

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 30 April 2009

The Council continued to meet at Nine o'clock

MEMBERS PRESENT:

THE PRESIDENT

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

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

THE HONOURABLE LEE CHEUK-YAN

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 MARGARET NG

THE HONOURABLE JAMES TO KUN-SUN

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG MAN-KWONG

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 LAU KONG-WAH, J.P.

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

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW CHENG KAR-FOO

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

THE HONOURABLE ABRAHAM SHEK LAI-HIM, S.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 AUDREY EU YUET-MEE, S.C., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE VINCENT FANG KANG, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WONG KWOK-HING, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE LEE WING-TAT

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG KWOK-HUNG

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

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE KAM NAI-WAI, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE CYD HO SAU-LAN

THE HONOURABLE STARRY LEE WAI-KING

THE HONOURABLE PAUL CHAN MO-PO, M.H., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KIN-POR, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE TANYA CHAN

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG KWOK-CHE

THE HONOURABLE WONG SING-CHI

THE HONOURABLE WONG YUK-MAN

THE HONOURABLE IP WAI-MING, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE IP KWOK-HIM, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS REGINA IP LAU SUK-YEE, G.B.S., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE PAN PEY-CHYOU

THE HONOURABLE PAUL TSE WAI-CHUN

DR THE HONOURABLE SAMSON TAM WAI-HO, J.P.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT HO CHUN-YAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE CHIM PUI-CHUNG

DR THE HONOURABLE LAM TAI-FAI, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HAK-KAN

DR THE HONOURABLE PRISCILLA LEUNG MEI-FUN

DR THE HONOURABLE LEUNG KA-LAU

THE HONOURABLE WONG KWOK-KIN, B.B.S.

PUBLIC OFFICERS ATTENDING:

THE HONOURABLE WONG YAN-LUNG, S.C., J.P.
THE SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE

THE HONOURABLE AMBROSE LEE SIU-KWONG, I.D.S.M., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR SECURITY

MR GREGORY SO KAM-LEUNG, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CLERKS IN ATTENDANCE:

MRS CONSTANCE LI TSOI YEUK-LIN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
GENERAL

MRS JUSTINA LAM CHENG BO-LING, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
GENERAL

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Clerk, please ring the bell.

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

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Good morning. This Council now resumes to continue the debate on the motion on "Developing new economic strategies to meet economic challenges".

MEMBERS' MOTIONS

DEVELOPING NEW ECONOMIC STRATEGIES TO MEET ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Continuation of debate on motion which was moved on 29 April 2009

MR PAUL CHAN (in Cantonese): President, Members, good morning. Since the relocation of industries northward in the 1980s, Hong Kong has shifted its focus to developing service industries, especially the financial services industry. Today, Hong Kong has entrenched its position as an international financial centre, a position hard won but also facing serious challenges. Earlier, the State Council endorsed the target to develop Shanghai into an international financial centre and an international shipping hub by 2020. Although there are 11 more years to go, time just slips away without our noticing it as Hong Kong has already reunited with the Motherland for 12 years.

In the past 12 years, what efforts have been made to maintain Hong Kong's position as an international financial centre and prevent its position from falling behind the entire financial and economic development of China in the coming 12 years? Talking about industries with development potential, both the former Chief Executive TUNG Chee-hwa and the incumbent Chief Executive Donald TSANG have made proposals to develop different industries. Unfortunately, to date, we have yet seen any prominent results, and the proposals have also failed to identify any new growth area for the economic development of Hong Kong.

Even for the six major industries recently proposed by the Chief Executive Donald TSANG who spoke after a meeting of the Task Force on Economic Challenges, many of them are just "old bottles". Can they make "new wine"

which exceeds our expectation? A subjective factor is whether the Government is determined to carry out reform and whether it has an indomitable will to take forward the proposal. However, objectively speaking, there are indeed many objective limitations which determine whether the six major industries can become the new growth areas of our economy. I am worried that before these new industries can harvest any economic return, our old industries would already lose their edge.

Why do I say so? The four pillar industries which Hong Kong relies on now, namely financial services, tourism, business support and logistics, are facing tough challenges. If immediate actions are not taken to tackle the situation, citing Premier WEN Jiabao's words at a meeting in Pattaya some time ago, we will lag behind if we do not forge ahead.

First, I wish to talk about the financial services industry which is our gravest concern. The financial services industry, which we have long been proud of, is an important economic pillar of Hong Kong. But the Lehman Brothers minibonds incident in September 2008 has exposed the lack of diversification in our financial services industry's development and the failure of the regulatory system to keep abreast of the times.

While the Legislative Council is investigating the Lehman Brothers minibonds incident, the Central Government and the Shanghai Provincial Government are determined to build Shanghai as an international financial centre. In response, the SAR Government invariably said that "China is a vast country with abundant resources and it is big enough to accommodate two financial centres". If this is not self-delusion, I believe it shows that the Government is not telling the truth. Let us look at some examples. Is the United States not a country equally vast and resource-rich? But I believe people will only remember the financial centre of New York. How many of us still remember the stock exchange in Philadelphia which established even earlier than the one in New York and was once thriving? After the financial centre of New York emerged, the one of Philadelphia was forgotten. I hope Hong Kong will not turn into another Philadelphia. Economic development is rapidly changing. The SAR Government cannot afford to loose guard and sit by without coming up corresponding measures to meet future challenges. For instance, a senior public officer predicted earlier that the convertibility of Renminbi will take many years or even 10 to 20 years to liberalize. However, just look at the decision made by the State Council, which means that the convertibility of Renminbi may very

likely be liberalized in 11 years' time, and some commentators even said that it may take place even sooner.

Despite repeated pledges of support made by the Central Government for strengthening Hong Kong's position as an international financial centre and building a mutually-assisting, complementary and interactive relationship between the financial centres of Shanghai and Hong Kong, Members should also note the cases of Japan and the United States. Since the setting up of the stock exchange in Tokyo, Osaka has shifted its focus to developing futures trading. Similarly, with the emergence of New York, Chicago also shifted its focus to futures trading. What should be the position of Hong Kong? If we cannot continue to take the lead, sooner or later, Shanghai will catch up; by then, not only will we be unable to scale new heights together with Shanghai and create a win-win situation, we will be doomed to lonesome misery.

In recent years, Hong Kong has relied heavily on tourism. The Government has injected quite a lot of resources into the industry. The strong support of our country, namely in the form of Individual Visit Scheme, multiple-entry permits for Shenzhen residents and mainland group tour travellers visiting Taiwan on cruise vessels homeporting in Hong Kong, has also given high hopes to the people of Hong Kong. However, in terms of preservation and development of scenic spots, what Hong Kong has done is very bureaucratic and rigid. Many precious and invaluable scenic spots have thus been wasted. The former residences of Bruce LEE and Teresa TENG are good examples. And the reason for the recent shelving of the Fisherman's Wharf project is even more incredible. Although the consultancy finds the project not financially viable, which seems to be the reason on the surface, the real reason is the mismatch between government planning and policy implementation. If the Fisherman's Wharf is to be built, the present Harbour Area Treatment Scheme in Ap Lei Chau and the promenade which are under construction would have to be demolished and rebuilt, in order to make room for the Fisherman's Wharf. Moreover, the water treatment plant and the South Island Line which will soon commence construction will also substantially reduce the scale of the Fisherman's Wharf by over 70%. A straw shows which way the wind blows. I believe Members will be able to see the problem from the Government's handling of incidents like the Fisherman's Wharf project.

Among the six major industries with development potential, I wish to talk about medical services. Because of the time constrain, I may not be able to go into the details. But be it medical services or education, there has been much

discussion in society. I hope the Government can humbly listen to views in society and make public the report published earlier by the Central Policy Unit, which claims that government policy does not facilitate the development of this industry, for more public discussion, and then we can work in concert to offer views for the future economic development of Hong Kong. Thank you, President.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): President, talking about economic development, even without the debates in this Council or policies formulated by the Government, Hong Kong had vibrant economic development from the 1960s or 1970s to the 1990s. The so-called non-intervention policy upheld at that time gave room for people to develop the economy. As long as the Government did not set many thresholds and government policy was not too rigid and bureaucratic, and as long as the Government did not impose too much control and the price of government land was not too high, the economy would naturally start spinning in the hands of the people. However, under the high land price policy of the Government, non-government and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Hong Kong have continued to shrink. This is an undesirable outcome of the Government's bad policies and bias towards large consortiums. Hence, we sometimes must ask the Government what kinds of assistance it is going to offer. This will only give a direction. And we also have to ask what it must not do in order to let SMEs develop. This is also important.

We have been to many places and I went to Taiwan recently. The SMEs in Taiwan are well developed. You can find many small shops along the streets running all sorts of creative businesses. However small these businesses may be, they offer a great many choices of food and drinks. For beverages alone you can find dozens of choices. Health drinks may already be an individual industry. In Hong Kong, however, the rent is very high. Renting a shop in a relatively popular location will cost a hundred thousand dollars or so monthly. How could the SMEs have room to develop then? Hence, if we do not abolish the high land-price policy, it is very difficult for SMEs and the creative industries in Hong Kong to develop. Occasionally, there may be one or two incredible examples of success, but it is extremely difficult to extensively develop the creative industries in Hong Kong. Just look around the world and you will find a big contrast between the creativity demonstrated by SMEs elsewhere and the stifling of creativity in Hong Kong.

I have helped the Global Art Centre for two years. Although it is a small company, it seeks to develop into an individual industry serving mainland and Southeast Asian tourists exclusively. Originally named as Moulin Rouge, the company has met with objection from District Council (DC) members, including DC members from the Democratic Party and Liberal Party, claiming that it is a sex trade. The company has taken two years to obtain the business registration certificate, that is, 24 full months in total. And it has lost 24 months of rents for nothing. Although it ultimately managed to obtain approval for operation, we can imagine how high the threshold is. Because of some complaints from DC members, the government department has set up hurdles after hurdles for a small company which wishes to stimulate or revive tourism in Hong Kong. The company, which nearly went bankrupt, has wasted 24 months of rents, incurring a loss of almost \$10 million. So, how could it be creative? The concept of Moulin Rouge is good, but the company finally withdrew this name in view of objection from DC members who said that it is engaged in sex trade. They claimed that the performers in Moulin Rouge were nude and they showed their thighs; and that this should be forbidden. This kind of rigid cultural perspective and attitude allow no room for any new idea, however small the idea may be. These DC members may lead tours to Thailand to watch ladyboys shows, but they object setting up a Moulin Rouge in their local district. Is this attitude not absurd? Hence, President, if we wish to develop a creative economy in Hong Kong, we have to change this rigid attitude of bureaucracy and be more open-minded culturally; otherwise, this will become a big obstacle.

I think the biggest challenge which lies ahead of Hong Kong is how we can find room for Hong Kong under a planned economy orchestrated by the Central Authorities. We can see some important factors in the Outline of the Plan for the Reform and Development of the Pearl River Delta (2008-2020) (the Outline) promulgated by the National Development and Reform Commission. Strengthening local construction, which is a central policy stipulated in the Outline, will actually weaken Hong Kong's leading position in logistics, financial services and exhibition industries. They also seek to promote infrastructure modernization and strengthen urban public infrastructure, including the construction of the transport hubs of Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Zhuhai. And the most important policy is about air transport, as the Outline proposes to speed up the expansion of the Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport to reinforce its pivotal status and strengthen its international competitiveness. Indeed, this is meant to compete with Hong Kong. Moreover, on logistics, they will construct hub-type modern logistics parks in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, which will become

another area of competition with Hong Kong. And needless to say, there is competition in other aspects such as financial services.

Hence, we can see that the Central Government has a plan to develop other places outside Hong Kong into certain centres or hubs, and these centres or hubs used to be in Hong Kong. How should we respond to this change and how should we find room for development under the Central Government's planning? So, government officials in Hong Kong, such as the Chief Executive and his In the times of TUNG Chee-hwa and Antony LEUNG, I already criticized this, saying that these people were mad. These public officers have led local businessmen to every major municipality in China, asking them to invest in these places. They have been to all provinces and municipalities, from Xinjiang to Heilongjiang. The responsibilities of our government officials should be to attract overseas investors to invest in Hong Kong and encourage members of the local business and industrial sector to invest in Hong Kong. Officials are duty-bound to do so. However, these senior officials, in order to build up a relationship with the Mainland, have asked them to invest in places outside Hong Kong. Do you not find this absurd? Hence, in future, all funding applications of this nature should be voted down and these public officers should be condemned. Would they please try to learn from others? Even when the leaders of other countries take their officials and businessmen and industrialists to overseas visits, the objective is only to ask the government there to invest in their own country. For instance, the United States Government will ask other countries to buy its Boeing aircraft and agricultural products. This is the right attitude to adopt. So, would our officials please learn from others, rather than driving Hong Kong down the cul-de-sac haphazardly.

MR WONG TING-KWONG (in Cantonese): President, the economic development of Hong Kong is facing a major challenge. On the one hand, we have to deal with the blow of the financial tsunami externally and on the other, we face the limitation of not being able to create new economic growth areas internally due to the narrow economic and industrial structure over the years. This has sounded the alarm for the sustainable development of the economy of Hong Kong.

The four major economic pillars of Hong Kong are losing their edge, making the above problems all the more serious. The financial services industry is one of the major economic pillars of Hong Kong. Recently, the State Council

has decided to develop Shanghai into an international financial centre, reflecting that the State no longer relies on Hong Kong alone in respect of international financial affairs. If Hong Kong is not proactive enough to play a bigger role in our country's financial and economic development, I am afraid we will even lose the position of being one of the dual engines of China's financial services. As for the logistics industry, because of the place of production, our mainland counterpart enjoys a lower freight cost and their supporting facilities and management are improving. It is thus difficult for Hong Kong to maintain its status as the centre of transshipment and re-export for mainland goods.

We agree that the four economic pillars of Hong Kong have taken a long time to develop and they have built up a certain foundation here. Hence, while maintaining Hong Kong's edges, we should explore new potentials; while strengthening and developing the four conventional pillar industries, we have to proactively develop new industries, so as to diversify Hong Kong's industries, promote our economy and create more job opportunities.

In the policy address, the Hong Kong Government proposed to develop a technology economy, a creative economy as well as a green economy. Speaking after the meeting of the Task Force on Economic Challenges on 3 April 2009, the Government announced that it would focus on six industries with development potential for further studies, namely, testing and certification, medical services, innovation and technology, cultural and creative industries, environmental industry, and educational services. And the result will be used as the SAR Government's input in the major development projects of the National Twelfth Five-year Plan. The SAR Government will provide assistance to these industries in the form of land, talents and legislation. This is a good start. I hope the Government is not just paying lip service but will make the necessary deployment expeditiously.

In order to promote the development of Hong Kong's innovation and technology and creative industries, apart from involvement of the industries, the Government also plays an important role. Particularly, system enhancement and improvement of the operating environment and cross-boundary co-operation can only be achieved through discussion between the Governments of Hong Kong and Guangdong.

Many consider developing innovation and technology in Hong Kong much easier said than done. We lack technology talents and do not have the related

industries to serve as the foundation. Since the production line of the manufacturing industry in Hong Kong relocated northward, the industry has been hollowed out. But in fact, the manufacturing industry has only relocated to the north and the Pearl River Delta, which has become the world factory, is located just across the boundary. Hence, if we can remove the concept of boundary, Hong Kong still has the foundation for the industry. If Hong Kong can develop the entire northern border area from east to west, and apart from establishing a convention and exhibition capital connecting the east and the west, developing innovation and technology and other related industries there is another idea that we can consider.

Why do we have to use the border area? Theoretically, the border area is an area for exchange of materials with an irreplaceable radiating function. In order to give full play to the referral function of the border area, many countries and regions have taken proactive measures to establish a port development zone or a free trade area at the border for trading and investment, or form alliances with other cities in related industries, such as the trans-boundary co-operation between San Diego of the United States and Tijuana of Mexico. The unused area along the Hong Kong-Shenzhen border is sheer wastage of resources and the function of the border.

In the Hong Kong-Mainland border region, we can fully utilize our unique political characteristic of "One country, Two systems" to implement Hong Kong's free port system and special immigration and customs clearance measures. To better facilitate co-operation and exchanges between people of the two places and the flow of goods, the development zone should allow free flow of goods to and from Hong Kong with tariff-free treatment until the goods reach Shenzhen where the mainland tariff is levied. Hong Kong can also follow the example of the Suzhou-Singapore industrial park and formulates preferential policies, such as profits tax concession, to attract more mainland and international enterprises to come and establish their research and development departments and develop advanced technologies in different areas. Such technologies can then be transformed into commercial products and in turn facilitate the integration of the two economies.

In fact, an idea similar to the above has been advocated by the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong in its research report published in 2004 on the options for and discussion on all-direction development

of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen border zone. With Guangdong Province being granted the "imperial sword" by the State Council for implementing experimental measures, this idea can be more easily realized through the mechanism of experimental measures. I hope the Government can seize this opportunity to develop the border area and the Northeastern New Territories, so as not to procrastinate the development of the area for another decade.

President, I so submit.

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

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mrs Regina IP, you may now speak on the five amendments. You may speak up to five minutes.

MRS REGINA IP (in Cantonese): President, I thank the 10-odd Members who have spoken on my motion.

I have basically no objection to the amendments proposed by several Honourable colleagues on my motion. They have in fact enriched the contents of my motion by supplementing some important details including the funding for cultural and arts development and the formulation of better support policies, such as providing more tax concessions and assistance in terms of land, making better use of factory buildings, and so on. I welcome these suggestions in principle. Although Members belonging to the Liberal Party are not in this Chamber now, I hope they can support my proposals because in the long run, the Government should have a dedicated Policy Bureau to promote these new industries, in particular cultural and creative industries.

If the workload of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau could be reduced, Secretary Rita LAU and her colleagues could then spare more time and energy to consider measures for helping the traditional retail, tourism, logistics and transport industries. Last night, Mrs Miriam LAU told us that the transport and logistics industries are facing tremendous challenges. The unemployment rate of container truck drivers has already risen to 26%. If the

heavy workload of the Bureau is alleviated, I think the officials could focus their efforts on how to deal with the problems faced by the traditional industries.

President, I would like to explain to Ms Cyd HO again that my proposal on recruiting talents from the private sector has definitely nothing to do with collusion between the Government and businesses. As Mrs Sophie LEUNG pointed out — of course, Hong Kong people are wary about collusion between the Government and businesses — the governments of many democratic countries such as Britain and the United States would recruit talents from the business sector to tap their professional expertise. A case in point is Mr Mervyn DAVIES, formerly of the Standard Chartered Bank. He is now Lord Mervyn DAVIES serving as Britain's Trade Minister. In the United States, their Secretaries of the Treasury have all along been recruited from Wall Street CEOs. Of course, there is concern about conflict of interest, but we must rely on stringent vetting and integrity checks to guard against the possibility of collusion.

In our bid to develop new industries, we must realize that the new industries have already branched out quite finely into distinct sectors such as micro-electronics, software, biotechnology, and so on. The fact is the Government does not have enough consultant expertise and hence, it should recruit more talents from specific sectors as consultants so as to allow for better development of these new industries.

President, I so submit.

SECRETARY FOR COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (in Cantonese): President, I wish to thank all Honourable Members who have spoken on this motion for their valuable views and suggestions. As I have pointed out in my opening remarks, the global financial tsunami has presented severe economic challenges to Hong Kong both in the short term and in the long term including the restructuring of industries in the Pearl River Delta (PRD). In face of such challenges, we must promote the development of new industries in Hong Kong. It is the top priority for the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) as well as the whole Government.

Last October, the Chief Executive announced the establishment of the Task Force on Economic Challenges (TFEC). One of the main objectives of the TFEC is to propose specific options for the Government and business community

to address the challenges presented by the current economic conditions. Since then, the TFEC has embarked on work to identify new economic areas with good potential and capable of contributing to the economy, in order to help Hong Kong overcome the impact of the financial tsunami. I beg to differ with Mr Frederick FUNG's analogy of "a pile of sand". On the contrary, the TFEC's views would help us enhance our competitiveness. This will lay down a more solid foundation for the sustained development of our economy in future.

The Government will continue to support the development of pillar industries in Hong Kong so that we will grow stronger and withstand the impacts brought by the financial tsunami. Moreover, we will concentrate on identifying new economic areas with potentials to contribute to our long-term economic development.

