一更)	those employed for non-airport work under 3-shift system (8 hours per shift)	(6,896)	(6,298)	(6,643)	(8)	(26)
受聘的非機場保安員	(8 hours per shift)					
(請參閱第71及72頁的 註釋1,2及3)	(see notes 1, 2 and 3 on page 71 and 72)					

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
 正常工作時數與平均標準工作日數 --- 續頁
**Table 8 Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average
 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.**

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
保安及偵探服務業 (請參閱第72頁的註釋4) (續)	Security and detective services (see note 4 on page 72) (Cont'd.)					
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	7,598	7,139	7,481	10	26
金融、保險、地產及 商用服務業	Financing, insurance, real estate and business services					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	15,692	18,702	16,892	8	23
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	12,083	13,780	13,362	8	22
服務人員	<i>Service workers</i>	7,279	6,865	7,169	10	26
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	7,761	7,212	7,651	10	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	10,075	13,014	11,155	9	25
清潔及同類服務業	Sanitary and similar services					
督導級及技術員級人員 其中：	<i>Supervisory and technical workers within which:</i>	9,416	7,589	8,609	9	26
監督/管工	<i>Supervisor/foreman</i>	9,416	7,589	8,609	9	26
文員級及秘書級人員 其中：	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers within which:</i>	*	9,180	8,963	8	24
簿記員/會計文員	<i>Bookkeeper/accounting clerk</i>	*	9,048	9,247	8	24
普通文員	<i>General office clerk</i>	*	8,487	8,199	8	24
私人秘書/速記員	<i>Personal secretary/stenographer</i>	-	16,523	16,523	8	23
服務人員	<i>Service workers</i>	7,290	*	6,918	8	26
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	5,730	5,159	5,359	8	26
其中：	<i>within which:</i>					
司機	<i>Driver</i>	11,440	*	11,367	9	26
廁所清潔工	<i>Cleaner (lavatory)</i>	5,236	5,030	5,114	9	26
一般清潔工	<i>Cleaner (general)</i>	5,406	5,158	5,241	8	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	6,196	5,382	5,685	8	26

WRITTEN ANSWER — *Continued*

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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**Table 8 Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average
 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.**

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)††			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
汽車及電單車維修 服務業	Motor vehicles/cycles repairing and servicing					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	15,052	*	14,845	9	23
其中：	within which:					
監督/管工	Supervisor/foreman	18,111	*	17,937	9	23
維修服務員/維修款待員	Service advisor/service receptionist	12,792	*	12,516	9	24
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>		*	10,560	8	23
其中：	within which:					
普通文員	General office clerk	*	9,438	10,768	8	22
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	9,136	7,492	8,410	8	24
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	*	7,492	7,649	7	25
司機	Driver	10,358	-	10,358	8	23
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	12,686	9,378	11,625	8	24
理髮及美容服務業	Barber and beauty shops					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	13,844	14,881	14,635	9	26
其中：	within which:					
剪髮師傅/髮型師	Barber/stylist	13,959	13,145	13,780	9	26
美容顧問/高級美容師	Beauty consultant/ Senior beautician	-	18,173	18,173	8	26
美容師	Beautician	-	12,880	12,880	9	26
按摩師	Masseur	*	13,163	13,028	9	26
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>		*	8,803	8	26
其中：	within which:					
簿記員/會計文員	Bookkeeper/accounting clerk	*	9,932	9,426	8	25
收銀員/出納員/接待員	Cashier/receptionist	-	8,560	8,560	9	26
服務人員	<i>Service workers</i>	5,133	6,625	5,696	9	26
其中：	within which:					
修甲師	Manicurist/pedicurist	-	13,653	13,653	8	26
洗頭員	Hair washer	5,133	4,893	5,068	9	26
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	*	6,399	6,391	8	26
其中：	within which:					
雜工	General worker	*	6,399	6,391	8	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers	10,083	12,133	11,601	9	26

WRITTEN ANSWER — *Continued*

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
 正常工作時數與平均標準工作日數 --- 續頁
 Table 8 **Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average
 Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
 Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.**

行業/職業	Industry/Occupation	平均每月薪金(元)†† Average monthly salaries(\$) ^{††}			平均每日 正常工作時數 Average number of normal hours of work per day	平均每月 標準工作日數 Average number of standard working days per month
		男 Male	女 Female	合計 Overall		
個人服務業	<i>Personal services</i>					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	11,923	13,047	12,603	9	26
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	9,336	9,058	9,098	8	25
服務人員	<i>Service workers</i>	6,368	6,438	6,394	9	26
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	5,807	5,209	5,418	8	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	6,955	6,628	6,746	8	26
所有選定行業@	<i>All selected industries@</i>					
督導級及技術員級人員	<i>Supervisory and technical workers</i>	16,549	15,977	16,282	8	24
文員級及秘書級人員	<i>Clerical and secretarial workers</i>	10,839	11,511	11,343	8	24
服務人員	<i>Service workers</i>	8,843	6,636	7,946	9	25
其他非生產級工人	<i>Miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	8,019	6,125	7,228	9	26
督導級、技術員級、 文員級及其他 非生產級工人	<i>Supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers</i>	11,607	11,003	11,303	8	25

WRITTEN ANSWER — *Continued*

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
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註釋： @ 指工資統計調查涵蓋的所有行業，包括並沒有列出其統計數字的電力及燃氣業。
 Notes: Refers to all industries covered by the Wage Enquiry, including the electricity and gas sector whose statistics are not separately shown.

* 為使個別公司所提供的資料得以保密，數據不予公布。
 Data not released in order to safeguard confidentiality of information provided by individual firms.
 (參照本報告第IV部的4.14段)。
 (see paragraph 4.14 in Part IV of this report).