As I mentioned in my speech last night, the Chief Executive announced on 3 April after the TFEC's fourth meeting that the TFEC will study how to develop the six economic areas where Hong Kong enjoys clear advantages. They are testing and certification; medical services; innovation and technology; cultural and creative industries; environmental industry; and educational services.

In examining and discussing which economic areas have greater development potential and comparative advantages, the TFEC has made reference to the findings of various studies conducted by the Government and non-government organizations (including study reports and opinions of the Central Policy Unit (CPU), relevant bureaux, think tanks and research institutes), papers of the Commission on Strategic Development (CSD), academic literature, statistical data, and the views of the public and the industries. These economic areas with comparative advantages have also been discussed thoroughly in the forums and meetings held by the CPU and the CSD.

Besides referring to past research studies, the TFEC has also considered a number of factors including:

- (1) the economic area concerned should be able to benefit Hong Kong's economy in the medium to long term, be built on the existing economic pillars and related industries, and filling or creating niche markets best served by Hong Kong given our competitive advantages;

- (2) the economic area should be able to develop sustainably in a free and open market without relying on government input on resources and continued support;
- (3) the potential of the economic area should be assessed by its viability and readiness for development; and
- (4) whether the development of the economic areas can capitalize on the opportunities for co-operation with the Mainland and the PRD Region, including those arising from the Outline of the Plan for the Reform and Development of the Pearl River Delta and the National Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2011-2015).

Taking into account the above factors, we are assessing the development potential of these six economic areas. Moreover, we are contemplating whether our increased integration with the Mainland will present new opportunities. The Government must make timely decisions to adopt measures that help facilitate their development, for instance, through policy, legislation and provision of land and other resources, and so on.

Before determining whether Hong Kong should focus on the development of these economic areas, the TFEC considers it necessary to further explore the room for their development and related implementation issues. The Chief Executive has asked the CPU to arrange a series of focus group discussions with participation of trade representatives, academia, researchers, TFEC members and government officials. In fact, discussion has been held yesterday to explore the scope of further development of the testing and certification industry in Hong Kong. Outcome of these discussions will be reported to the TFEC at its next meeting for further consideration. The Government will carefully study and consider the views of the community and the TFEC before making a decision on the order of priority, and specific policies and measures for the development of these industries.

Our ultimate goal is to formulate long-term and practicable measures to facilitate the development of new industries including creative industries. Under the present economic conditions, we must ensure that our measures are targeted and appropriate for the purpose. Taking the creative industries as an example, we have met with representatives and stakeholders of various sectors of the creative industries to gauge their views. We have also studied the practices of

other places with good progress in the development of creative industries. Based on the input from local creative industries and the results of our study, we have worked out a preliminary development strategy with a multi-pronged approach covering the following seven areas:

- (1) nurturing creative human capital;
- (2) supporting creative establishments;
- (3) expanding local market size for creative industries;
- (4) exploring markets for creative industries in the Mainland and overseas;
- (5) fostering a creative atmosphere within the community;
- (6) developing creative clusters in the territory; and
- (7) promoting Hong Kong as Asia's creative hub in the long run.

In this February, we consulted and gained the support of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting on this development strategy which is practicable and can meet the expectation of both the public and the industries. Upon further studies by the TFEC and the establishment of Create Hong Kong (CreateHK), the dedicated office to drive the development of creative industries, in the middle of this year, we will embark on more in-depth studies to set out the long-term development strategy for creative industries.

Mrs Regina IP also suggested in her motion that we should draw reference from successful experiences overseas. We completely agree with her view. In the course of formulating the preliminary development strategy, reference has been made to the institutional arrangements for creative industries in other places and we will continue to monitor their new developments. We find that different countries have different arrangements to promote creative industries. For example, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in the United Kingdom has the responsibility of co-ordinating the development of a creative economy. But it will share with the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform the responsibilities relating to specific creative sectors. In other countries and places, such as Singapore and Scotland, dedicated offices are set up

under existing Policy Bureaux or decision-making departments to co-ordinate the development of creative industries. Our proposal to set up CreateHK under the CEDB is a step towards this direction.

Mrs Regina IP also suggested the setting up of a dedicated Policy Bureau to promote innovation and technology as well as cultural and creative industries. At present, the CEDB is responsible for formulating policies in relation to the development of creative industries as well as innovation and technology. But as cultural aspects are wide-ranging, we must consider other factors besides economic ones. Hence, the present arrangement of having a separate bureau responsible for cultural policies is best suited for Hong Kong's need. The present division of labour with the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) responsible for cultural policies and the CEDB responsible for policy matters in relation to creative industries as well as innovation and technology is appropriate. We have considered whether cultural industries should be grouped under the umbrella of creative industries but our conclusion is that it would not be appropriate. Nonetheless, we are aware that there would be overlappings between cultural industries and creative industries.

Dr Samson TAM mentioned last night that the name of the CEDB does not include the word "technology". I wish to reiterate that the CEDB is responsible for formulating and implementing the Government's policies and programmes to promote innovation and technology in Hong Kong with the assistance of various executive departments under its purview such as the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO). I can assure Honourable Members that the promotion of technological development is without any doubt one of the key policy objectives of the CEDB, even though the name of the CEDB does not include the word "technology". Economic development spans across a wide range of areas including industry, tourism, innovation and technology, information technology, and so on. If we look at the examples of overseas countries, the title of their responsible ministers is also quite simple, such as the United States Secretary of Commerce who is responsible for a wide range of policy areas including industry, telecommunications and information technology. The CEDB's policy commitment for driving technological development in Hong Kong is steadfast and sustained, and we will continue implementing our policies through various departments such as the ITC and the OGCIO.

The setting up of CreateHK will greatly enhance the co-ordination among the concerned bureaux and departments in driving the development of creative industries. We can assure Honourable Members that CreateHK will work together with the HAB to ensure close co-ordination and generate synergy in developing cultural and creative industries. Our view is that this new arrangement closely echoes Mrs Miriam LAU's call for introducing ways to strengthen the co-operation among various bureaux so as to solve problems such as fragmented administration and unclear delineation of powers and responsibilities. In respect of the creative industries, the new CreateHK's main task is to provide one-stop services and better support for them.

A number of Honourable Members have expressed concern about the use of the Lok Ma Chau Loop (the Loop) and New Development Areas (NDAs) in response to the proposal made by Mrs Regina IP in her motion. In his speech, Dr Raymond HO has also raised concern in this respect. In the Chief Executive's 2007-2008 Policy Address, the development of the Loop and NDAs were identified as two of the initiatives under "Ten Major Infrastructure Projects to Boost Our Economy". We totally agree that such land available for development should be put to good use by utilizing their geographical advantage to complement the development of the PRD so as to achieve synergy.

The Loop is located at the boundary between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, and adjacent to the Lok Ma Chau Boundary Control Point (BCP) and the North East New Territories NDAs (NENT NDAs). This piece of land will provide an excellent opportunity for co-operation between Hong Kong and Shenzhen. Both Governments have agreed that consideration could be given to developing higher education as the leading land use in the Loop, with some elements of high-tech research and development (R&D) facilities as well as cultural and creative industries. Both sides will work together and a comprehensive planning and engineering study would be carried out from this June. If good progress can be achieved, both sides would reach a final decision on the use of the Loop as soon as possible so that the relevant facilities could be ready for operation in the Loop by 2020. The Development Bureau and the Education Bureau (EDB) have already written to the 12 tertiary institutions in Hong Kong to invite their views on the development of the Loop. Representatives of the institutions were also invited to conduct a site visit to the Loop on 23 April 2009 so that they could be briefed on the latest development.

The NENT NDAs, comprising the proposed NDAs in Kwu Tung North, Fan Ling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling, are in close proximity to the Hong Kong/Shenzhen boundary district. In last June, the Planning Department and the Civil Engineering and Development Department embarked on comprehensive planning and engineering studies for the NENT NDAs for purposes including preparation of Recommended Outline Development Plans and Recommended Layout Plans, confirmation of the feasibility of these plans as well as carrying out preliminary design of engineering works for the necessary infrastructure and associated site investigation. The studies, which are expected to be completed by the end of 2010, will carefully consider the land use of the NDAs to support the development needs of Hong Kong in the long term and to create employment.

The Kwu Tung North and Fan Ling North NDAs are situated near the Loop while the Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling NDA is close to the Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai BCP. When conducting the relevant studies, the Government will carefully consider and co-ordinate these development projects to ensure that their development would complement one another. Moreover, we will engage the Legislative Council, North District Council, local communities, environmental groups and other stakeholders during various stages of the studies. We will take heed of Ms Cyd HO's proposal and carefully consider the interests of local residents during the development process.

Mrs Regina IP has also suggested that we should recruit talents from the private sector, make good use of society's resources and introduce new ideas to ensure that the development of new industries will not lose momentum and vitality. We share Mrs IP's view. Take the creative industries as an example. We agree that we should tap talents from the private sector who are familiar with the creative industries. Apart from facilitating close collaboration between CreateHK and the creative industries, this could also introduce new way of thinking into the Government and hence, help develop initiatives which best suit the industries' needs. For this reason, we have already stated that the post of Head of CreateHK would be filled through open recruitment, and this proposal has the support of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting. Moreover, we have listened to and incorporated the views of representatives from various sectors of the creative industries when formulating the preliminary development strategy for driving creative industries.

Ms Audrey EU has made a proposal about studying the impact of the establishment of China-ASEAN Free Trade Area on Hong Kong. The

Government has always been watching closely the development of free trade agreements (FTAs) in the international community, as well as the negotiation and conclusion of FTAs by our trading partners who have close trade and economic ties with us. Generally speaking, the growth of intra-regional trade will have positive impacts on Hong Kong in the long term. For example, Hong Kong, with our advantages as an international financial centre and a major regional hub port, could help promote co-operation and exchanges between the Mainland and ASEAN. ASEAN and mainland enterprises can also capitalize on Hong Kong's strategic geographical advantage and set up offices here to manage their trade businesses. Moreover, as an international trade and financial centre, Hong Kong could provide efficient professional services to enterprises engaging in trade business between ASEAN and the Mainland.

Regarding the commitments under the China-ASEAN FTA, the Central Authorities have already agreed that all such commitments that are more favourable than the CEPA would be included as part of CEPA's liberalization measures. In fact, China's concessions to ASEAN have been incorporated into Supplement IV to the CEPA announced on 29 June 2007. These liberalization measures have come into force on 1 January 2008.

Ms Audrey EU, Prof Patrick LAU and Dr Priscilla LEUNG have highlighted the need for improving our education and training systems to provide more talents for the new industries, and for promoting a social climate that respects talents engaging in scientific and technological research and creative work, so as to attract the young generation to join the new industries. Since the "Learning to Learn" curriculum reform in 2002, creativity has become one of the priority generic skills to be nurtured in students throughout various stages of basic education (Primary One to Secondary Three) in all Key Learning Areas (KLAs). Creativity would have to be nurtured through appropriate teaching methodologies for different KLAs or subjects. For example, in primary education, creativity is instilled through inquiry-based learning in general studies, creative writing in language studies, appreciation and creation in arts education, design in science education and project learning in cross-KLA activities. In junior secondary education, a broad base of culture and knowledge is built through the KLAs, which provides substantive elements for the students to develop their creativity and innovating abilities. The students are also encouraged to utilize their creativity in out-of-classroom activities under life-wide learning. The goal is that ultimately they would be guided by creative thinking not only in their studies, but also their work and throughout their lives. As Prof Patrick LAU said,

creativity is an important attribute to be cultivated through gifted education programmes and in exceptionally gifted students.

According to the results of a survey conducted by the EDB in 2006, the majority of KLA co-ordinators and teachers in primary and secondary schools considered that their students have shown marked improvement in creativity. Results of the 2008 survey even show that most of the students considered themselves having unique creative ideas and a keener interest in physical and aesthetic development.

With the implementation of the New Senior Secondary curriculum in September 2009, we will continue to encourage students to develop their creativity. In fact, the development of creativity has been incorporated as the aim and expected outcome of many subjects such as Liberal Studies, Integrated Science, Language Studies, Visual Arts, Music, Creative Studies for Applied Learning as well as Aesthetic Development, Physical Development, Career-related Experiences and Community Service of Other Learning Experiences. In order to effectively develop the creativity of students, the EDB would provide support to teachers and schools in the form of professional development programmes as well as learning and teaching materials. Moreover, the EDB will work closely with organizations both within and outside the Government to promote participation from all sectors to spearhead the development of creativity in schools. The EDB will also continue to organize, co-organize and support a whole host of activities and programmes so as to provide more opportunities for students to think and work creatively in real-life situations.

All in all, our new generation of students will develop a broader vision and more diverse skills with the ability to think creatively. All these would come into full play as they continue their studies or work in different areas. This could in turn enhance the development of creative economy in Hong Kong.

In addition, the Government attaches great importance to academic and scientific researches. The recent establishment of an \$18 billion Research Endowment Fund is a major investment in our higher education and it also demonstrates the Government's staunch support for research. In the 2009-2010 to 2011-2012 triennium, the Government will also provide an additional 800 Research Postgraduate places in phases to allow more education opportunities for students who are committed to research undertakings, thereby promoting a

culture of scientific research. Moreover, we have relaxed the funding criteria under the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) so that each ITF-funded project can engage up to two interns to assist in undertaking R&D activities. The maximum internship period is 24 months. For this purpose, the Government has earmarked an additional \$90 million to create 600 intern positions. We will continue to co-operate with local universities, research institutes and the industries to ensure optimum use of our resources by creating more R&D positions in the short- to medium-term. In the long run, this could help nurture local R&D talents and thereby, lay a more solid foundation for R&D culture in Hong Kong.

Regarding Mr LEE Wing-tat's proposals on reviewing the current subsidies on cultural arts provided by the Government and extending the scope of subsidies to other forms of arts, our stand is that we have always strived to support the development of performing artists and arts groups. In order to strengthen the performing arts sector as a whole and promote its sustainable development, the Government has implemented a series of measures to nurture second- and third-tier arts groups other than major arts groups receiving recurrent funding from the Government.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will continue to support budding artists and arts groups as well as small and medium-sized performing arts groups through presenting them in cultural programmes organized or regularly sponsored by the LCSD, such as the Arts Festival, free entertainment programmes in 18 districts as well as major festive events, so as to help them develop and build up audience bases. In 2009-2010, the LCSD will further enhance the support for budding performing artists and small and medium-sized performing arts groups. Apart from organizing more events in non-LCSD venues to help the arts groups build up audience bases in the community, the LCSD will also co-operate with the arts groups to promote arts education and audience building, thereby encouraging community and student participation.

Apart from the LCSD, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (ADC) also provides financial support to all disciplines of the performing arts sector through various grant schemes. Since 2007, the ADC has launched the "Grant for Emerging Artists" under the Project Grant to strengthen support for young and emerging arts practitioners. This grant is open to all fresh graduates of arts programmes or formal arts training courses who are aspired to pursue a career as

a professional artist. Separately, the ADC also encourages experienced medium-sized arts group to apply as Intermediary Funding Organizations (IFOs) under the Devolved Grant Scheme. The selected IFOs will be responsible for developing specific grant programmes to nurture smaller groups.

At the policy level, the HAB will commission a research study to develop a new set of assessment criteria for the major arts groups so as to improve the existing assessment and funding mechanism. An "entry and exit" mechanism and an "upward and downward" funding adjustment mechanism will also be explored so as to put in place a progression ladder for the second- and third-tier performing artists and arts groups to rise to the league of majors. Regarding the support for other forms of arts in addition to performing arts, the existing grant schemes administered by the ADC are applicable to all disciplines of the arts sector and they are not limited to performing arts.

Suggestions have also been made by Mr LEE Wing-tat for improving the management of cultural venues and increasing the opportunities for local artists to display their works. In this respect, the LCSD has implemented the "Venue Partnership Scheme" from 2008-2009 upon the recommendation of the Committee on Performing Arts. The scheme aims to foster a partnership between the venue operators and local arts groups and organizations with the objectives of building up the artistic character of individual venue, enlarging the audience base, developing venue-based marketing strategies, facilitating the solicitation of corporate and private sponsorship and encouraging community involvement in the development of the arts. Apart from venue rental waiver, each selected venue partner could receive programme fee support not exceeding \$1 million annually for organizing activities and related production. In 2009-2010, eight major arts groups and 26 small and medium-sized arts groups have participated in the "Venue Partnership Scheme" which is fully operational in 11 performing arts venues under the LCSD.

Mr LEE Wing-tat proposed the opening up of public service broadcasting and the setting up of radio and television channels for use by the public so as to boost the creative industry through broadcasting businesses. The Government is always committed to facilitating the introduction of new broadcasting technologies and widening programme choice. As a result of the pro-competition regulatory approach, the people of Hong Kong can enjoy programmes on over 350 TV channels and 13 radio channels. Following the successful launch of digital terrestrial television, we will assign frequency

multiplexes for the provision of broadcast-type mobile television services through open auction in 2009. The increasing demand for video and audio content in the market will bring about new business opportunities with immense potentials for the creative industries.

A case in point is our commitment to encouraging independent television programme production. The Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) has been commissioning independent producers to produce documentaries, dramas and animations. In the coming year, over 6% of the RTHK's prime time programmes will be produced through outsourcing. This is conducive to the training of local talents.

Regarding the future policy of public service broadcasting in Hong Kong, the Government is now carefully studying the report submitted by the independent review committee and reviewing all the related issues in a comprehensive manner. The findings of the review will be made public when completed. We will also invite community participation in formulating our future public service broadcasting policy.

With regard to Mr WONG Kwok-hing's call for the provision of tax concession, the Government is committed to maintaining a simple, low and predictable tax regime so as to provide a neutral level playing field for all sectors. Any proposal for providing tax or other concessions for specific industries must be considered carefully. We would welcome views from all sectors.

Yesterday, Mr WONG Kwok-hing has expressed concern about the lack of government initiatives to support our film industry. The Government has always supported the development of film industry in Hong Kong through various channels. Initiatives which include the establishment of the Hong Kong Film Development Council (HKFDC) and the injection of \$300 million into the Film Development Fund (FDF) are aimed at providing support for small-to-medium budget film productions and enhancing efforts to promote Hong Kong films and talents in the Mainland and overseas. Our proposal to inject \$300 million into the FDF was approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in July 2007. Financial support from the FDF will be provided for small-to-medium budget film productions and projects which would benefit the long-term and healthy development of the Hong Kong film industry.

I can now provide the information on the FDF to Mr WONG. To date, a total of 19 applications have been received by the FDF. Of these applications,

12 were approved with a total funding of over \$32 million. The FDF is met with enthusiastic response from the industry. The 12 approved films have involved six novice directors who are directing commercial films for the first time. One film directed by a novice director has been nominated to participate in the Hong Kong Film Awards and the Hong Kong Asian Film Festival as well as in nine international film festivals. It shows that the FDF is conducive to the nurturing of film talents.

On the question of whether there are other initiatives, the answer is definitely yes. Approval has been given by the HKFDC for 24 film-related projects which are conducive to the long-term and healthy development of the Hong Kong film industry, with a total funding of \$38 million. These film-related projects together with the film productions I just mentioned will have a positive impact on the development of film industry. Under the approved film-related projects, funding support has been given to organizing large-scale film publicity activities, financing the participation of Hong Kong film industry in overseas film festivals, hosting seminars, producing film industry manuals and teaching materials. We will maintain close liaison with local film workers and particularly novice directors so as to encourage them to engage in new film projects with financial support by the FDF. In addition, the HKFDC is now reviewing the operation of the FDF in consultation with the film industry so as to ensure that it fully meets the needs of the industry.

A number of Honourable Members including Mr Ronny TONG, Mr Paul CHAN and Mr WONG Ting-kwong have expressed concern about Hong Kong's status as a financial centre. But as Premier WEN Jiabao said a couple of weeks ago (18 April), Hong Kong is still enjoying unique advantages as a financial centre and will continue to have an important role in China's development. It is generally accepted that the competitive edge of Hong Kong as a financial centre lies in our globalized, liberalized and institutionalized regime. The Government will continue to strengthen and develop our advantages to enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness. Mr Paul CHAN has compared Hong Kong and Shanghai with New York and Philadelphia in the United States. Philadelphia is the City of Brotherly Love. The two cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai also share a brotherly relationship that we could build on. Through co-operation, both cities can develop into major financial centres. At the same time, we can also open up our markets for mutual benefits. The Government will strengthen our work towards this goal.

President, many useful suggestions have been made by Honourable Members today regarding the implementation of measures to develop new industries. We will give careful consideration to these suggestions when formulating the long-term and practicable development strategies for the new industries to help Hong Kong overcome our short-term and long-term economic challenges.

Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now call upon Ms Audrey EU to move her amendment to the motion.

MS AUDREY EU (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mrs Regina IP's motion be amended.

Ms Audrey EU moved the following amendment: (Translation)

"To delete ", as" after "That" and substitute with "the economy of Hong Kong lacks diversification in recent years, which aggravates the disparity between the rich and the poor as well as undermines social mobility, and"; to add "China and ASEAN will form a free trade area and" after "coupled with the fact that"; to add "and benefit various social strata" after "higher economic value"; to delete "setting up a policy bureau to promote" after "for example," and substitute with "assigning the work relating to the promotion of"; to delete ", fully co-ordinate work in these areas and restructure" after "innovation and technology as well as cultural and creative industries" and substitute with "to suitable policy bureaux or assigning the work to a higher-level body for overall co-ordination and setting up new policy bureaux in respect of individual areas of the innovative industry or cultural industry as necessary, as well as restructuring"; to delete "and" after "synergy"; and to add "; (e) studying the impact of the establishment of China-ASEAN Free Trade Area on Hong Kong, and formulating corresponding strategies; (f) while developing new industries, exploring the creation of more jobs that are related to the new industries for non-skilled workers, so that sufficient

employment opportunities are available to such workers; and (g) improving the education and training systems to provide more talents for the new industries, and promoting a social climate that respects talents engaging in scientific and technological research and creative work, so as to attract the young generation to join the new industries" immediately before the full stop."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Ms Audrey EU to Mrs Regina IP'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 LEE Wing-tat, as Ms Audrey EU'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 may speak 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 LEE WING-TAT (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mrs Regina IP's motion as amended by Ms Audrey EU be further amended by my revised amendment. I have nothing to add.

Thank you, President.

Mr LEE Wing-tat's further amendment to the motion as amended by Ms Audrey EU: (Translation)

"To add "; (h) reviewing the current subsidies on cultural arts provided by the Government so as to nurture budding performing arts groups and, apart from subsidizing performing arts, extending the scope of subsidies to other forms of arts such as literature or installation arts, etc, thereby enabling arts development in Hong Kong to be more diversified and fostering a social culture which is conducive to promoting the development of the creative industry; (i) increasing the opportunities for local artists to display their works, including improving the management and operation mode of cultural venues as well as the operation of their supporting facilities, and providing more exhibition space to enable artists to have more opportunities to display their works to the public, thereby enhancing their popularity and augmenting the economic contributions of the cultural and creative industries; (j) promoting public art and increasing the display of art works in public space or at venues other than museums and art galleries to enable the community and the public to enjoy more local art works, so that cultural arts can integrate into the community to nurture the local audience, thereby boosting the development of cultural and creative industries; and (k) opening up public service broadcasting to promote and encourage public participation in the diversified broadcasting businesses, and setting up radio and television channels for use by the public, so as to boost the creative industry through broadcasting businesses" immediately before the full stop."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That Mr LEE Wing-tat's amendment to Mrs Regina IP's motion as amended by Ms Audrey EU 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): Members have been informed that Ms Miriam LAU will withdraw her amendment if Mr LEE Wing-tat's amendment is passed. As this is the case now, Ms Miriam LAU has therefore withdrawn her amendment.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr WONG Kwok-hing, as the amendments by Ms Audrey EU and Mr LEE Wing-tat have 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 may speak 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 WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mrs Regina IP's motion as amended by Ms Audrey EU and Mr LEE Wing-tat be further amended by my revised amendment. I do not intend to make any further elaboration as I have explained it earlier on.

Mr WONG Kwok-hing's further amendment to the motion as amended by Ms Audrey EU and Mr LEE Wing-tat: (Translation)

"To add "; (l) examining the provision of tax concession and land assistance as well as how to make good use of vacant factory buildings, constructing infrastructural facilities, opening up areas for research and development, as well as nurturing relevant talents, etc for the new industries; and (m) providing one-stop support services to centrally process all applications relating to the creative industry, including those for licences required for setting up business, government subsidy and tax concession, etc" immediately before the full stop."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That Mr WONG Kwok-hing's amendment to Mrs Regina IP's motion as amended by Ms Audrey EU and Mr LEE Wing-tat 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): Ms Cyd HO, as the amendments by Ms Audrey EU, Mr LEE Wing-tat and Mr WONG Kwok-hing have 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 may speak 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.

MS CYD HO (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mrs Regina IP's motion as amended by Ms Audrey EU, Mr LEE Wing-tat and Mr WONG Kwok-hing be further amended by my revised amendment. In this final version of my proposed amendment, I have only made certain textual changes to put the whole thing in context and hence, I have nothing further to add. Thank you.

Ms Cyd HO's further amendment to the motion as amended by Ms Audrey EU, Mr LEE Wing-tat and Mr WONG Kwok-hing: (Translation)

"To add "; (n) in respect of making good use of the land available for development in the Lok Ma Chau Loop and the North East New Territories, the original way of living of the residents must be protected during the development process; and (o) recruiting talents from the private sector to set up a steering committee to monitor whether the authorities are making good use of society's resources to ensure that the new industries will not lose vitality due to the Government's bureaucratic way of doing things" immediately before the full stop."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That Ms Cyd HO's amendment to Mrs Regina IP's motion as amended by Ms Audrey EU, Mr LEE Wing-tat and 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.

(Members raised their hands)

Mr IP Kwok-him rose to claim a division.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr IP Kwok-him 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:

Dr Raymond HO, Dr Margaret NG, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, Ms LI Fung-ying, Dr Joseph LEE, Mr Andrew LEUNG, Prof Patrick LAU and Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che voted for the amendment.

Mr WONG Ting-kwong and Mr IP Kwok-him voted against the amendment.

Ms Miriam LAU, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Mr CHAN Kin-por, Mr IP Wai-ming, Dr PAN Pey-chyou, Mr Paul TSE and Dr Samson TAM abstained.

Geographical Constituencies:

Mr James TO, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Ms Audrey EU, Mr LEE Wing-tat, Mr KAM Nai-wai, Ms Cyd HO, Miss Tanya CHAN, Mr WONG Sing-chi and Mrs Regina IP voted for the amendment.

Mr CHAN Kam-lam, Mr LAU Kong-wah, Mr TAM Yiu-chung, Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming and Ms Starry LEE voted against the amendment.

Mr WONG Kwok-hing abstained.

THE PRESIDENT, Mr Jasper TSANG, did not cast any vote.

THE PRESIDENT announced that among the Members returned by functional constituencies, 17 were present, eight were in favour of the amendment, two against it and seven abstained; while among the Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, 16 were present, nine were in favour of the amendment, five against it and one abstained. Since the question was not agreed by a majority of each of the two groups of Members present, he therefore declared that the amendment was negatived.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mrs Regina IP, you may now reply and you have 24 seconds. This debate will come to a close after Mrs Regina IP has replied.

MRS REGINA IP (in Cantonese): President, I wish to thank Members for their amendments and speeches as well as the Government for its reply. Nonetheless, I think the Government's reply is just a hodgepodge of all its ongoing initiatives and there is really nothing new. But I understand that Secretary Gregory SO is just standing-in today and maybe I will discuss this with him again some other day. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mrs Regina IP, as amended by Ms Audrey EU, Mr LEE Wing-tat and Mr WONG Kwok-hing, be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): 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.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Second motion: Concern about the youth drug problem.

Members who wish to speak in the debate on the motion will please press the "Request to speak" button.

I now call upon Dr Joseph LEE to speak and move his motion.

CONCERN ABOUT THE YOUTH DRUG PROBLEM

DR JOSEPH LEE (in Cantonese): President, I move that the motion, as printed on the Agenda, be passed.

President, today, we are discussing the youth drug problem, and I do not know whether Members and the Secretary had viewed the program "News Magazine" on Television Broadcast Limited (TVB) last Saturday which clearly revealed the seriousness of the current youth drug problem among adolescents in Hong Kong, especially those in schools. In one session of the program, it was reported that according to a simple survey conducted by a drug addiction treatment agency, there are one to two students taking drugs in almost every school. Certainly, this is a subjective survey conducted by the Agency and the details were not revealed; however, this program did show the seriousness of the current drug problem among adolescents in Hong Kong.

This motion is proposed today mainly to discuss whether the current anti-drug policies or policies against drug abuse are adequate or not. Let us first look at some figures. Apart from learning that the problem of students taking drugs in school is extremely serious from the program, "News Magazine", on TVB which I mentioned just now, some simple figures also reflect this situation. In the four consecutive years from 2005 to 2008, the number of young people

(those under 21 years of age) taking drugs had increased from approximately 16% to 24%. Though it seems that the figure was not that high, the number had nevertheless been increasing, and this is the first point.

The second point is the worrying phenomenon that while secondary schools had been our focus in the past, now the trend has spread even to Primary Five and Six students. Our focus is now put on schools and this group of young people. It could further be seen that while in the past, youngsters consumed drugs mostly in places like rave parties, now, apart from spreading to the schools, the trend is that they do not just take drugs in Hong Kong, but would go across the border to the Mainland for taking drugs during weekends or on festive occasions, which is a situation that warrants our concern because, upon crossing the border, we see that I do not know if Members have heard of "glass ketamine" which is very popular in the Mainland — it will shine like crystals under the lights. Why? Because in a bid to make the drugs look more appealing, in the process of "cake mixing" (a term commonly used in the manufacturing of drugs), fragments of fluorescent tubes and glass powder are mixed into drugs like ketamine by unscrupulous drug manufacturers. The youngsters would find the shiny drugs under the lights of the discos and rave parties highly appealing. I do not know what the result would be if the glass powder is being taken into the human body. I remember when we played "cutting" the kites in childhood, we would grind the glass into powder and brush it onto the strings of the kites for cutting the strings of other kites. One of the harms is that if this glass powder is taken into the human body, it would pierce the intestines. Certainly, we could not generalize and say that the drugs produced by all drug manufacturers in the Mainland is "glass ketamine", but it is very popular for youngsters nowadays to consume "glass ketamine", and I do not know whether they are aware of the harm that this would do to them. It is a general phenomenon that youngsters are going across the border to take drugs, and while we have been exerting our efforts in anti-drug activities in Hong Kong, it seems that we can do nothing once they go across the border to take drugs.

Under this situation, we have to look into the adequacy of the entire anti-drug policy. Let us talk about the basics, that is, legislation and enforcement. It has been regarded that adequate efforts have been made in law enforcement, I believe the Secretary of Security is in the Chamber now, and naturally they would think that they have made much effort in this area, as there are the Action Committee Against Narcotics, the various measures on border

patrol, and also enforcement by the Customs and Excise Department. All these efforts are beyond doubt. However, one important point is that no matter how stringent our law enforcement is, a loophole exists under the law. With regard to penalties under the law, there are three major ordinances, namely Cap. 134, Cap. 145 and Cap. 405, which are related to drugs. It is pointed out in these three ordinances that penalties are imposed on drug consumption, manufacturing or storage; however, penalty is heavy for traditional drugs such as heroine, and "ice", but penalty is light for certain psychiatric or soft drugs.

According to newspaper report on the current statistics of the Customs and Excise Department or detection of narcotics at the border, about 3 000 to 4 000 g of ketamine and other soft drugs are seized, compared to only 400 to 500 g of heroine and "ice", which means that the quantity of soft drugs is larger than that of the traditional drugs like heroine. This is because most youngsters would not be so "old fashioned" as to take heroine and "ice"; instead, they would take soft drugs. Despite such huge quantity of soft drugs, the penalty would be relatively lighter for consumption or possession (not to mention manufacturing) of such drugs. Recent figures indicate that one would be liable for one to two years' imprisonment for possessing 100 or less tablets of drugs, and 10 to 14 years' imprisonment only when 9 000 or more tablets are found in his pocket. It would be unlikely for a youngster to carry two big bags of 9 000 tablets of drugs in total when he crosses the border. He might just carry several tablets, since it would not be a big deal to do so, and penalty would not be too high even if he is caught. Insofar as penalty is concerned, there is a loophole here which lessens the awareness of the youngsters who cross the border to take drugs, as they do not know that the possession of drugs (not to mention consumption) is a serious crime and they could be liable to serious penalty when they go back to Hong Kong. With regard to legislation, the Secretary has to consider that since a loophole exists in the law due to the discrepancy in penalties between traditional drugs and soft drugs, this might be a point which we have neglected irrespective of how good the law enforcement is. Would the authorities consider the problem that though there are severe penalties, they have nothing to do with the youngsters? I believe insofar as the current policy is concerned, a review that starts with the law could be considered.

Just now, we said that the focus has to be placed on the primary and secondary students, but this cannot address the actual situation. I just read from yesterday's news that the trend of drug-taking among tertiary students is

extremely serious as well. The Narcotics Division and the Census and Statistics Department just stated that in 2008, the number of university students over 21 years of age seeking assistance had increased by 57%, which indicates that the trend of drug-taking is not confined just to primary or secondary students, but possibly in universities as well. Why do they take drugs? It may be due to pressure. Recently, a young singer explained that she took drugs because she was under great pressure. However, pressure is not an excuse for taking drugs. I know that Members and the Secretary are also under great pressure, but they do not take drugs. Hence, our focus should not be put only on primary and secondary students, and the target groups should also include university students. Youngsters who are between 10 to 25 years of age nowadays might take drugs for various reasons. With more severe penalties established through law, we hope to deter them from keeping drugs.

It would be more difficult to deal with other situations of drug intake. Now, many students begin to take drugs in schools, a situation which I mentioned just now. As for cases in which youngsters cross the border to take drugs, I do not know whether the Secretary would consider just now we discussed the motion on innovation and creativity, and Members may say that this involves issues on human rights. Drivers could be requested to take the breath test at any time after the law on drink driving was passed. When the youngsters are crossing the border, we should not just focus on policing or searching work. If the youngsters appear to be abnormal, could they be requested to undergo body examination? However, things become complicated when it comes to examination. Activists for human rights would stand out and raise objection on the ground of human rights, and disputes would ensue if other Members explain that it is for the sake of safety. However, putting these disputes aside, can consideration be given to taking deterrent measures targeting these youngsters who cross the border to take drugs, in a bid to let the youngsters know that their look or appearance would be affected by drugs and that they might be requested to undergo drug addiction treatment once they are found to have consumed drugs by the Customs and Excise Department? As this is a positive message with deterrent effect, it is worth considering as it would deter the youngsters from crossing the border to take drugs just as they please. Certainly, the details of this would be left to the specialists for discussions.

The situations in schools seem to be very serious. We have indicated just now that there has been a rise in the relevant figures, and it has also been pointed

out by some organizations that there may be one or two students taking drugs in each school. In the past, the authorities would insist that a lot of work had been done, and many announcements of public interest had been produced by the Narcotics Division, and that drama performances on anti-drugs or drug addiction treatment had been organized by a good many volunteer organizations in schools. Efforts in this area seem to be quite fruitful, and I was glad to hear from a radio programme yesterday that some members of the public had said that they dared not take drugs. However, would school headmasters think that if it is revealed that students of his school take drugs — such as Joseph LEE is his student and if it is reported that he takes drugs, serious consequences would follow, as reputation of the school would be tarnished and the school would be labelled? Should the authorities educate the headmasters to put down this "baggage"? Looking at it from a positive angle, would a mechanism for assessment be established by the Government (such as giving a star and commendations to a school in which no student takes drugs)? This is like the system currently implemented in hospitals, whereby certain hospitals would be labelled as five-star hospitals and commendations given to them for good performance. The headmaster would feel happier with such positive encouragement, and, in a bid to make known to others that no one takes drugs in their schools, schools may actively request for assessments or tests to be conducted. This is a kind of positive measure that is more constructive than the approach adopted by some headmasters or parent associations trying every means not to make known cases of students taking drugs in their schools, which would only lead to the spread of the problem.

I understand that anti-drugs student ambassadors have been appointed in some schools, but schools have to let them know that students taking drugs are not necessarily normal students who may even threaten classmates not to report their deeds, or else, they would be beaten up. If this really happens, anti-drug projects could not be taken forward in schools. While it is difficult for the drug problem at schools to be resolved, I believe greater effectiveness could be achieved if more positive measures could be adopted by the Government to deal with the problem, rather than focusing only on policing, inspection, and a high-handed approach.

This morning, I happened to read a book which reminded me of an interesting story: The sun was having a quarrel with North wind and they were having a comparison to see who could make a person take off his clothing — a

story which I believe all of you have heard of — so the sun shined fiercely on a man while North wind kept blowing hardly on him. The stronger North wind blew, the harder he shivered and grasped his clothing; but he took off his clothing under the strong sun. The story proves that effectiveness could not be attained just by using the stick or high-handed measures, but the carrot, that is, a soft approach should be used and this would enable the drug problem to be resolved more easily or deter students from taking drugs.

Apart from schools and the border, one point in fact has been missed out in the entire anti-drug policy, that is, the social problem, which includes family problems, and family is closely related to social policies. More family assistance can be provided, such as encouraging more parents to — according to some researches, parents are encouraged to assume the role of "peer" counsellors to their children and to be the friends of their children when they are back from school. Such counselling is a more positive approach, because at least students know they would not be scolded and beaten up by their parents when they go home after they are found to have taken drugs or even after serving a prison sentence. Could more resources be allocated by the authorities for the development of social policies and social networks, so that they know taking drugs is bad and when they go home, they would not be scolded or penalized by their parents, but would positively obtain their assistance for getting away from drugs? This is something which the Government could consider; however, for the time being, I have not seen any action on the part of the Government in this aspect.

Besides, at the policy level, apart from policing and work carried out in schools and society, there is also rehabilitation. But, are the current resources for rehabilitation enough? Since this is not within his purview, perhaps the Secretary would not know. I am rather disappointed today for, if the authorities attach great importance to the anti-drug policy, we should at least see five persons sitting here. The first is Mr WONG Yan-lung, Secretary for Justice, and then the Secretary for Security, Secretary Dr York CHOW (but he may be busy dealing with the swine flu and has no time to come), Secretary Matthew CHEUNG and Secretary Michael SUEN. All these five persons are very important, because their concerted efforts are required before a comprehensive anti-drug policy can be formulated. The responsibility should not fall merely onto the shoulder of the Secretary for Security. Policing is certainly important, but matching work in other areas is equally important.

Just now I mentioned rehabilitation, and among the current rehabilitation organizations, there is one let me check the documents — its name was mentioned in "News Magazine" last Saturday. This college, which seems to be the Christian Zheng Sheng College in Cheung Chau, has taken up work on anti-drugs; however, resources for them are certainly inadequate. More organizations like this can, at least, assist the youngsters to resolve their problems. It is difficult for youngsters who have taken drugs to go back to general schools, and it is afraid that they would meet their old friends who take drugs when they go back to society. Would it be better if a good environment can be provided to them for gradual recovery with the support of their family? Have these NGOs, which are small in number, being neglected by the Government? Drug addiction treatment centres and treatment homes are within the Secretary's purview; however, they may not be the ideal places for assisting the youngsters in their rehabilitation.

I believe better results would be attained if more efforts could be put in by the authorities for improvements in these areas. However, today, Members have made different suggestions and there are debates on urine test, hair test, which methods are cheaper and which are more expensive, and human rights, and so on. In any case, with regard to the youth drug problems, I believe we all have a common goal and that is, we hope that the number of those taking drugs could be reduced to zero, but this would require the concerted efforts of the various Policy Bureaux in the four areas. Under this premise, it is hoped that Members could put aside their differences and individual opinions and allow the Bureaux the opportunity to fully consider a more comprehensive policy for assisting all youngsters, from Primary Six to university students, to refrain from taking drugs.

Dr Joseph LEE moved the following motion: (Translation)

"That, the recent incidents such as secondary students taking drugs on campus and young singers being arrested in Japan for suspected possession of drugs which occurred successively have once again aroused the concern about the youth drug problem; yet, the Government's concern about the deteriorating youth drug problem has all along been inadequate and the progress of its anti-drug work is slow; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to expeditiously formulate a comprehensive anti-drug policy to address the increasingly serious youth drug problem."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Dr Joseph LEE be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Two Members will move amendments to this motion. This Council will now proceed to a joint debate on the motion and the two amendments.