- 統計調查期內並沒有數據。
 Data not available for the survey period.

†† 本報告所包括的「督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人」的平均工資是以月為計算基準的。按其他時計方式支薪的工人的工資，亦會轉換為以月計算及包括在本表的平均月薪工資內。
 The wage rates of all employees under “supervisory, technical, clerical and miscellaneous non-production workers” are estimated and presented on a monthly basis in this report. For those employees paid on other time bases, their wage rates are also converted to the monthly rates and included in the average monthly wages in this table.

‡ 由於行業的涵蓋範圍擴大(美式快餐店已納入“快餐店業”內)，二零零七年九月及以後的“快餐店業”的數字(例如特定職業的平均每月薪金、每日正常工作時數及每月標準工作日數)未必能與二零零七年六月及以前的數字作嚴格的比較。進行有關的數列分析時，務須小心。
 Figures (e.g. average monthly salaries, normal hours of work per day and standard working days per month of a particular occupation) for “Fast food shops” industry for Sep 2007 onwards are not strictly comparable with the corresponding figures for Jun 2007 and before, due to the fact that the industry coverage has been enhanced and expanded by including American style fast food shops. Time series analyses should be made with caution.

(1) 大部分樓宇管理員和保安員的工時為12小時(以2更制聘用)，其次為8小時(以3更制聘用)，其他9小時、10小時等等也有。政府部門外判合約多採用8小時的3更制。為方便參考，除整體平均薪金外，本報告也附加編制以2更制(12小時一更)及3更制(8小時一更)受聘的樓宇管理員/保安員及保安員的平均薪金。
 The majority of the building attendants/guards and security guards work for 12 hours a day (under 2-shift system). Some work for 8 hours (under 3-shift system). Other working hours, such as 9 hours and 10 hours, are also prevalent. However, under government departments’ contracting out service arrangements, building attendants and security guards are generally employed with 3 shifts. To facilitate reference, the average salaries for those working under 2-shift and 3-shift arrangements are additionally compiled and published in this report, besides the overall average for all building attendants and guards.

(2) 樓宇管理員的主要職責為：
 The major duties of building attendant are:

- (i) 防止未經許可人士進入大廈；
to prevent unauthorized entry into the building；
- (ii) 遇有緊急事故，趕往現場支援及通知警方；
to rush to the scene to assist and report to the police as appropriate if an emergency occurs；
- (iii) 登記進出大廈的訪客資料；
to register visitors going in and out of the building；
- (iv) 記錄大廈發生的事故(如電梯損壞、停電、漏水、警鐘鳴響等)，並通知有關負責人跟進處理；
to record every incident that occurs in the building (e.g. lift breakdown, power failure, water seepage, alarm ringing), and notify those responsible for appropriate follow-up action；
- (v) 確保公共走廊及走火通道暢通無阻；及
to ensure that common corridors and fire escapes are always kept clear; and
- (vi) 處理大廈業主、住客和訪客的投訴和查詢。
to attend to all complaints and enquiries lodged by owners, occupants and visitors.

保安員的主要職責為：
 The major duties of guard are:

- (i) 防止未經許可人士進入大廈；
to prevent unauthorized entry into the building；
- (ii) 定時巡樓，以防範暴力事件，火災及其他滋擾；及
to patrol regularly to prevent violence, fire or disturbances; and
- (iii) 遇有緊急事故，趕往現場支援及通知警方。
to rush to the scene to assist and report to the police as appropriate if an emergency occurs.

WRITTEN ANSWER — Continued

表 8 按行業及職業劃分的督導級、技術員級、文員級及其他非生產級工人職級的平均每月薪金、平均
正常工作時數與平均標準工作日數 --- 續頁

Table 8 **Average Monthly Salaries, Average Number of Normal Hours of Work and Average
Number of Standard Working Days of Supervisory, Technical, Clerical and
Miscellaneous Non-Production Workers Analysed by Industry by Occupation --- Cont'd.**

- 註釋 : (3) 數字不包括駐守機場的保安員，這是由於他們的特殊工作性質(例如進行X光保安檢查及機場禁區進出控制)，
Notes : 以及相關的特別技能要求。
Figures not including guards performing airport security due to their special job duties (such as X-ray screening
and access control to the airport restricted area) and related requirements of special skills.
- (4) 統計調查所包括的公司主要為保安服務公司。
The companies included in the statistical survey are essentially security services companies.

Appendix II**WRITTEN ANSWER****Written answer by the Secretary for Transport and Housing to Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming's supplementary question to Question 5**

As regards of the more than 50 000 prosecution cases over the past nine months, how many involved careless driving, dangerous driving or causing death by dangerous driving, and among those involving cases of causing death in particular, what the sentences imposed by the Court were, in instituting prosecution against any person for a traffic offence, the police will take into account the relevant legislation, the facts of each case, the evidence available, and seek advice from the Department of Justice as necessary, before deciding on the specific traffic offence to be charged. As regards red light jumping by drivers, the police can charge the drivers with the offence of failing to comply with traffic signals under the Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations (the Regulations) (Cap. 374G). In the first nine months of 2007, the police instituted a total of 56 064 prosecutions under the Regulations.

Separately, the police can, depending on driver's driving manner, the evidence available and the fact of individual cases (such as whether there was a traffic accident and whether casualties were involved), charge the drivers concerned with the offence of "careless driving", "dangerous driving" or "causing death by dangerous driving" under the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374). In the first nine months of 2007, the number of prosecutions instituted by the police against these three offences were 12 322, 255 and 26 respectively. Since the police do not have a breakdown of these prosecutions by different driving behaviour (such as red light jumping), we cannot provide a breakdown of the relevant statistics.