I will call upon Mr WONG Sing-chi to speak first, to be followed by Mr CHAN Kin-por; but no amendments are to be moved at this stage.

MR WONG SING-CHI (in Cantonese): President, youth drug problem has existed for a long time, and various sectors of society have been requesting the Government to curb the spread of the menace of drugs in Hong Kong; however, up till now, the situation is exactly the opposite — not only is there no decrease in the number of youngsters taking drugs; on the contrary, there has been an increase in the figure. Certainly, this is not because of ineffective anti-drug work carried out by the Government. This is not the problem. In fact, given their pervasiveness and the change in nature (or mutation), drugs have become different from what they used to be. Previously, drugs like heroine or opium had to be refined; now chemical substances such as ketamine and ecstasy could be manufactured in small-scale factories, and prices for them are cheap as well. The drugs are even marketed on websites as recreational drugs, that is, drugs used for recreational purposes. In fact, these drugs have been infiltrated slowly into the community by people from various strata. The age of those who first come into contact with drugs is becoming lower and lower; and there has been an increase in the types of drugs being consumed and abused. Youngsters frequently and extensively talked about how funny and excited it is to take drugs and abuse drugs on the Internet, influencing one another among their peers. Given the situation at present, if no measure is adopted, we are concerned that the problem would deteriorate further.

While previously schools were more peaceful and safer, now, drugs have gained their popularity even in schools. Now, in some schools, the toilet cubicles have become the gathering spots for students to take drugs. Since it is easy to get a small pack of drugs from drug traffickers, students become the drug dealers themselves as well because apart from self-consumption, they could sell the drugs to other schoolmates. Schools thus become the retail outlet for drugs such as heroine, ketamine, ecstasy, "blue gremlin" and "white melon seed",

inducing more students into consuming them, thereby causing the drug problem to spread out of control. I believe the Hong Kong public already has knowledge of this. Drug abusers and students taking drugs said frankly that in the past, since not many students took drugs in schools, they dared not take drugs in school, fearing that it would be easy for them to be discovered; now, since there are many students who take drugs in school, this phenomenon has become common, and students even just as what I said earlier, drugs are termed as recreational drugs (that is, drugs used for recreational purposes) on some websites, therefore, it is no big deal to give them a try. As a result, the drug abuse problem has become more and more serious in schools. Under the influence of drugs and psychotropic drugs, students who were originally lively, cheerful and witty become non-focused, mentally retarded with irreparable damages to the body. It is indeed misleading for some websites to state that a little and slow intake of drugs would be healthier and safer. The feedback I got from consulting the opinions of various doctors and specialists is that taking a little or even just half a tablet of these psychotropic drugs could already do permanent and irreplaceable harm to the human brain. Looking at these students, I feel pain in my heart. Just imagine how heart-rending it would be if these youngsters are your children. I believe it is extremely clear for us all.

According to regular reports on drug abuse cases published by the Government, since 2004, the number of youngsters aged 21 who were reported to be taking drugs has increased by 57% in four years (an increase from 2 186 persons in 2004 to 3 430 persons in 2008), which is indeed extremely alarming. These figures would indeed be the tip of an iceberg and it is believed that there are more cases which go unreported. According to surveys conducted by the Government among students in 2004, around 17 300 secondary school students indicated that they had consumed heroine or psychotropic drugs. By how many the number has increased in 2008? Indeed, we just know it only too well.

Let us look at the figures from surveys conducted by some non-governmental organizations regarding the drug problem at schools.

According to surveys conducted last year by two drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation centres, namely, the Christian New Being Fellowship and Christian Zheng Sheng College, 82% of the 217 students coming from 116 schools had taken psychotropic drugs, and 40% among them had taken drugs at schools. The average age for first-time drug-taker is as low as 14, with the youngest being only just eight years old.

Statistical information on cases obtained by the Democratic Party from two drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation centres and one counselling organization indicate that a total of 136 schools were involved in the 293 cases of students taking drugs, and that included three primary schools, 118 secondary schools, 13 professional colleges and vocational training centres, and two schools at Shenzhen and Dongguan. Even Band One schools are included in the 118 secondary schools which are distributed all over Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories (with 71 in the New Territories, 21 in Kowloon, 24 on the Hong Kong Island).

According to information from a counselling organization that deals with referral students from the Hong Kong Island and the outlying islands, among 128 student cases, 19 schools on Hong Kong Island are involved, which is 20% of the schools on Hong Kong Island; the situation of the outlying islands is more serious, seven out of 10 schools are "poisonous".

While it is not my intention to exaggerate on the drug problem among university students, I earnestly hope that the Government, schools, parents, and the various concern groups would understand that drug problem at schools has reached a very acute stage, as one child taking drugs at school does not only mean one single case, because many students may have the same problems. We could no longer afford to "hide" the students' drug problem with an ostrich attitude; instead, we need to face the problem with a positive attitude. Apart from reinforcing efforts in publicity and education, we need to have specific measures for enabling students to pull themselves out of drugs and curbing the spread of the menace of drugs in schools which would otherwise do harm to the next generation.

A report on the study of drug testing at schools had been submitted earlier by the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse led by Mr WONG Yan-lung, the Secretary for Justice. In the United States of America, United Kingdom and Singapore, schools could decide on whether to accept the school drug testing measures; in Hong Kong, only some international schools set up various drug testing schemes on their own.

According to an opinion survey conducted by the Democratic Party in late March this year, 75% of the 627 interviewees are concerned that the drug problem would become more and more serious. Nearly 70% of the interviewees agreed to school drug testing. When asked whether prior consent of schools,

parents or students has to be sought before implementing school drug testing scheme, almost 60% and 50% of the interviewees respectively agreed that there was such a need.

This reflects that the majority of the public accepts drug testing on a voluntary basis. The Democratic Party is also of the view that implementation of voluntary drug testing in schools could be considered, because only in this way could the current youth drug problem be truly dealt with. Not only could the students be identified, but more importantly, schools would have a voluntary attitude, the children would have a voluntary direction, and parents would be prepared voluntarily in the process. In fact, it would enable them to assist the child in a more effective manner if the child is found to have problems. Otherwise, if the matter is being ignored or handled in a coercive manner, the child may not have the motivation or confidence to accept the service even if he wishes to change. Hence, we reckon that voluntary drug testing at schools is necessary at present. Certainly, students must not be forced to take the drug test in the process. The wish of the students and their consent are very important. It is reasonable for parents to assist their children who are too small to decide on this. But most important of all is the willingness of schools to accept this voluntary drug testing scheme. In the event that schools are not willing to adopt the scheme, which means that they are not yet prepared to do so, it would not be reasonable for us to force them to do so. Hence, we hope that after introducing drug testing, they must not be given a free hand. Instead, more matching measures should be launched by the Government, such as providing more parental education for them to understand how they can care for their children better, and also providing them with services which could enable them to be better prepared after their children had undergone drug testing. Greater assistance could be provided to children only when work has been adequately carried out by schools. For appropriate services to be provided when a large number of students voluntarily accept treatment and services, more resources should be allocated to organizations providing services in this aspect.

School drug testing is designed for early identification, so that early treatment could be given to students; otherwise, if the situation persists, the difficulties and hardships encountered by the students are even harder to overcome. Hence, we hope that more detailed planning in this aspect could be made by the Government so that together with the public, better solutions for the youth drug problem could be worked out. Thank you, President.

MR CHAN KIN-POR (in Cantonese): President, the motion moved by Dr Joseph LEE today has brought back memories of my childhood in public housing estates.

The public housing at that time was a breeding ground for many illegal activities, including "Tse Fa" lottery, gambling, gang fighting and triad society recruitment. But among all, it was the hazards of drugs that had left me with the deepest impression. At that time, one of my neighbours was a drug addict who tried to quit drugs once every few months. Each time he was tied in a bed in order to break the addiction. As his neighbours, we were very much affected because we often heard him screaming during those few days. But the same thing happened again and again, once every few months. Besides, we often saw drug addicts hanging around public toilets and the area nearby and this had left me with two deep impressions on drugs. The first impression is: once you try it, it will be very difficult for you to get rid of it. The second one is: when craving for drugs, you will make any promise or do anything to satisfy your addiction, with no regard to human dignity.

I believe Dr Joseph LEE, Mr WONG Sing-chi and other Members all have profound insights on the motion "Concern about the youth drug problem". Regarding the amendment that I am going to move today, I would like to put particular emphasis on several fundamental factors that lead to the problem. These factors are parents, families and schools.

Life is difficult today. To make ends meet, a lot of parents have to work outside day and night, and many of them cannot afford to hire domestic helpers to look after their children. Feeling exhausted after a whole day's work, when they arrive home and see their children indulging in computer games or engaging in internet surfing while doing homework, they will easily lose temper and scold their children. On the other hand, the children often complain about their parents scolding them or spending too much time watching TV, playing mahjong or horse race betting. Time after time, they will become more estranged from their parents since there is little communication between them.

Parents find it hard to manage their children as they always offend them with words. For the children, they think that their parents, instead of caring for them, only scold them and beat them up. They gradually feel that life and family are meaningless and thus lose their life goals.

Under such circumstances, if these children are lured by some delinquents in their peer groups or in school, they will easily start taking drugs, and eventually, get addicted and have their future ruined.

Therefore, in order to prevent teenagers from taking drugs, I think parents are actually the most important gatekeepers, while other family members such as grandparents, brothers and sisters also play a very important role. Finally, the role of schools, including headmasters, teachers, social workers and schoolmates, should not be overlooked either.

In fact, the Government can support parents, families and schools to fight against drug use.

First of all, promotion is needed. Messages should be conveyed to parents to let them realize that they are the most important gatekeepers in the prevention of youth drug use, whereas schools and the Government only play a supplementary role. Actually, if their children take drugs, the parents should be held responsible.

Secondly, we have to emphasize the importance of harmony, mutual support and mutual encouragement in a family.

Thirdly, we have to make headmasters, teachers and students realize the urgency as well as the importance of reporting and combating drug trafficking in schools.

Regarding support in other areas, the Government should work out a plan for organizing or subsidizing a series of family and parent-child activities, providing parent-child counselling service and organizing parent-child workshops, as well as carrying out campaigns in schools to encourage the reporting of drug use as a way to combat the problem. Apart from that, it is more important for the Government to substantially increase the resources for school social workers and outreach social workers according to the situation of individual districts since the seriousness of the problem varies in different districts. This will allow the social workers to play the role of front-line gatekeepers, so that they can effectively observe the situation in schools, explain the hazards of drugs to students, provide counselling service, and refer students to relevant organizations for further follow-up when necessary.

President, the issue we discuss today has also made me rethink how to get along with my two sons. In the past, once I arrived home, I would ask my sons, "Have you finished your homework? Have you played computer games?" But now I will ask them, "Do you have any happy or unhappy experience to share with dad today?" Looking at the relationship between me and my parents as well as that with my two sons, I believe that parents always have to take the first step to improve the parent-child relationship. What the teenagers need is not material satisfaction but their parents' love and care, which is the most fundamental and important thing. I absolutely believe that only when the general public understands the importance of the role of parents, families and schools in combating youth drug use can the youth drug problem possibly be tackled at root.

President, I so submit.

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY (in Cantonese): President, first, I am thankful to Dr Joseph LEE for proposing this motion, which gives the authorities and Members room for discussion on the problem of youth drug abuse. The amendments proposed by Mr WONG Sing-chi and Mr CHAN Kin-por have also highlighted part of the thrust of this problem which is worthy of our attention.

The Government is highly concerned about the problem of youth drug abuse. For that reason, in October 2007, the Chief Executive announced in his policy address that the Secretary for Justice, the incumbent Deputy Chairman of the Fight Crime Committee, be appointed to lead a high-level inter-departmental task force in order to combat youth drug abuse. Having undertaken its work for one year, the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse (the Task Force) released a report in November last year and set out therein some 70 recommendations, with a view to combating drug abuse in a holistic and sustainable manner. The Task Force has completed its work and at present, the Security Bureau is responsible for overseeing, co-ordinating and monitoring the actual implementation of the recommendations. In this connection, as the Secretary for Security, I will give a comprehensive reply today to this motion on behalf of the Government. That said, given that the Secretary for Justice is still very concerned with the problem of youth drug abuse, he will try to spare some time to attend this meeting later and listen to the views expressed by Members.

Drug abuse imposes far-reaching repercussions on young people and issues revolving around drug abuse have aroused deep concern in society, the Legislative Council and the Government. Moreover, such issues have bearings on the well-being of our next generation and the foundation of our society. As early as in 1998, the United Nations published the drug-related Political Declaration and warned, "Drugs destroy lives and communities, undermine sustainable human development and generate crime. Drugs affect all sectors of society in all countries; in particular, drug abuse affects the freedom and development of young people, the world's most valuable asset."

The responsibility of combating drug abuse rests firmly upon the Government. We have all along adopted a "five-pronged" anti-drug strategy, focusing on five areas, namely, preventive education and publicity, treatment and rehabilitation, legislation and law enforcement, external co-operation and research, in a bid to direct efforts to cutting off the supply of, and reducing the demand for, drugs. The work in this regard has borne fruit.

Despite the fact that in 2001, the total reported number of drug abusers had once exceeded 18 000, the figure for the following five years had declined by nearly 30%. In 2006, there were 13 300 drug abusers. That said, it is a pity that the past two years have witnessed a reversal of the declining trend. In 2008, the total reported number of drug abusers increased to 14 200. The reversal of the trend is attributable to the increase in the number of young drug abusers aged under 21. Over the past four years, the reported number of young drug abusers has accumulated a rise of 57%, 99% of whom consumed such psychotropic substances as ketamine. This drug is of a more hidden nature when compared with such traditional drugs as heroin in terms of the method and place of consumption, withdrawal symptoms and the harmful effects caused to the physical and mental health of abusers at the initial stage. On average, young drug abusers first consume drugs at the age of 15. This highlights the fact that the problem of youth drug abuse has witnessed a great change in terms of nature and quantity.

The Task Force was well aware of the urgency of combating youth drug abuse and that the implementation of mitigating measures brooked no delay. The Task Force, when considering long-term strategies, had immediately started to formulate a series of interim and short-term measures which could be introduced at the earliest opportunity while seeking new resources, with an aim to

announcing those measures within half a year since the commencement of its work. An additional funding of some \$53 million has been earmarked in the 2008-2009 Budget to finance the implementation of these new measures. Measures that have been, or are gradually, introduced include:

On preventive education and publicity, in June last year, we commenced a territory-wide anti-drug campaign with the theme of "No Drugs, No Regrets. Not Now, Not Ever." which will last for two years, so as to heighten the public awareness of drug abuse. In so doing, we have changed the positioning of our strategies by stop employing such an indirect expression as "abuse of psychotropic substances". Instead, we have directly determined the nature of abusing ketamine as "drug abuse" and this has produced an immediate effect. Therefore, I hope Dr Joseph LEE will not use the term of "soft drugs" again in the future because ketamine is a kind of drugs by nature.

As regards schools, the Education Bureau has established a dedicated anti-drug education team to promote a healthy school policy. The Government has also allocated additional resources for the purpose of providing anti-drug training to school staff and parents, stepping up the implementation of preventive education for students, as well as enhancing the Police School Liaison Programme.

On treatment and rehabilitation, the Government has injected some \$26 million, precisely with a view to enhancing the provision of a series of downstream services, including an addition of one Social Work Assistant to each of the 16 Youth Outreaching Social Work Teams providing day services and 18 Young Night Drifter Teams providing overnight services, the provision of subsidies to 101 additional places in Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres, the enhancement of psychiatric medical social services provided by the Substance Abuse Clinics (SAC) and an increase in the number of the Counselling Centre for Psychotropic Substance Abusers from five to seven.

On the other hand, we have co-operated with the Hong Kong Medical Association and utilized the funding provided by the Anti-narcotics Fund to commence training for private medical practitioners, so as to enhance their awareness about the youth drug abuse problem, thereby providing medical advice, treatment and referral services as soon as practicable at the level of primary care.

To tie in with the work undertaken by the Government, the Hospital Authority has utilized the additional funding provided by the Government and redeployed its resources to establish two additional SACs. This leads to an increase in the number of the SACs from five to seven and these SACs will render comprehensive services to every hospital cluster.

Insofar as legislation and law enforcement is concerned, we have enhanced the services rendered by the Juvenile Protection Section under the Police Superintendents' Discretion Scheme and those by the Community Support Service Scheme. In addition, the police have set up dedicated teams to conduct cyber patrols while the Customs and Excise Department has also increased the number of undercover operations and added 11 drug detector dogs to enhance its capability to combat at boundary control points cross-boundary drug trafficking and drug abuse.

On the research front, the Survey of Drug Use among Students (the Survey), which is conducted on a regular basis, is underway at present. The coverage of the Survey has also been extended to cover Primary Four to tertiary students while the interval between further rounds of the Survey will be shortened to three years.

The Secretary for Justice had grasped the opportunity to submit to the Court of Appeal of the High Court (the Court of Appeal) the latest medical evidence on the harmful effects caused by ketamine and ecstasy to physical health. Having accepted the grounds put forward by the Government, the Court of Appeal substantially enhanced the sentencing guideline for the offence of trafficking in ketamine and ecstasy in June last year.

Subsequent to an in-depth study conducted for one year, the Task Force released a report in November 2008 and set out therein a long-term and sustainable anti-drug strategy, as well as some 70 recommendations. The Task Force confirmed the proven "five-pronged" strategy and suggested that the strength and depth of the efforts dedicated to each area be stepped up, new horizons be explored and the co-ordination among the five areas be deliberately strengthened, thereby formulating a comprehensive and consistent anti-drug strategy.

Let me give Members a brief account of these five areas. First, on preventive education and publicity, we will continue to intensify the latest

publicity strategies and the implementation of such strategies will be targeted at specific groups. We will particularly enhance the work undertaken by schools in this regard, so that the school sector can play the role as a platform in preventive education.

Second, we have to devote continuous efforts to the provision of treatment and rehabilitation services. In addition to introducing and strengthening support services, we propose to initiate drug tests, precisely with an aim to addressing the hidden nature of the abuse of psychotropic substances and the need for early intervention. We have proposed a three-tier drug testing arrangement involving a compulsory drug test that must be approved by the legislative process, a school-based voluntary drug test and an individual-based voluntary drug test. Within this year, the Government will commence the relevant consultation, study and implementation of each tier of the drug tests.

Third, on legislation and law enforcement, we have to enhance our law-enforcement work through an appropriate legal framework, so as to reduce the supply and circulation of drugs and seek to have the Court impose sentences of sufficient deterrence on offenders convicted of drug-related offences. We welcome the supplementary sentencing guideline laid down in March this year by the Court of Appeal for the offence of trafficking in a substantial quantity of heroin and cocaine.

Fourth, when it comes to external co-operation, we must work closely with mainland and overseas counterparts, as well as international organizations, so as to devote concerted efforts to countering the world drug problem, particularly with an aim to addressing the problem of cross-boundary drug abuse. In relation to obtaining information on young people from Hong Kong who are caught abusing drugs in the Mainland and making the necessary arrangements for such youngsters to be repatriated to Hong Kong, we have liaised with the mainland authorities in order to step up the work in this regard.

Fifth, in order to better understand the problem of drug abuse and the changing drug trend, we will direct efforts to conduct evidence-based studies, so as to lay a firm foundation for the formulation of policies.

On top of this "five-pronged" strategy, the Task Force has proposed to include an additional element of fostering within the community a culture of care for young people, so as to inject a new momentum into our anti-drug work. To

this end, the Government and the Action Committee Against Narcotics launched in September last year the Path Builders programme, which serves as a platform for various sectors of the community to gather momentum, so as to assist young people in their healthy growth and strengthen their resistance to temptations and adversity at various levels and through flexible means, thereby tackling at root and more effectively the problem of drug abuse and those relating to young people.

President, I have to emphasize that the Government has proposed a comprehensive strategy and decisive measures to combat youth drug abuse. In addition, the Commissioner for Narcotics is leading an inter-departmental working group to implement a holistic and sustainable anti-drug strategy, so as to put in place the various recommendations proposed by the Task Force.

President, I so submit. I will give a reply after listening to the views put forward by Members on this motion. Thank you, President.

MR WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): President, there is a shocking news report on the front page of a newspaper. Yesterday a murder happened in Yau Oi Estate in Tuen Mun. It is reported that two teenagers abused drugs and finally a girl was killed with 30 stab wounds. This case clearly shows that youth drug abuse has become a very serious social problem. In fact, not only the Security Bureau should be held responsible for such a serious social problem. Therefore, I think not only the Secretary for Security but also the Secretary for Education and the Secretary for Labour and Welfare should attend the meeting today. This is a problem concerning the entire society that will not possibly be solved by any stop-gap measures focusing only on the penalties and rehabilitation service for teenage drug abusers.

After hearing the speech delivered by Mr CHAN Kin-por just now, a lot of feelings have swelled in me. Mr CHAN did not speak up to the maximum time on his amendment earlier. His speech, only lasting for about 4.5 minutes though, focused on youth drug abuse, the hazards of drugs and several factors such as education, parents and families, and in particular, what he said on the role of parents and families has aroused many feelings in me. He told us why teenagers felt estranged when they went back home, and why parents did not have time and energy to care about their children. He said that some parents were so exhausted when arriving home that they did not have time to care about their

children but just let them play computer games and do anything they like. Why is it so? This is an issue that the Secretary for Security is not able to address. Because of all these problems, that is why I said that the Secretary for Labour and Welfare and the Secretary for Education should also attend the meeting. Secretary, why are we in such a situation?

As a Legislative Council Member representing the New Territories East, I am fully aware of the seriousness of the drug abuse problem in remote new towns. Do you know what it is like in Tung Chung after midnight? Do you know what it is like in places like Tin Shui Wai after midnight? Why is it like that? Honestly speaking, the reason is that parents of grass-roots working families work around the clock but are still not able to make ends meet. Then how can they spare time to look after the children and care for their growing up? They work till evening and arrive home at about eight or nine o'clock, but the wages they get might not be enough to cover family expenses. Therefore, this is a social problem. How can we accuse the parents? How can we blame them? Are there any parents who do not hope to see their children growing up healthy and educated? However, does our society offer adequate support or assistance to these grass-roots families? In fact, the introduction of legislation on minimum wage and standard working hours requested by our members of the labour sector is a practical way to put the Government's family-friendly policy into implementation, so as to bring warmth to these families. Nevertheless, our society does not care about this. Therefore, I hope Members in the Chamber will support the early enactment of legislation on minimum wages and standard working hours because this is surely a factor that affects the upbringing of the youngsters.

In addition, I would like to spare some time to talk about the education problem. Regarding education, we all know that teachers are the soul engineers of the students. However, we can see that under the existing education system, our students are those to be sacrificed and eliminated. If you fail to achieve good academic results, you cannot see your future. Even if you finish your study, you cannot find a job. Actually, the youth unemployment rate is rather high. How much time can our teachers spare to care for our students? Is it possible to make home visits to know more about the situation of individual students so as to offer them support? Why do teachers not have time to do such work? It is because with the existing education system, teachers are already under pressure and overloaded with work. How can they spare time and efforts to care about the problems faced by students in schools, families, society and

their daily life? Has our government ever studied and reviewed the existing education system thoroughly? How much emphasis do we put on moral education? How many resources have we put in? Hence, we cannot blame the schools. Instead we have to ask, "What is our education system all about?" We have to ask, "What is our stand on moral education?"

Regarding Dr Joseph LEE's proposal on giving labels to schools without drug users, I totally disagree with it because it is not right. It should be the entire society instead of certain schools to be held responsible for the problem. As for teenagers who have used drugs, they should not be labelled either. The current United States President OBAMA also had the experience of using drugs when he was a teenage student. In fact, the key to the problem lies in how we should help our youngsters.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr WONG Kwok-hing, your speaking time is up.

MR WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): Thank you, President.

MR TOMMY CHEUNG (in Cantonese): President, I would like to thank Dr Joseph LEE for moving the motion "Concern about the youth drug problem" today so that the entire society can have discussions on this issue. President, teenagers are the pillars of our society in the future, but the drug problem is now rapidly ruining the lives of these masters of future. Last year, the number of drug users under the age of 21 rose for the fourth consecutive year to 3 430 with an accumulated increase rate of 56.9%, and there was a tendency that drug users were getting younger and younger. Since this is only the data of reported cases, it is possible that the actual number of youth drug users was even much higher.

Let us take drug use in schools as an example. The data from the Narcotics Division shows that only 46 teenagers were reported to have taken drugs in school in 2008. However, this is only a tip of the iceberg. In February, collective drug abuse cases were reported in two schools in Sheung Shui and Sha Tin. Besides, the Christian Zheng Sheng College, which provides accommodation and education for youth drug users, interviewed 200 teenage drug addicts undergoing rehabilitation earlier. It was found that more than half of the interviewees had the experience of taking drugs in school and the youngest

drug user was only eight years old. It was also found that 32% of the interviewees had been dealers and sold drugs in school. All these show that the school campus, which used to be considered as the safest place, has already deteriorated into a drug parlour of the highest danger.

The Liberal Party thinks that in order to eradicate the problem of drug use in schools and youth drug abuse, we have to fully understand the background of the issue and work out specific measures to address it. In fact, the Narcotics Division's last survey on student drug use was conducted in 2004 and its data has inevitably become outdated. Besides, the existing data is not comprehensive enough to fully reflect the latest trend of student drug use.

In view of this, the authorities should complete the new round of the survey which started at the end of last year as soon as possible and consider conducting such surveys more frequently. A thorough and comprehensive analysis of data should also be conducted to facilitate the formulation of more effective policies and measures to eradicate this "malignant tumour".

Furthermore, the voluntary school-based drug testing scheme proposed in the Report of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse (the Report), which was compiled under the leadership of Mr WONG Yan-lung, the Secretary for Justice, has won the general support of parents and students. Hence, the Liberal Party thinks that we should take the lead to implement this scheme to prevent the school campus from deteriorating into the haven of drug trafficking or drug abuse.

As for the Report's proposal on empowering enforcement officers to require those who are reasonably suspected to be drug users to take a drug test, the authorities should handle it with extreme caution and careful planning since it involves more controversial elements such as human rights and privacy.

On the other hand, in order to tackle the problem at root, the authorities must make every effort to prevent drugs from entering Hong Kong, especially when the problem of cross-boundary drug trafficking by teenagers is worsening. The data from the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) shows that 647 suspected drug traffickers were arrested last year. Among them, 66 were under the age of 21, which accounts for a rapid increase of 78% over the year before, and the youngest one was only 13 years old. Most of the suspects, who had

travelled to the Mainland to take drugs, were found bringing their unused drugs back to Hong Kong.

Hence, the Liberal Party thinks that the authorities should step up the inspection work at various border control points to enhance the deterrent effect. At the same time, they should strengthen their co-operation with the law-enforcement authorities on the Mainland, especially the exchange of intelligence and the co-ordination of enforcement work, with a view to blocking the flow of drugs, in order to help reduce the adverse impact of drugs on teenagers.

President, the Liberal Party is also very concerned about the drug scandals in the entertainment circle recently, especially when a singer who had been appointed as an anti-drug ambassador was found in possession of drugs by the police in Japan. That singer even admitted that she had taken drugs for more than a hundred times in the past year. This incident is not only shocking, but inevitably, has also set a bad example for teenagers and struck a blow to the Government's anti-drug promotion.

Nevertheless, the Liberal Party thinks that our society can take this real-life incident as a negative example to teach teenagers a lesson and let them realize the serious consequences brought by drugs, including imprisonment, so as to warn them to stay away from drugs. Of course, the Government should be cautious when it invites singers or artists to participate in its promotional activities in future. It has to know more about their backgrounds and try to find out if they are living a healthy life in order to avoid any embarrassment.

President, the Liberal Party also supports the implementation of additional measures to assist in identifying youth drug users as well as the increase in relevant resources to help teenagers quit drugs and get back to normal life. For example, the authorities may appropriately increase the number of counselling centres, front-line social workers and rehabilitation places to help youngsters who have gone astray to get rid of drugs as soon as possible.

In fact, the Liberal Party thinks that the Government has to carry out measures according to the actual situation of different districts and groups to ensure that its resources will not hit the wrong target. Let me cite an example. Regarding the youth drug problem, now the three worst-affected areas are Yuen Long District, the North District and Kwai Ching District. But among the four counselling centres and substance abuse clinics reopened by the Government

earlier, only one is located in Tin Shui Wai. Therefore, the Liberal Party thinks that the authorities have to allocate resources carefully to prevent the worst-affected areas from being trapped in dire straits due to the lack of appropriate support.

President, although Mr WONG Kwok-hing has left the chamber, finally I would like to respond to his views on minimum wages and drugs. I think these are two individual issues. Even if we have to fight for minimum wages, I would not like to see others thinking that we have to be held responsible for the drug problem because we do not support minimum wage legislation. I think we should not link the two issues together. President, I also believe that the youth drug problem is not only concerning parents from the working class. All parents, whether rich or poor, running their own businesses or working as employees, should be concerned about this problem. This is a problem not only faced by parents from the working class.

Thank you, President.

MS STARRY LEE (in Cantonese): President, today the focus of the media is on the incident that two young lovers addicted to "ice" were suspected to have lost self-control after taking drugs and stabbed one another with knives in Tuen Mun. Both of them were found with multiple stab wounds and the girl was certified dead. In the past, we also heard many news reports such as "13-year-old girl died in disco after taking ketamine" and "Five Secondary Two female students sent to hospital after taking ketamine on school campus". What seems so pathetic is not only the drug abuse behaviour of individual students but also the new trend reflected by these incidents. This trend, which has a far-reaching impact, shows that some teenagers do not have a clear concept on drug use and never know if it is right or wrong. It also reveals that drug use has already become a subculture that teenagers just see it as a normal practice or even a common social behaviour among peers and friends.

In fact, how devastating is this vicious trend? The data provided by the Narcotics Division has clearly answered the question. Over the past four years, the reported number of drug users under the age of 21 had increased by 57%. Among them, 26% were students. Moreover, the number of first-time drug users under the age of 15, of whom nearly two-third were students, had risen from 34% in 2006 to 38% in 2008.

At the end of last year, the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse led by the Secretary for Justice WONG Yan-lung released a report of 183 pages, which suggests a "five-pronged" strategy along with over 80 proposals to combat the youth drug problem in all domains. On the whole, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) thinks that the report is comprehensive and has fundamentally responded to the needs of various parties. Besides, for any proposals that will help combat youth drug use, including the motion and amendments proposed by our Honourable colleagues today, the DAB is always ready to give our support.

Now I would like to use the following time to concentrate on expressing the DAB's views on the anti-drug measures for schools and the cross-boundary drug trafficking problem.

President, according to the survey conducted by two drug rehabilitation schools last year, 23% of the secondary schools in Hong Kong had experienced the problem of student drug use and 37 of them had found student drug dealers selling drugs in school. This data came out as a big shock to our society. However, when responding to my question last month, the Security Bureau just gave us a totally different picture. It said that last year the police just handled 15 drug abuse cases in schools, and that there were only six drug trafficking cases on school campuses. The numbers are surprisingly low. With such a big difference between these two groups of data, does it reflect the schools' incapacity to effectively identify the drug-addicted students or the police's inability to combat the youth drug problem? Or are there other reasons? I hope the authorities will look into the matter in detail and find out the reasons for such a big difference. If there is any underestimation, it will affect their decision in the allocation of resources and efforts for combating the drug problem and thus substantially reduce the effectiveness of the anti-drug measures.

Furthermore, we should also address squarely the question of whether the authorities have provided schools with sufficient resources for combating the drug problem. Under the existing Police School Liaison Programme, 59 liaison officers are responsible for the liaison work of more than 1 200 schools in Hong Kong and actually faced with tremendous difficulties. Although an addition of 27 liaison officers have been recruited by the police recently, considering the workload of each liaison officer who on average has to take care of 15 schools, we believe that it is hard to achieve the goals of timely assistance and effective follow-up.

As for the school drug testing scheme mentioned by Mr WONG Sing-chi, the DAB agrees that it will facilitate the early identification of drug users in schools. But we also understand that this scheme has aroused great controversy. For example, schools might be concerned about the possible labelling effect created by the scheme, while parents also worry that schools will use the drug test results as the evidence and justification for expelling their children. Therefore, we would like to emphasize that the drug testing scheme must be carried out on a voluntary basis. We believe only through the co-operation between different parties, including schools, parents and students, can we reach a consensus on the scheme and implement it in an effective way.

President, to combat the spread of drugs, apart from focusing on schools, we should also pay attention to the problem of cross-boundary drug trafficking. The data provided by the C&ED shows that the number of teenagers arrested for cross-boundary drug trafficking last year was 80% more than the year before, and the amount of ketamine seized also increased 11 times compared with the previous year.

Regarding this issue, the DAB made a proposal on combating cross-boundary drug abuse in as early as 2007. In the proposal, one of our suggestions is that the authorities should discuss with the Mainland ways to strengthen their co-operation so that the information on the teenagers arrested for cross-boundary drug abuse can be sent back to Hong Kong. In this case, the parents of these teenagers will be informed and appropriate rehabilitation service can be arranged.

As for the proposal on increasing the number of social workers and providing them with support mentioned by Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che and Mr CHAN Kin-por, it has our full support. Apart from this, we also think that the scope of cross-boundary outreach counselling service should be further broadened. Since more and more teenagers travel to the Mainland to take drugs, it is difficult for social workers to cope with the situation. The DAB urges the authorities to encourage and subsidize community groups to provide cross-boundary counselling service. Besides, assistance should also be provided for the formation of a special team of cross-boundary outreach social workers, who can visit the local communities in Hong Kong and mainland China to provide immediate counselling service for suspected cross-boundary drug abusers.

Finally, I notice that there has been a significant increase in the number of youth drug users in various districts. The number of youth drug users in Sham Shui Po, in particular, increased more than 1.2 times in 2008 compared to the year before. The rise is much faster than that of other districts. Why is it so? Have the authorities formulated relevant policies according to the district's situation? It is hoped that the Secretary will pay more attention to this.

President, as a mother, I am so sad to know that the youth drug abuse problem is getting more and more serious. No mother would like to see her children taking drugs, right? Therefore, our society must make the greatest effort and try all means to protect our children from the hazards of drugs. To perform this task, I believe we will face big challenges. It is hoped that all of us, from all walks of life, can work together to tackle the problem. I so submit.

MR CHEUNG KWOK-CHE (in Cantonese): President, it is indisputable that psychotropic substances have invaded school campuses. The statistics provided by the Narcotics Division show that the number of student drug users has been increasing, and for those under the age of 21 in particular, there was a 15% increase in 2008 compared to the year before. Moreover, yesterday a newspaper reported that the trend of drug use had invaded tertiary institutions, which had recorded a 60% annual increase in the number of drug abuse cases. Some tertiary students even said that in a class, two-third of the students were drug users. So we can imagine how serious and urgent the problem is regarding the intrusion of psychotropic substances into schools. Faced with the spread of drug use among students, many people, I believe, will suggest measures such as cracking down on the source of drugs, increasing channels for timely identification of drug users, enhancing rehabilitation counselling service and other downstream rehabilitation services as well as strengthening strategies on community education and other areas so as to rebuild a healthy campus for the young generation.

We know that under the existing circumstances, if some student psychotropic substance users seek help from the social worker in school, they will not only face the risk of being requested to withdraw from school but also the possibility of being labelled by schoolmates. The existing drug testing and rehabilitation services are acutely inadequate. Therefore, in order to solve the problem that we are facing, an appropriate increase in the allocation of resources is a must.

Although the voluntary drug testing scheme can help us identify the student drug users as soon as possible so that we can provide them with the suitable rehabilitation service, we worry that some schools, in order to safeguard their prestige, will use this as a strategy to request the student drug users to leave. On the other hand, the scheme has to truly respect the will of students and the schools cannot give students any indication of threats or compulsory actions. As intermediaries, social workers may handle or resolve these structural contradictions.

We know that now there are seven counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers subvented by the Social Welfare Department and five Substance Abuse Clinics under the Hospital Authority. They provide territory-wide services, including rehabilitation treatment, counselling and necessary psychiatric treatment, which are very useful to the youth drug abusers. However, some outreach social workers told me that due to the limited resources of the Substance Abuse Clinics, drug users usually had to wait for three months before they could be referred to the clinics for drug testing. They said that the waiting time for referral to rehabilitation centres was even longer that it completely failed to meet the needs of today's teenagers who believed in the doctrine of "just do what you want to do". Hence, there is an urgent need to provide more resources for Substance Abuse Clinics and the social workers' counselling service.

If drug testing and rehabilitation are just stop-gap measures, then the real solutions to the problem are prevention and education. Case examples show that teenagers usually start to abuse drugs due to academic problems, low self-esteem, failed romance or unhappy family life. If school social workers can provide more training to help students build up life skills and confidence, and if mutual trust can be established between them, students will not be influenced by peers and resorting to drugs so easily when they encounter problems. Since the teenagers today are facing so many temptations and challenges in society, the measure of "one social worker for each school" is far from enough to meet the needs of the schools with serious problems. Besides, social workers can also let teachers and parents know more about the hazards of drugs and the reaction of teenagers after taking drugs, which will help prevent the problem from worsening. We all know that we cannot only rely on school social workers. For youth drug users who are not willing to go to school or those highly addicted to drugs, both daytime and evening outreach social workers are the ones they have to count on. In fact, the support of government departments is needed.

Some outreach social workers had tried to contact some cross-boundary youth drug users at places near to the entrances and exits of the closed areas to see if any counselling work could be done, but the Government seemed to have big difficulties in offering support and they finally failed to come into contact with those teenagers.

Lastly, we have to point out that school drug use is a problem that needs to be handled with great attention and extreme caution. The Government should immediately communicate with professionals such as teachers, psychiatrists and social workers, and at the same time, increase the allocation of resources so as to build a healthy campus environment for students.

I would also like to use the rest of my speaking time to express to the Secretary for Justice and Secretary for Security my opinions on Christian Zheng Sheng College, which has been mentioned by many Honourable colleagues just now. In fact, Christian Zheng Sheng College is an institute without special subventions and it has been facing difficulties in expansion recently. Since the Southern District Secondary School in Mui Wo has been vacant, Christian Zheng Sheng College is applying to use the premises of that school for expanding its service. However, some residents in the district oppose the proposed expansion for several reasons. Firstly, they think that it will lead to a drop in property prices. Another reason is that the achievements of Christian Zheng Sheng College might make teenagers believe that drug abuse is no big deal and never a problem as they can use the college's service whenever they need it. I think such views actually reflect our inadequate efforts in community education. I hope the two Secretaries will look into this individual case and support Christian Zheng Sheng College's expansion so as to ensure that its service will not be affected due to the lack of space.

I so submit.

MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): President, today if we still have to collect information and statistics to prove the seriousness of the youth drug abuse problem, it means that we really lag behind and fail to face the reality of our society. Many Honourable colleagues have mentioned the issue. In fact, not only the Honourable colleagues but also the existing situation in our society has told us that the problem is very serious and that we have to face it and handle it

without any delay. In view of this, today we should not waste any more time discussing the number of drug users. Instead we have to find out solutions to prevent teenagers from continuing to abuse drugs. Only this is the right direction.

Mr CHAN Kin-por said that in order to solve the problem, we had to pay attention to several factors, including parents, families, schools and social workers, which were all very important. I very much agree with his views because apart from peers and friends with whom the teenagers spend most time, parents, families and schools also play an important part in their life. Therefore, if we can put more effort in this area, I believe it will help curb youth drug abuse effectively. Unfortunately, the Government's direction in tackling this problem is wrong. It does not mean that its direction is not right, but just not right enough. Why do I say this? Today we can see that during the discussion on the youth drug abuse problem, only the Secretary for Security and the Secretary for Justice are present. It gives us a feeling that the problem of drug abuse has been put on the legislation and law-enforcement level. As for other areas, it seems that they are considered of no importance. Of course, it does not mean that legislation and law enforcement are not important. However, we cannot help teenagers get rid of drugs only through these means. The most important of all, as said by Mr CHAN Kin-por, is whether the parents can spare more time to look after and care for their children, and whether they can notice the children's problems and provide timely assistance. In fact, as mentioned by Mr WONG Kwok-hing, in order to cope with the financial pressure on the family, parents, especially those at the grass-roots level, usually do not have time to deal with the problems faced by their children in their growing up. Therefore, his suggestion of minimum wages and restricted working hours is neither elevating the issue nor linking everything to minimum wages as Mr Tommy CHEUNG said. I only think that what Tommy CHEUNG said just reflects the rich's ignorance of the poor's sufferings. He does not know that in order to make ends meet, grass-roots families have to work around the clock and do not have any time or chance to care about the development of their children, even if they want to. Therefore, this is very important. But unfortunately, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare has not attended this meeting to hear our views and thus not able to address the issue accordingly.

In fact, we are not just asking for minimum wages. What is the meaning of minimum wages? It means the basic protection given to a family to ensure

their livelihood. It means parents do not have to travel here and there and work around the clock so that they can talk and listen to their children. We often hear it on television that parents should listen to their children. But how can they spare time to do so? Working for 13 hours a day, how can they have time to listen to their children? So this is really a problem.

Many Honourable colleagues have just asked why the teenagers take drugs. One of the reasons is that they are in lack of family warmth and parents' care. When they think that they can get love and care from peers and friends, they will be deeply influenced by them. Therefore, if we only talk about legislation and testing today, we are going in the wrong direction and our focus is wrong. To make it right, we have to start with the families. Of course, it does not mean that the problem will certainly be solved if the parents have more time and a better livelihood. Parents also need our support to help them communicate with and provide assistance to their children. In view of this, other kinds of support such as the support of social workers are also essential. For instance, social workers may assist parents in communicating with their children so as to help them lead a healthy life. This is very important. Unfortunately, we do not have the right Secretary from the right Bureau here today to handle this issue.

The role of schools is even more important. However, as teachers or the school management have to handle a lot of administration work, they are not able to cope with the examination pressure. Even if they can cope with the examination pressure, they cannot cope with the needs of the large number of students. How can a teacher deal with so many students? That is why we call for the early implementation of small-class teaching as we hope that teachers can have more opportunities to come into contact with students. This is of the utmost importance. Nevertheless, the Government kept on saying that small-class teaching would not be able to improve the academic performance of students. I think it is not easy to have improvement in academic performance, which involves many factors. A lot of students who have private tutors are still not able to make obvious improvement. Some of them even receive one-to-one tutoring. So that is not what we mean. What we mean is that small-class teaching can offer teachers more opportunities to build a good relationship with students so as to arouse their interest in studying or help them set their life goals. This is actually the most important thing. Our efforts are inadequate in this area because the Secretary did not listen to our views and thus chose the wrong direction.

Finally, I would like to talk about the issue of voluntary drug testing. Though it is said to be voluntary, it is actually not so. Why? It is because while parents can sign the agreements with schools on a voluntary basis, students do not have the choice. They are forced to do it. I hope the Secretary can pay attention to a point: if a student is suspected and requested to do the test, and as long as their parents have signed the agreement, he has to do it even if he is not willing to. The point is that if the test result is drug-positive, the student certainly will not say anything, but what if it is negative? It will result in the worsening of conflicts between students, teachers, schools and parents as well as the complete loss of mutual trust. Eventually, our education work will become 10 times harder in the future. Some students even said that they would not do anything but just stay away from school. It makes me worry that a truancy problem may arise. I so submit.

PROF PATRICK LAU (in Cantonese): President, recently there have been a series of negative news reports on the collective drug use of secondary students and the arrest of teen idols for drug possessions, which has aroused concern about our young generation's understanding of the hazards of drugs and their misconceptions about drug use.

I think one of the important issues is the skew of the entire education system. Students in school have to face the pressure of examinations, tests, dictations and homework. The primary school syllabuses are so difficult to manage that students do not want to go to school or even try to ease their pressure by taking drugs together. In fact, if more parent-child and extra-curricular activities can be arranged to help balance their physical and psychological development, and if inspirational teaching methods can be applied to arouse their interest in learning, we can surely encourage them to take the initiative to learn, and most important of all, to enjoy learning. When students no longer have to escape the responsibility of studying by taking drugs, lawless elements will not be able to take advantage of them.

Now, many schools require students to do learning reports, which allow teenagers to learn from real examples through collecting information and conducting interviews. I think that this learning method should be promoted to all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. By requesting students of different levels to do learning reports on anti-drug promotion, we can encourage

them to find out more about the hazards of drugs through the process of information collection so as to adjust their perspective on drug use.

President, to address the issue of school drug use, we cannot only rely on school education. The co-operation of parents and people from all walks of life is needed to combat the problem. For instance, the school drug testing scheme proposed recently is opposed by parents and headmasters, who fear that it will create a labelling effect. If parents are really unwilling to let their children undergo the test, then every school may consider training or raising a drug detector dog, which can work as a gatekeeper at the entrance of the campus every morning. This may ensure that no drugs can be brought to school.

Apart from avoiding the further spread of drugs in schools, it is also important to help youth drug users get rid of drugs and turn over a new leaf. Many Members have just mentioned that in Hong Kong, there is only one drug rehabilitation school which is run by a church at its own costs. Named as Christian Zheng Sheng College, the school aims at encouraging drug users to return to school and stay away from drugs. After rehabilitation and with the knowledge learnt in school, they can reintegrate into society and turn over a new leaf. However, the college, which originally provided spaces for 30 students only, now is over-enrolled with about 120 students. Besides, due to the lack of funds and support, the college is applying for relocation to a vacant school site but faced with the opposition of the residents in the district. Even if it wants to help more students, it is not able to do so. Many Members have just mentioned this.

The key point lies in whether the Government's support is adequate. If the Government is really committed to combating the problem of youth drug use, should it directly subsidize a drug rehabilitation school through the allocation of funds instead of ignoring the issue? In fact, for the teenagers who have gone astray, we must provide them with the opportunities to start again and encourage them to reintegrate into society instead of neglecting them and eventually creating a heavy burden for the public.

President, I went with police officers of Yau Tsim Mong districts to a late-night venue for inspection earlier and found many boys and girls under the age of 20 still hanging out there after 2 am. The investigators of the Police Narcotics Bureau told me that late-night venues were the source of drugs for youngsters. In films, we can see that the triad societies, taking advantage of the

young generation's liking for hanging out as well as their weakness of being easily influenced by peers and friends, tempt teenagers with drugs at late-night venues.

Hence, in order to solve the youth drug problem, I think the most important of all is to crack down on the source of drugs. Can the Government cut off the source of drugs through certain measures such as stepping up the inspection of late-night venues suspected of importing or supplying drugs? I know that the Secretary has already mentioned many government policies in this area, but do we still have to review the effort we have made in combating drugs to see if it is adequate compared with neighbouring countries or regions? Are the penalties enough? Why could those young singers carry drugs out of Hong Kong so easily? Is it also very easy to bring drugs in?

I think that co-operation in all domains is of the utmost importance. Not only the police, the C&ED and immigration control officers but also social workers, teachers, medical workers, parents, students and people from all strata should co-operate with each other to teach our young generation the positive values of life and encourage them to stay away from drugs. Only through this can we effectively combat the youth drug problem. I so submit. Thank you, President.

MS LI FUNG-YING (in Cantonese): President, although cases of drug abuse in schools have been reported from time to time, the increase in the number of young drug addicts is not unique to Hong Kong. In fact, the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants is spreading on a global scale. To prevent young people from becoming drug addicts in their adolescence is a common problem in modern societies.

News about drug abuse on campus may only be the tip of the iceberg. Information has shown that the number of young drug addicts aged below 21 has increased by 34% over the three-year period before 2007, and in the first half of last year, there was still a more than 20% growth. The drug problem among youngsters has sounded the alarm in the community. The situation is so grim that by the end of last year, the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse (the Task Force) led by the Secretary for Justice published a report entitled "Say no to drugs, say yes to youth", which made a lot of recommendations targeting the problem of drug addiction among young people with a view to helping young

people to stay away from drugs. Among the recommendations, the most significant move was to conduct drug tests in schools. Although the report cited a number of pilot drug testing schemes in the United Kingdom, the United States and other Western democratic countries, it acknowledged a host of controversial problems involving privacy and confidentiality. However, it seems that the controversial testing scheme will surely be implemented. According to media reports, a voluntary trial scheme on school drug testing will be implemented next year at the earliest, and it will be fully implemented in 2011, while public consultation on a compulsory scheme on drug testing will be launched later.

President, I hope the voluntary drug testing scheme in schools can effectively help young people to stay away from drugs. Nevertheless, in the course of implementation, my concerns are how we can ensure that the student drug abusers being identified can receive care and proper treatment, rather than being discriminated against and expelled from schools.

According to the report of the Task Force, instead of schools, the most popular venues for youth drug abuse are homes, entertainment establishments such as karaoke and discos. While the Task Force's report put emphasis on the school-based drug testing scheme, it made very little mention of the entertainment establishment-based drug testing scheme. In fact, if youth drug abusers are identified through drug testing conducted at entertainment establishments, this can avoid problems such as schools and students being stigmatized and discriminated against, and so on. In order to protect young people from abusing drugs, I consider that it is necessary for the Government to study the feasibility of drug testing in this area and put forward proposals to the community for further discussion.

President, the development of young people cannot be isolated from families and schools, and the Task Force's report recommends that measures should be targeted at these two areas, so as to prevent drug addiction among young people, and this is a right direction. Basically, just as any youth-related issue, it is always right to impose more responsibilities on families and schools, but to achieve results, all written proposals must tally with the reality in society. Looking at Hong Kong's actual circumstances, we can see that in most families, both parents have to go to work. Some grass-root workers have to work from morning till night in order to support their families at just a minimum subsistence level, and they have already been weighed down with work. To request their participation in courses so that they will learn the relevant knowledge of drugs

and narcotics as well as observe whether their children are affected by drugs in their daily lives is not easily achievable. Similarly, with regards to schools, teachers now have to cope with a multifarious array of teaching reforms in addition to the heavy work pressure. In the future, they have to assume an even greater responsibility of preventing drug abuse among young people. How the Government should provide adequate resources to alleviate the pressure on teachers is a problem that must be addressed in reality. If all these problems remain unsolved, no matter how good the views of the Task Force are, we will only get half the result with twice the effort in the implementation of the measures.

President, I so submit.

MR CHEUNG MAN-KWONG (in Cantonese): President, the trend of drug abuse among young people has shifted from local karaoke establishments to those on the Mainland. In recent years, it has shifted to schools, where groups of students are found snorting ketamine in schools collectively, and some students have even become street-level traffickers or dealers and carried out drug trafficking activities on campus. Recently, even Canto-pop idols and Anti-drug Ambassadors have found to be drug abusers and traffickers. Young people will follow suit. It is shocking that the trend of drug abuse and trafficking among people who are younger and younger has been developing concurrently with universal education, which is rather saddening.

Students have become the prey of drug traffickers, because ketamine is cheap, and offered for free trial. Drug dealers will recruit students as street-level traffickers. They even set up hotlines to provide express delivery of drugs, and the penetration is rather astounding. Every school has nearly 1 000 students; peer temptation will have a great impact on them. Schools are unlike late night establishments, as the police cannot regularly carry out anti-drug raids. As ketamine abusers have no obvious symptoms at the early stage and students may only be identified after abusing the drug for two to three years, this has resulted in the rapid spread of drugs on campus, and drug abuse has thus become highly infectious in schools.

Two Addiction Treatment Centres (ATCs) in Hong Kong have conducted a survey among a number of students this year, and the figures were ghastly and horrible. Among the 177 students in the ATCs who came from different bands

of schools, including prestigious schools and girls' schools, the average age of drug abusers had dropped to 14 years old or 15 years old. Among them, 91 have used drugs in school, involving 76 schools; while 41 students have committed drug trafficking on campus, involving 37 schools. The figures show that the problem is serious, and yet it is only the tip of the iceberg. How can the education sector not wake up from its slumber? How can this be taken lightly?

I have asked the Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau to conduct surveys in all ATCs, with a view to gaining a comprehensive understanding of the source and distribution of drug abusers and drug trafficking in schools. Although the authorities may make public the overall figures, but they should treat the names of schools involved with strict confidence. Nevertheless, it may bring the problem to the attention of the schools concerned for follow-up actions.

In order to identify student drug abusers and to curb the spread of drug abuse on campus in a speedy manner, the voluntary drug testing in schools is an option which can be considered. According to the findings of the Democratic Party's survey, almost 70% of the respondents supported drug testing in schools, more than half of the respondents considered it necessary to first obtain the consent of schools and parent-teacher associations, and the most importantly, consent must be obtained from the parents for allowing their children to take part in the scheme and to take trial tests in school. We believe that at this stage, we should adopt voluntary drug testing in schools, which will enable schools and parents to sum up experience. On the other hand, it will also allow social work organizations the time to develop school-based addiction treatment and counselling services at the district level, and then determine the anti-drug strategies in schools according to the actual outcome of the scheme.

The purpose of the trial scheme of drug testing in schools is to identify student drug abusers and provide them with treatment as early as possible. The authorities should make it clear that no students will be expelled because of the test result. At present, even student drug abusers are identified in schools, schools often feel helpless and have nowhere to turn to for help due to the lack of a drug addiction treatment support system in the district. A survey conducted by the Caritas also showed that 90% of respondents were in support of drug testing in schools, but 35% worried that their children will be expelled from school. Therefore, I urge the Government to allocate more resources, in order to provide in all districts social work organizations or abuse treatment centres for students and develop referral and outreach counselling services to systematically intervene

in and help schools to deal with minor abuse cases. This should be made a prerequisite for voluntary drug testing in schools, so that the students can stay in school and continue their studies.

Treatment and education should be implemented in parallel. With the average age of youth drug users dropping to 14 years old, and as 12-year free education is provided by the Government for youngsters up to 18 years old, it means that more and more youth drug abusers are students who are attending schools, thus the provision of addiction treatment schools is justifiable. Addiction treatment schools face shortages mainly in respect of land, school premises and resources. Many colleagues have said that although the Christian Zheng Sheng College, an addiction treatment school, produced significant results in the provision of addiction treatment services to students, its students are only granted a monthly tuition subsidy of about \$7,000 as recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance and the amount of subsidies over the past 11 years has not been adjusted, and this is simply not enough to cope with school and accommodation expenses. I have paid a visit to the college, and I have witnessed the poor environment and the safety threats to the school premises. The Government has provided not even the most basic support to these students who wish to turn a new leaf, and it is totally irresponsible. I urge the authorities to set up additional addiction treatment schools in accordance with the needs, provide standard school premises and quarters and provide reasonable assistance, in order to help students to get rid of drugs and enable them to get back to the right track.

The fact that student take drugs and do harm to themselves and even engage in trafficking of drugs are evidence of the failure of education. We must put the focus back on education. For those less competent students or those who find mainstream education not suitable for them, in fact, we have not given them full support. Have they been given the option of alternative education? Each year, 6 000 students who obtained zero points in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination are being neglected, and some 50 000 to 60 000 young night drifters under the age of 18 years are wandering the streets at night doing nothing. They do not want to go home, and they have become the targets of drug traffickers. Has our education extended a warm and supportive hand to these at-risk students? As the New Senior Secondary academic structure is to be introduced shortly, in addition to providing anti-drug education to students, schools need to strengthen the remedial work in education, teach students in accordance with their aptitude, care about them and bring their abilities into full

play. In so doing, the students' immunity to drugs can be strengthened, and ultimately, they will be able to stay away from drugs.

President, I so submit.

DR PAN PEY-CHYOU (in Cantonese): President, as to the seriousness of the youth drug problem, I believe a number of Members have already spoken on it, therefore I am not going to further elaborate it here. What I would like to talk about is how we should address this serious problem. With regard to the structure, the relevant work is carried out by the Security Bureau's Narcotics Division, which co-ordinates the implementation of anti-drug work among various government departments. The Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) is a non-statutory advisory body with limited powers. However, a number of Members have just mentioned that the anti-drug work includes inter-departmental initiatives involving law enforcement, education, health, medical and welfare which requires inter-departmental co-ordination. Therefore, I propose to set up an inter-departmental co-ordinating committee against narcotics. The committee should be a standing committee which assists various departments in the long term anti-drug endeavours.

As for the current service structure, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has set up seven counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers. The Hospital Authority (HA) has also set up seven Substance Abuse Clinics. We have noted the distribution of these clinics and centres and in fact, the New Territories North is not included. As a Member has said, the North District is close to the border and there are many poor families, and youth drug abuse is particularly serious in the district. I therefore consider that services should be extended to the district. Just now I have mentioned the clinics and centres under the SWD and the HA, and their functions and work are duplicated. If we are to use the resources in a more effective way, why do we not combine these two types of centres into, say, integrated service centres for abusers of psychotropic substances to provide support in medical services and social welfare? These centres may also deploy social workers to provide the necessary services to families of the youth in need so as to help their parents. I believe that this will be a more effective way of resource utilization.

From the medical point of view, drug abuse and anti-drug work are psychiatric-related fields. Just now some Members pointed out that the waiting

time for the service was rather long, I therefore propose that the Government should look into the staff establishment and appropriately increase the number of psychiatric health care workers as well as social workers, so that appropriate treatment can be delivered to young people who are willing to receive the service and treatment. The majority of young abusers may control and quit their addiction through out-patient services, but some may require hospitalization or residential services. It is therefore necessary to increase short or medium term accommodation services in this respect in order to help these young people to quit their drug addiction.

With regard to education, we should organize anti-drug education workshops for guidance and discipline teachers in schools to provide them with more information, so as to gear them up to the challenge and to enable them to provide better counselling service to students in schools.

With regard to social workers, as the workload of outreach social workers is extremely heavy and they have contacted many marginal youths, I therefore consider that we should increase their resources in this area. Some anti-drug outreach teams should be set up, so that they can use their professional knowledge to help the needy students. Although the policy of "one social worker for each secondary school" has already been put into effect now, we all know that each school has many students, but when there are nearly 1 000 students, can one single social worker also handle the drug abuse problem in school? I suggest that a full-time or part-time social worker should be added in each school in high-risk districts for work in this aspect.

As for other measures, we know that the Superintendents' Discretion Scheme is a very effective measure. Therefore, we believe that the police should increase the manpower and resources for work in this area. As regards young drug addicts who committed the same offence repeatedly, we should take into consideration whether a legal basis should be provided to subject them to compulsory addiction treatment. Just now some Members have mentioned that there are schools set up to help students to quit addiction, but such services are scarce in Hong Kong. The Government should provide appropriate resources and land to assist the development of drug treatment schools.

In the remaining time, I would like to add some points on the damage caused by drugs. Many young people have a misconception about the hazards of drugs, thinking that these soft drugs are not dangerous. In fact, some of the

drugs most commonly used by young people, such as ketamine or ecstasy, have very harmful effects and, they may even cause sudden death. Ketamine will damage the kidney, bladder, liver and bile duct. Recent studies in Hong Kong showed that it will cause very serious problems. Just Now Dr Joseph LI mentioned that glass powder is mixed with drugs. The actual purpose of doing so is to cut into the nasal mucosa when the abuser snorts the powder, so the drug can reach the brain immediately and therefore it can be absorbed as soon as possible. It can be said that this practice is utterly devoid of conscience, and the ruthlessness is simply terrifying. I so submit.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): President, as we are discussing the issue of youth drug problem today, I would like Members to pay special attention to a social group that has not been mentioned, that is, the ethnic minority groups.

Members may not know that within six short months in 2003, seven ethnic minority youths aged from 15 to 24 — of whom six were Nepalese and one Pakistani — had been killed because of drug abuse by way of injection. However, not much media attention was attracted. One can see that the problem of youth drug abuse actually includes ethnic minorities, and ethnic minorities also need target-oriented schemes to address the drug abuse problem among ethnic minority youths. Unfortunately, as to how serious the problem has developed, no studies have been conducted so far. Although concern groups and organizations which provide services for ethnic minority groups have not conducted any survey to ascertain the number of abusers, they consider that the situation is very serious. In general, Nepalese and Pakistani youths are prone to using cannabis, hashish and heroin, while ethnic Filipino youths will abuse cough syrup and "ice".

With regard to drug abuse among ethnic minorities, I hope the Secretary for Justice will pay special attention to this problem. Because we found that the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse (the Task Force) led by the Secretary for Justice and the Task Force's three-year plan have made no mention of ethnic minorities. Does this reflect that the Government is turning a blind eye to these people, and that it has failed to take them into account at all? That is, does it reflect that the Government has not taken the ethnic minorities into consideration when drawing up the plan? Therefore, I hope that the Secretary for Justice will pay special attention to it.

Another area that the authorities need to pay special attention to is the service providers. The service target of mainstream service providers are mainly ethnic Chinese youths, and ethnic minorities have not been taken into account. The services provided to ethnic Chinese have always failed to meet the needs of ethnic minorities. Besides the drug abuse problem, all other services are also disoriented. As ethnic minorities have their own communities and religions, they simply cannot gain access to services provided by some Christian organizations or ethnic Chinese organizations. Therefore, I consider that the Government should pay special attention to finding ways to encourage social service organizations targeting ethnic minorities to expand their services in this area, so that services for combating drug abuse among ethnic minority youths can also be included.

In particular, I wish to make the following recommendations: firstly, the Government should conduct a study to ascertain the magnitude of the problem and the needs of drug abusers; secondly, education should be stepped up for ethnic minority parents, students and schools on the prevention of drug abuse; and thirdly, efforts should be made to enhance the sensitivity of front-line social workers in racial and cultural issues as well as their acceptance, so that they can provide more services to ethnic minorities. The Government should also step up education and vocational training for ethnic minorities, with a view to putting them back on the right track, as well as provide an opportunity and platform for ethnic minority youths to participate in social activities, including folk dances and cultural performances featuring their ethnic characteristics, so as to give play to their potentials and enable them to better integrate into society. I therefore hope that the Task Force led by the Secretary for Justice will specifically discuss the problem among ethnic minorities.

President, I would also like to talk about the social factors of the youth drug problem. Just now Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that whenever we talked about social and family factors, we would often refer to the minimum wage and invariably escalate the issue. I think whenever Mr CHEUNG hears of minimum wage, he will immediately respond so strongly as if his brain is agitated after sniffing glass powder into the nose. There is no denying that the problem of drug abuse among young people cannot be dealt with only superficially, that is, the questions of how the police should combat triad activities and solve the problem of cross-boundary drug abuse on the Mainland should not be dealt with superficially. The relevant social factors should also be considered.

As to social factors, there are three indispensable aspects: first, family; second, school; and third, cultural, sports and recreational activities. In terms of family, obviously it has to do with how parents are allowed more room to care for their children. But now the problem is that parents have no time at all to care for their children, and inevitably, we have to talk about employment issues. Since parents are exploited by their employers and have to work long hours, how can there be time for these parents? Let us take the catering industry as an example; the working hours are as long as 13 to 14 hours. President, at present, how many hours does half a shift comprise? Half a shift now means nine hours, and a full shift means 14 hours. If both parents have to work long hours, how can there be time for them to care for their children? This is not just the case of the grassroots, but also the problem of the middle class. Because both parents are working in many middle-class families, and their working hours are very long. Both the middle-class and grassroots actually have no time to care for their children. However, there is no law to regulate working hours in Hong Kong, and there is no minimum wage, thus the problem remains that people have no time to care for their children.

The second point is how much care the schools can provide. Just now we have heard many Members talk about the trial scheme of drug testing in schools. What has worried me most? That is, if some students are identified to be drug abusers through the drug testing scheme in school, it may become a scheme to expel them from schools, which will make the whole project meaningless. If a drug testing scheme is put in place, of course, students should participate on a voluntary basis, but the prerequisite is that only the social workers and parents but not anyone else in the school should be informed. Can this be achieved? Only in this way can safeguard. However, we do not wish that the schools will use this as an excuse for expelling student (*The buzzer sounded*) because this can only solve the problem for the schools concerned, not solving the problem of drug abuse.

MR WONG YUK-MAN (in Cantonese): President, speaking of the Task Force led by the Secretary for Justice, we definitely hope that he was really observing Christian benevolence, just as he said in the preface of the report, "he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed". But we all the more hope that "he who poisons others will himself be poisoned." Therefore, we have no objection to the proposal of increasing the penalties on those who sell drugs to youths under

the age of 18. However, how to prevent young people from abusing or using drugs? According to the report, we can see that the most innovative measure is drug testing. What is the problem with drug testing? I think the Secretary for Justice should really think twice. In addition, what approach will be adopted?

Here are the extracts of a blog which I would like to read out to the Secretary for Justice: "as soon as the voluntary drug testing scheme is launched, for students who are considered bad students by teachers and principals will be the prime suspects, and then they will be forced to voluntarily take part in the drug testing. If parents and students are bold enough to refuse to take the test voluntarily, they (the school administration) will deal with the students according to the rules of the school. Within just one day, the student can be alleged to have breached at least 10 school regulations and within just one week, no matter how reluctant he is, he will take the test voluntarily."

The purpose of the drug testing scheme is to empower schools to identify whether the students have come into contact with drugs. In international schools, perhaps this is effective because of the implementation of small class teaching. However, in today's local schools, one teacher has to face 40 students; is he able to help these students to quit their drug addiction? Given tremendous work pressure on the teachers, sometimes even they would want to commit suicide or take drugs, how can they be able to test or identify which students are acting differently and therefore suspect them of abusing drugs, or to spend a lot of time checking whether there are students who look like undesirable elements in each class, right? Or is it that he should co-operate with the police and social workers by taking a look at the students on a daily basis, and if any abuser is found, he should require the student to take part in the voluntary drug testing scheme? If he should do so, our society would be exactly confronting the youngsters.

When students see their parents, they have to avoid them because there is a so-called voluntary drug testing scheme for individual students, and their parents will tell them to participate in the drug test. When schools are to implement the so-called voluntary school-based drug testing scheme, they have to run away when they see the teachers and social workers. Students will certainly run away when they see the Secretary for Justice because you look like a righteous man who is going to "fix" them, right? So students have to run away. When they see the police, they have to run away. Hey, whenever young people see the

adults, they just run away. If you have not come up with specific and feasible measures, if you have not shown empathy to the youths, you will never succeed — this is something I can tell you right now.

Drug testing, hair testing and urine testing will be conducted at check points; of course, they have to be conducted with the help of the police, right? Will the police ask in a friendly and gentle manner: "My little friend, come, you look terrible, have you been doing dope in a karaoke in Shenzhen last night?" The police just do not call this drug abuse, they call it "doing dope". Will they ask in a friendly and gentle manner: "I am helping you out now, come on in, I will do the hair test on you." This is impossible. When the police are facing these young people, of course, they will wear a long face, mate.

Some young people will have their hair tinted and will have tattoos, and when the police see them what do they call the police? They call the police tortoise. They will say, "The tortoise has just messed us around." Young people will ask, "Hey, is it illegal to have tattoos, to wear earrings and to tint hair?" But police do not see things in this way, and they have already been labelled as outlaws and bad guys. So, if you take a look at this, you will see that young people will always be in a confronting position. The well-intentioned measures are meant to do them good, and you love them, but the method adopted by you will do a disservice to them. The method you use is to push them to become confrontational. May I ask, how can we save these youths? Even the blind know that the hazards of drug abuse are devastating; it is a universal problem, right?

As regards the scheme, it will be very clear if one leafs through the pamphlet, but in fact the arguments are just repeated again and again, right? Three methods have been mentioned: the first is voluntary testing, individual-based voluntary testing; another is drug testing in schools; and the third is compulsory testing, right? In fact, when the police raid disco or karaoke establishments now, if they intend to target a disco establishment, a number of youths there will be taken into custody for drug testing. Doctors from the Department of Health will help to test these young people in the discos. Their purpose is neither to help young people quit their addictions, nor to arrest them. Their purpose is to create a situation where people are constantly found to be trafficking drugs and using drugs in this establishment, so that when it applies for

a liquor license next time, it has to close down, OK? This is what the Security Bureau's police have to do. But why are there so many young people hiding in karaoke establishments or discos to abuse drugs? Why?

In this report, about combating the problem in the Mainland, it is said that the source of drugs is from the Mainland. Now that all the substances including ketamine and methamphetamine hydrochloride (ice) are known as drugs; they were called dangerous drugs or whatsoever in the past but now, let us not call them such names. We have to change not only their nomenclature, but also their descriptions. Therefore, all treatment centres will be called drug treatment centres in future, and they should not be referred to as rehabilitation centres. Let us not use these terms anymore, right?

How many things have you done and how many more will be done? Do you dare to negotiate with the Mainland's public security? The Secretary will tell me that he will definitely do so. You may visit Shenzhen's karaoke establishments, because nine out of 10 rooms will provide a plate for customers, which is not for drinking, but for sniffing. Nine out of 10 rooms will have that. A lot of young people in Hong Kong will travel to the Mainland in groups for this purpose. I therefore consider it most important to combat drugs at source. In fact, seven minutes are not enough for me to speak because I do really think that, especially to the parents

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr WONG Yuk-man, your speaking time is up. I must ask you to stop speaking.

MS CYD HO (in Cantonese): The problem of youth drug abuse is in fact not just a problem of drugs, but also an overall problem concerning the growth of young people. Indeed, teenagers have a lot of troubles in puberty; there is peer influence too, and the report of the Secretary for Justice has also mentioned this point. He mentions that youths are facing a lot of pressure, and they feel unhappy and like to seek excitement, which in fact have a common origin. He also mentions about peer influences.

These are just superficial characteristics. Why do teenagers have pressure in their growth? Why do they feel unhappy and have to seek excitement?

Why can they not find the solution when they have all these emotional problems? In fact, not just primary and secondary school students have these problems, university students also have these problems. Students of the University of Hong Kong major in economics and finance told me that they also had these problems. In fact, we have to identify the underlying reasons and tackle the problem at root, and only in this way can we benefit most from education.

In addition, the report has also mentioned peer influence. We have to ask: Why do our young people have no courage to act independently? Why do they have no courage to remain sober among his intoxicated peers and have no courage to go against the prevailing trend by saying "no"? In fact, our education has turned our children into "quails", not daring to speak up; even though they have their own thoughts, they dare not to speak up. When we tell our youths to be self-confident and have the courage to say "no" to drugs, we do not teach them to say "no" to the Government, and we do not teach them to say "no" to the teachers. We have this requirement on the one hand, but we also require them to be absolutely obedient on the other; it is so contradictory that it is impossible to foster their self-confidence.

Similarly, we have seen that the Government has been ploughing the resources into downstream measures only, that is, anti-drug campaigns. In 2008 and 2009, the Government has allocated \$53 million to the Commissioner for Narcotics, and more than \$40 million has been spent. In addition, \$900,000 are spent on this year's pilot scheme, and \$4 million are spent on counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers. However, there are inadequate resources for school teachers and the resources for parental education are also very scarce. I remember this very clearly because I am deeply concerned about family education. In 2000, the Government only allocated \$50 million for a three-year project in this area, but no funding has been made ever since that time. When we talk about helping the parents and formulating family-based policies, we nevertheless resort to judicial and law-enforcement authorities on the youth drug problem, and this will not be a fundamental solution.

The report also mentioned the drug problem in schools. If there are drug dealers in schools, and students are engaging in drug trafficking activities, I think the Government should make it clear that it is a criminal offence which should not be tolerated. If students are found to be participating in drug trafficking in schools, I think it is perfectly alright for the police to clamp down on these

activities in schools, but they should explain to the students their criminal liabilities very clearly. However, this aspect has rarely been mentioned. This issue has been mixed up with the question of drug testing for identifying whether there are student drug abusers in schools; I consider this rather out of place.

A number of Members have mentioned earlier about the stigma effect. What we are most concerned is not the stigma effect caused by the test results. We are most concerned that the testing process will become a means for teachers to single out those "problem" students, and that these students will be singled out and be made to have their hair cut. If the testing process will be used as a means of punishment, the stigma effect will deal a bigger blow to students.

The Secretary has just mentioned a paper issued by the United Nations, which I have a copy at hand. This document is about the discussions in 2004 on ways to prevent drug abuse in schools by a youth organization under the United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime — School-based Education for Drug Abuse Prevention. The paper made it clear that the school is the place to impart knowledge, to influence the behaviour of students, to establish sound values, and enhance students' confidence and self-esteem which eventually help them to stay away from drugs, instead of introducing the police into schools to carry out anti-drug bust and drug testing. Because in the eyes of students, teachers should assume the role of counsellors and educators. However, if we are to encourage teachers to rashly hand over the education work to the police, in the long run, the credibility of teachers in the eyes of students will be greatly reduced.

Similarly, the roles of parents are the same, and the trust between parents and their children is most valuable. Of course, we understand that many parents have long working hours, so I very much agree with the suggestion of Mr WONG Kwok-hing of setting a minimum wage and maximum hours of work. It is a pity he was not in this Council 10 years ago to support the democratic camp's proposed legislation on minimum wage. I hope that before parents handing over their relationship with their children to the police, they should understand that it will have an utterly negative impact on their mutual trust for a lifetime. I hope that parents groups will think carefully before giving their support to random testing in schools. What young people need most is the trust and respect from adults, and if the adults have no respect for them and do not trust them, they cannot build up self-confidence and will only become more rebellious, and that is

something no one wants to see. Therefore, I hope that the Government will eliminate these contradictions in the overall policy before assistance can be provided for young people to stay away from drugs. Thank you, President.

MR PAUL CHAN (in Cantonese): President, youth drug problem or the abuse of psychotropic drugs among youngsters is the concern of developed countries or regions all over the world, including Hong Kong. The total number of people reported to be taking or abusing drugs has been increasing consistently over the past three years, and the increase is especially obvious in the total number of adolescent abusers who are aged below 21. According to figures from the Central Registry on Drug Abuse Information (Central Registry) of the Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau, it was reported that nearly 3 500 adolescents had taken drugs last year, representing a year-on-year increase of as much as 24.2%.

Quite a number of surveys conducted in the community found that youngsters started to take drug mostly out of curiosity or due to peer influence. Once they become addicted to drugs, not only would they be affected, but their families and society at large would also be seriously affected. It is even found that there has been a lowering in the age of adolescents who took drugs for the first time, with the average age found to be 14 years old, which is actually extremely shocking. A lot of surveys also found that parents could not tell whether their children had taken or abused drugs until their children were arrested for possession of drugs.

Besides, data from the Central Registry of the Narcotics Division showed that there were relatively more reported cases of adolescents taking or abusing drugs in the New Territories such as Yuen Long, North District, Kwai Tsing and Tuen Mun; however, the survey conducted earlier jointly by Lutheran Tsing Yi Center, the Hong Kong Christian Service PS33 and Christian Zheng Sheng College found that the youth drug or drug abuse problem which previously occurred mostly in the North District has now spread to schools all over Hong Kong, especially to Band One schools in the Southern District of Hong Kong Island. There were even reports in newspapers earlier that referrals on student drug cases had been made by half of the schools in the Southern District, which had become a gravely affected area on Hong Kong Island. This reflects that the problem is no longer confined to certain districts or school banding.

In the past, the Legislative Council had listened to the views of quite a number of organizations and front-line social workers who mostly held the view that preventive education was of paramount importance and believed that on top of the support and concern from family members, prevention work could be more effective if timely support could be given to the adolescents as early as possible to help them establish a more healthy lifestyle. However, as stated in Mr CHAN Kin-por's amendment, for preventive measures to be effective, it is necessary for the Government to allocate additional resources for the social workers, particularly school and outreaching social workers, as well as educate parents on knowledge of drugs.

As far as allocation of additional resources is concerned, in its written reply to Members' questions on this year's Estimate of Expenditure, the Government pointed out that since in the period from 2005-2006 to 2007-2008, the number of actual cases had remained steady, there was no plan to increase resources for the "one social worker for each school" policy. This has undoubtedly cast doubts on how determined the Government is to combat the youth drug or drug abuse problem. Earlier on, a survey conducted by Lok Heep Club of Caritas found that 20% of the parent interviewed would seek assistance from social workers or other professionals when they discovered that their children took or abused drugs. To whom would the student abusers turn most directly for assistance on campus and to whom could they turn for professional counselling? The answer is school social workers and outreaching social workers. It is further pointed out by social workers of Lok Heep Club that in general it takes social workers two years to familiarize themselves with the skills to identify youth drug abusers. So, it would be rather difficult for those who have not been trained (such as parents) to find out whether their children take or abuse drugs.

Some 70 five-pronged anti-drugs proposals were made in the Report of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse published last year by the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse (the Task Force) led by Mr WONG Yan-lung, Secretary for Justice, which will be discussed next week by the Panel on Security. However, before this Council debates this topic, the authorities will first explain to Members the progress of the proposals, which will mostly be launched consecutively in the latter half of this year. If possible, I think the Government should have the relevant proposals implemented as soon as possible, including the setting up of the voluntary school-based drug testing scheme for local schools, because the unemployment rate will increase naturally as the economy is bad and the summer holiday is approaching, which may worsen the drug abuse problem.

As far as penalty is concerned, I find the proposal of the Task Force agreeable, including implementing the two years' pilot project at the magistracies for reinforcing the assistance rendered to youths who take or abuse drugs, and to arrange visits to drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation facilities for them. However, I reckon that the Government could further consider having youths who succeed in quitting drugs to conduct schools visits to relate on a voluntary basis their own experience and consequences of taking or abusing drugs. This is believed to be a more convincing way in letting students to learn about the harm brought about by drug intake or drug abuse.

Nevertheless, in the event that not much effectiveness is attained upon the implementation of the measures suggested by the Task Force, I would concur with the Administration borrowing the example of the neighboring regions to adopt more serious measures to combat the youth drug or drug abuse problem.

President, I so submit.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): President, the Secretary for Justice WONG Yan-lung quoted Proverbs of the Bible: "he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed"; and "..... did not come to be served, but to serve" also comes from the Bible. This is in fact very simple. In his blissful life surrounded by celebrities, the Secretary for Justice will only cut the ribbons or attend grand banquets; how would he understand the psychology of the youths, especially those who are excluded by society and who are deprived of appropriate education?

The attitude of Mr WONG, the Secretary for Justice, is just like the severe God in the Old Testament of the Bible. It is not like the spirit of Jesus in the New Testament of the Bible. According to the New Testament, those who do not believe in God would have no good ending; however, it is different in the New Testament, in which Jesus approached the public in Messiah and kissed the lower limb and even washed the feet of a woman who was looked down upon. What the Secretary for Justice has read is definitely the Old Testament, which resembles drugs testing, in that one has to offer his own son and kill his own son before he would be regarded to be God-fearing. Hence, in fact, there are various kinds of religions, one of which is the belief that an all-mighty God would penalize all kinds of acts which in God's view should not be performed. Frankly speaking, threatening non-believers by hell or purgatory would only push more

people into believing in black magic, rather than inducing changes in them. This is the latest development of modern religion — focusing only on the present life but not the next life.

Mr WONG Yuk-man said just now that in Shenzhen there would be nine "plates" in 10 rooms — the nine plates are used for inhaling ketamine. I would like to ask Secretary Ambrose LEE and Secretary for Justice WONG Yan-lung whether they had visited Shenzhen to have a look or ask their young cadres (this terminology is very popular nowadays) to check out the situation and take some photos back. I would like to appeal to all of you that young people crossing the border to take drugs is a problem. Even if we do not do something for the Hong Kong public, we should do something for the people of Shenzhen and for our nation at large. Would it be good for adults or youths in Shenzhen to take drugs? This "trend" has become obvious. If the drug problem is extremely severe in Shenzhen, why do we not conduct tests at the border? Would they not feel ashamed? Would they not consider it necessary to remind the public security officials at Shenzhen or Guangdong Province (public security official CHEN Shaoji had been arrested)? Pool governance results in the proliferation of drugs. Why is there no regulatory and monitoring work? Instead of just touching the cat's bottom, why do they not touch the tiger's bottom?

The first thing to do to combat drugs is to block it at source. However, this is not done at present, that is, this has not been attained. Just as Mr TSANG went to the Mainland and with just half of his buttock on the sofa, he held a notebook in his hand and asked Mr CHEN about their anti-drug activities. He would certainly reply that great effectiveness had been achieved, that drugs were not found on the streets but only in karaokes. Excuse me, that is hypocrisy. There is no mentioning about people who, through their privileges, continuously manufacture drugs and bring drugs to Hong Kong. Would Jesus do that? Would Jesus accuse only those of a low status but not others? He accused the publicans and Pharisees but not those who are pitiful. This is the first point.

The second point is that this Council is kind of strange because while the expenditure on education, social service, and so on, have been cut in the Budget that has just been passed, which means that services could not be increased according to tasks and the needs of society, but now, it says that anti-drug work must be carried out. Hey man, how much resource could be allocated? Even small-class teaching was negated and said to be unimportant. Secretary, and

Secretary for Justice, it is precisely for this reason that small-class teaching must be implemented; while the Secretaries may have the time to chat with their children, many people are deprived of this opportunity. Mr Tommy CHEUNG is even more ridiculous; buddy, nowadays working hours are long while wages are low, and there is poverty. One-fifth of our population are in poverty, and there are 500 000 workers in poverty. You are insensitive to all these. The other day when we discussed the minimum wage with Donald TSANG, I said to him, "Enact the law quickly! Many people could no longer hang on and are about to die. Be careful that you will die!"

Would a delay in the minimum wage legislation not mean that more people would have to work 15 to 16 hours a day, and have to leave their children to nobody's care? Nevertheless, he is still indifferent towards the issue. The issue of maximum working hours is even more ridiculous. In the 19th century, workers in Europe and the United States already fought for the eight-hour day and the world went on strike together. Tomorrow is the anniversary of this movement. But there is no way for this antique from Europe to be transported to Hong Kong, man. What else can we say? The world of the youths is a reflection on the word of the adults.

Besides, my request for the problem of alcoholism to be dealt with has been refused. Many medical evidences from the West have proven that alcoholics take drugs in an attempt to quit alcohol. Alcoholism is not considered a problem; may I ask how many treatment centres there are for alcoholics? There is only one which is attached to a methadone center. What in fact are they doing? The Secretary for Justice wants to be the LIN Zexu of modern times, right? He does not care about the rest; nor does he do anything about the various laws in Hong Kong which violate human rights conventions. He does not make legislation; he does not localize the law; what has been done is only replacing the good law with bad law, and he just keeps on sitting idly by.

Our anti-drug work does not focus on the source; it does not focus on education or social services. In passing such motions, Members have subject children of the poor and middle-class families to sufferings. Today, on the contrary, they nevertheless stand up and say that something has to be done. What dignity is there to speak of in this Council which is hypocritical and worse still, it has even voted for the Government

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, your speaking time is up.

MRS SOPHIE LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, after listening to such an agitated speech, perhaps Members should listen to my voice with which I never manage to shout. I know nothing about speaking softly, Chairman of the House Committee.

However, I think the Chairman of the House Committee was right, we need to calm ourselves down and look at this youth problem in a peaceful way. Just now we have talked about a lot of issues concerning Jesus Christ and the Bible, perhaps we may now look at this matter from the cause-and-effect or seed-and-fruit perspective. It seems that this issue is related to the Security Bureau alone or even this well-intended report written by the Secretary for Justice. If this is the case, it would be better to say that we are just keep on pressing for a bigger effect or "fruit". However, please do not forget that the "fruit" is no longer on the tree. Will it not be better for us to look at the cause of this "fruit"?

Many anti-drug agencies, NGOs and individuals have been making high-profile announcements about their ongoing anti-drug work and assistance given to youngsters, but as a matter of fact, I wonder whether they know the anguish and desolation that these young people feel deep down in their heart. Just now a lot of Members from the labour sector have made use of this issue to put over their ideas, saying that working hours are long, life is short and it is difficult to make money. In that case, people should not make so much money. However, I understand that my remarks will be criticized. However, do parents really need to spend a lot of time on their children? I remember that when I had to stay late and work almost the whole night in the beginning, I spent very little time with my children. All I could do was to write a note to express concern for them. At that time, computers were not yet popular. Every morning, I would leave them a note or two, and when I got home at night, I would also leave them a note or two. I am not saying that I am a good mother, because I also understand that to support a family is a very difficult task. However, President, I have been engaging in youth work for more than a decade, and I think present-day parents are actually treating the matter lightly; that is why the teachers are also treating the matter lightly and have become indifferent. In the final analysis, why do parents give birth to children? If we always discuss these issues here and then

ask the Government to do this and that, frankly speaking, the Government can only adopt measures in accordance with existing policies or legislation. Do we want the Government to impose more regulation? If this is the case, the Government will be fiercely dressed down by Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung for being inhumane. So, what exactly do we want? I really do not know.

I consider that we must look at the facts from the root cause. So, I hope that the Secretary for Justice and the Secretary will urge those anti-drug agencies or youth associations to truly take actions. You need not make the appeal, but they should make the appeal, and they should be asked to discuss each case with the young people thoroughly, in order to find out the roots of their distress. If this problem is unresolved, it will be a never-ending task even if we keep on conducting anti-drug publicity activities and arresting young people. No matter what measures are implemented at the boundary, drug traffickers will certainly work out counter-measures. They may perhaps import drugs to Hong Kong via Macao, or they may resort to smuggling by sea transport.

President, I have hosted many activities, including activities to promote communication in Tin Shui Wai targeting at schools, students and parents. We produced a three-hour program called "the TONE in Communication", and every alphabet had its meaning. We found that it was very effective. No matter how short the time is, as long as parents and children can communicate and understand each other at home, it will make a difference, and it will be a big help to the mindset of the children. Therefore, I consider that we need to seize the opportunity to conduct parental education. However, parental education available now is rather superficial, and yet various government departments have allocated a lot of resources to it. Therefore, those who have been given the resources but have not earnestly carried out work in this area should really receive a good flogging.

In addition, I would like to say that self-confidence of young people is not tantamount to saying "no" to society, to the Government and to various agencies; this is mere sophistry. They should understand more about their responsibilities and rights as a member of the community, as well as the responsibilities and rights as students. More importantly, they should learn how to make self-improvement and pursue knowledge, and they should also identify their goals in life at an earlier stage. However, it seems that none of these have been achieved by them. I have contacted some secondary school students, especially Band Three students — President, I am pleased that I have met 2 800 secondary

school students this year. I do not only have contacts with them, as I have also been getting along with each student for three to four months. Through the ambassadors of our company, we have been getting along with each other for three or four months, and we hope to change them and teach them to look for their goals in life. We can do it, so why does everyone not do the same? Why do organizations receiving government resources not do the same?

President, another thing I would like to comment on is that many youth workers and agencies have all along been thinking about the top-notch students only. When the Chief Executive visit them, they will only arrange for him to meet the top-notch students. When representatives from government departments visit them, they will also make the same arrangement. So, only elites will be given attention in any case. Then, what about those who are not top-notch? Will this not put much bigger psychological stress and burden on them? Why should they just think about the top-notch students all the time? Why do we not introduce more support programmes for the poor performers?

President, I hope that from today onwards, everybody will learn more about the mentality of our young people.

MISS TANYA CHAN (in Cantonese): President, when discussing the problem of youth drug abuse, many people will naturally shift the responsibility to young people. The labels of "naughty", "bad" and even "hopeless" are often put on young drug abusers. It is also considered to be a sheer waste of time to pick out and penalize them. That said, has the Government undertaken sufficient work in this regard? Is it the best solution for the Government to bring these young people to drug tests prior to undertaking sufficient work?

When it comes to the problem of youth drug abuse, I hold that the Government has not undertaken sufficient work in such areas as anti-drug raids, as well as counselling and treatment services.

Let me tell Members a joke. I recall that at the beginning, I had no knowledge of ketamine. On one occasion, having heard some friends of mine raise similar questions, I asked one of them how many tablets of ketamine were pocketed by him, but my question was met with my friends' surprising gaze. Subsequently, I was told that the quantity of ketamine was not measured by the number of tablets but by weight. At that time, I still had no idea as to the form

and shape of ketamine. Later, having become a Legislative Council Member, I needed to make some preparations for my work and that was why I joined a team of social workers from the Youth Outreach in locating marginal youths, that is, visiting them. We started off at 11 o'clock at night and had come into contact with many young people thereafter, including those who had weaned themselves off drugs. I have also met with a number of social workers and many problems have gradually come to my knowledge.

Let me first speak on anti-drug raids. According to the figures provided by the Customs and Excise Department, between January and September 2008, there were 492 drug-related cases and 477 people were arrested in this connection. Despite the slight increase in these two figures, the value of the drugs seized declined significantly by two thirds, amounting to some \$57 million only. These statistics indicate the fact that there is much room for improvement in the law-enforcement actions against drugs.

Take a recent incident in which an artist was found to be in possession of drugs in Japan as an example. According to her, she was provided with a one-stop service, which involved placing an order and transferring money. Someone would then have the ordered drugs delivered to her. Does this incident not indicate that something has gone wrong in anti-drug raids and enforcement? If the authorities have dealt with this problem at source and when young people could not have access to drugs, the problem of drug abuse would have been improved significantly. Therefore, it is important to step up the gathering of intelligence, deploy more manpower and allocate more resources to eradicate drugs, especially targeting at the control over the inflow and sale of raw materials and manufactured products of drugs.

In addition to combating this problem at source, preventing young people's first contact with drugs can serve to offer support to young drug abusers. This is also one of the ways to deal with this problem. Many young people linger on the street in the middle of the night for various reasons. In fact, this may make it easy for them to fall into the trap of abusing drugs. As I mentioned just now, I joined several social workers on that occasion and in fact, we went to the North District. We had not seen a large number of young people because of the cold weather that night and that was why many of them were unwilling to stay on the street. However, those social workers also provided certain services to the young people, such as making arrangements for them to sing karaoke or play video games on vehicles, in a bid to attract them to get on those vehicles. I had

an opportunity to get into conversation with some young people, but of course, I was slightly frightened on the first occasion because I had no knowledge of how to start a conversation with them. For that reason, I watched and learned from those social workers ways to engage young people in conversation. In fact, I notice that many young people are pure-minded, and I have heard some social workers say that very often, it is someone who treats young people to drugs while the latter actually have no knowledge of drug abuse. Subsequent to their first attempt of taking drugs, it is easy for them to become addicted. Therefore, we have to be very careful in anything that we do for the first time.

In this circumstance, I believe many outreaching social workers may render assistance to those young people. That said, those responsible for handling the problem of drug abuse only account for a pitifully small number. At that time, we were informed by some social workers with whom we came into contact that the population of the New Territories East amounted to 1 million, but there were only 8.5 social workers, one of whom was even responsible for clerical work. Let us come to imagine this. One social worker is required to serve some 100 000 people. How is he able to do that? Many elderly, middle-aged and young people live in that district and at present, these social workers have to aim their efforts at handling this youth problem. It is impossible for them to discharge their duty in this regard. Outreaching social workers in Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing, when added up, only amount to 10. Is such a situation acceptable?

All this boils down to the very question of resources. At present, only a small number of social workers are undertaking work in this regard. This situation, to a great extent, is attributable to the unsatisfactory working environment and consequently, many talents have left this profession. For that reason, should the Government consider making some improvements on the remuneration packages offered to these social workers? Through this, better support services can be made available to our young people. I hope students can be provided with better support services, whether they are inside or outside schools, thereby preventing their contact — first contact with drugs.

Despite the fact that prevention is better than cure, treatment services are indispensable to those young people who are unfortunately led to abuse drugs. However, such services rendered by the Government and major voluntary agencies are far from satisfactory.

Released by the Audit Commission last year, the Director of Audit's Report No. 50 (the Report) contains information on the work of the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers. Such information highlights the fact that the Shek Kwu Chau Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre, which targets at young people addicted to heroin, currently provides 316 beds. However, its occupancy rate only reaches 65%. In other words, around 100 beds are vacant. On the contrary, its rehabilitation centre, which is designated for providing treatment services to young people, only offers 20 beds and has already stretched to its maximum capacity. Such a situation is only expected and we are aware of it simply by conjecture, without the need of referring to any figures. Obviously, there exists a resource mismatch. As a funding body, the Government really needs to follow up this situation actively.

In fact, I have no idea as to whether or not the Government is aware of the present development trend of drug abuse. That said, I believe the Government starts to realize it now. Although we have heard that more resources and funding will be allocated for this year, according to the information contained in the Report, in the year of 2006-2007, two thirds of the Government's expenses on voluntary treatment and rehabilitation programmes were dedicated to offering treatment services to abusers of heroin. In contrast, the expenses on the provision of treatment to abusers of psychotropic substances amounted to less than 20%. However, it is also highlighted in the statistics that in 2007, abusers of heroin and those of psychotropic substances respectively accounted for 50% of the reported number of drug abusers. The respective numbers of these two types of abusers were almost the same. In fact, the resources allocated to the provision of treatment services are not in proportion to the demand for the same.

In addition, according to the information provided by the Audit Commission, there are seven Substance Abuse Clinics under the Hospital Authority at present. I hope in this regard However, the average waiting time is Young people who are minded to wean themselves off drugs may have to wait for 10 to 15 weeks and in fact, they may encounter some form of dangers during these several months. For that reason, I hope the authorities can conduct a review of this situation and allocate more resources.

President, I wish to put forward my views on the suggestions raised by Mr WONG Sing-chi. Initially, we were concerned about the implementation of the school-based voluntary drug test. However, the explanations offered by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong and him reveal to us the fact that there are many requirements to be met and we feel relieved upon hearing that students still have

the right to choose. We do not want to see the labelling effect come into existence. In addition, if students are unfortunately or fortunately found to have abused drugs, we hope they will not be expelled from school. On the contrary, we hope the community can formulate the most normal and correct approach to assist them in breaking their addiction to drugs, thereby affording an opportunity for them to turn over a new leaf. Thank you, President.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): President, I find today's debate very solid and fruitful, for Members have provided many views. These views are quite unpredictable in that Members have based their views on the information they got, their own assessment and value judgment. Hence, their views are poles apart on several issues. But this is normal.

I have followed these issues for many years. In those few years, Mrs Regina IP was the Bureau Director, so she is also very familiar with these issues. Now, I would like the Government to tell us in detail its stance on these issues. Let me try to list the issues. First of all, how will the Government assess the present situation? For the time being, the more reliable information is obtained from our one and only formal registration centre which also acts as the reporting centre. But according to voluntary surveys conducted by a few addiction treatment agencies, the number of school drug abusers is a few times more than the number reported to this centre. I do not know if the Government finds these voluntary surveys conducted reliable. Assuming that we take a middle-of-the-road approach and even if that is the case, I think the Secretary may still need to increase manpower and resources, just as pointed out by Miss Tanya CHAN. And the manpower and resources may need to be increased substantially.

Regarding drug testing mentioned just now, it is a more controversial issue. I think Members may come to the same conclusion that after implementing drug testing, the problem will not be solved. The actual situation to be reflected by drug testing may give us a fuller picture than what we already know, and thus indicating that the Government is duty-bound to provide adequate resources. As Mr WONG Sing-chi has said, after implementing drug testing, if the authorities only respond that the schools should solve the problem themselves, or that the relevant personnel already shoulder a heavy workload, so you had better try harder and handle these cases yourselves, I am afraid this will only make the problem worse.

Implementing drug testing does not mean solving the problem for good. To a certain extent, prevention and deterrence are necessary after drug testing. We hope that school campuses can be drug-free, but a drug-free campus does not mean a drug-free society. Students may still get drugs from suppliers outside schools. Why then do I still think that achieving a drug-free campus is a strategic step and why do I support voluntary drug testing? Because it is very, very difficult to extensively conduct work on prevention and investigation in the school environment. This is more achievable outside the school campus where the police, the Customs and Excise Department and other parties concerned can play a part. Hence, in the end, drug testing will only be successful if there is adequate manpower and resources.

Moreover, regarding enforcement actions against drugs, that is, combating the sources of drug, I certainly agree with the League of Social Democrats that many sources are from the Mainland, while some are from other places. I think it is a biased view if we say that we cannot play our part because we cannot tackle the sources. In my opinion, the Secretary truly needs to step up discussion with the mainland authorities on combating drugs at source. And I believe that drug abuse in the Mainland is also giving the Central Government a headache. The Central Government has not said that it does not want to tackle this problem. It has not said so. I believe it is also determined to take action as it also finds this a trying issue. Hence, on this issue, we cannot request the Central Government to do its part by tackling the sources of drugs first before we will do our part. I do not think we should do something first before doing another thing. We need to take actions in parallel to tackle the problem.

Moreover, in the past years, I have urged the police and the Customs and Excise Department to fundamentally adjust their manpower, resources and strategies pertaining to anti-drug policies and make focused efforts to tackle youth drug problem, particularly the problem among students. We should fully utilize the aggravating factors for heavier penalty as provided as in the law, and this will require a comprehensive strategy covering intelligence gathering, undercover operations and strategic and manpower deployment. All these should adopt a focused approach. We have not made full use of the law. I am not convinced in this regard. Some say that anti-drug enforcement is not an easy task and they will take follow-up action when there are suitable cases. I disagree that we should only take action when there are suitable cases; but rather, we should target at these cases, so as to tell drug traffickers and those who engage young people in drug trafficking that the police are targeting actions against these

crimes.*(The buzzer sounded)* If these people continue to do so, they will have to consider the price and whether they must sell drugs to young people. What is the higher price they will have to face? I hold that we have to make full use of the law to stop the problem.

Last but not least, I think the resources are inadequate. And I thus would like to listen to the Secretary's analysis. If someone says to us, "This is not true. We believe the curve will move up and down." I know this is exactly the mindset of some officials. They think that if they have to provide more resources when the curve goes up, they will not be able to reduce the resources later. In fact, this is not exactly true. The resources can be adjusted downward. I hope the Secretary can clearly tell us how much resources the authorities will inject. If no resource is deployed for this, it will be impossible to take follow-up actions even if the result of school drug tests is positive. This will only make the problem worse.

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

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): President, regarding youth drug abuse and the drug problem, in my capacity as an ex-member of the Action Committee Against Narcotics and an ex-social worker Like WONG Sing-chi, I am not registered, but I have stopped working as a social worker since 1991 and there was no registration system then. I was registered in Canada and was then a registered social worker in Canada. My master's degree thesis was also about the youth and family.

President, recently, the voluntary drug testing scheme has stirred up much controversy in society. I believe no one will support young people taking drugs, but the drug problem, particularly the problem with the relationship between young people and drugs, must be handled with care. Because in the course of growing up, any subjective wish to control adolescents' behaviour or any attempt to do so through the law, administrative means, public pressure or school regulation may trigger sequelae and cause the situation to rebound. We must handle the problem with care. The urge to rebel in youngsters in their adolescence and their perception towards many issues may be incomprehensive to the adults, especially those powerful, well-respected senior officials or Members

of this Council who have been leading a well-off and blissful life. We must go deep into the grassroots or the circles of youngsters before we can truly understand their thinking.

Many years ago I already brought the youth problem in Tin Shui Wai to the attention of the Government, saying that the problem would break out one day, and that the Government should think about different options of youth work in Tin Shui Wai. But my view was heard but not heeded. Recently, problems have truly broken out, involving bombs, drugs and triad activities, or any problem you can think of. I believe the imminent outbreak of the youth problem in Tin Shui Wai will be the most serious among new towns in Hong Kong in history. If the Secretary does not believe me, just wait a year or two and he will see problems surfacing one after another. Recently, signs such as youth suicide can already be seen.

President, in fact, I have raised this issue a few years ago in, among others, the Panel on Welfare Services, and I have also expressed my view to government officials as well as the Chief Executive in relation to the policy address. But the Government has been tardy and indifferent towards this issue. To put it nicely, it is like a sleeping lion, but in fact, it is a snoring hog. The Government still shows no interest in dealing with this problem.

If the Government will adopt voluntary drug testing to tackle youth drug abuse, I think it is only deceiving itself and playing with concepts. If schools carry out random drug tests, this will never be voluntary. The Government will make administrative arrangement, such as in the form of instructions or policies, to designate certain schools to participate in the voluntary drug testing scheme. So, this is by no means voluntary but rather, schools are semi-coerced or semi-directed by the policy to do so. This will definitely induce a labelling effect. Members of the League of Social Democrats, including our leader WONG Yuk-man and "Long Hair", have raised this point.

I only wish to point out that if voluntary drug testing is to be implemented, as I said just now, we have to consider the chain reaction it may trigger. The youngsters will dodge from the tests. The labelling effect induced by the measure may trigger their emotions and hurt their self-esteem, or it may change their relationships with other social groups or their relationships with school and teachers. Because even if they take drugs In fact, in our course of growing up, we have also come across many examples of people taking cannabis in

secondary schools or universities. In our days, people took cannabis to stress their advocacy for love and peace, but youngsters today who take psychotropic substances react differently. The Legislative Council organized an overseas visit to the Netherlands earlier. Prof LAU and me even went to a café to see how people sell cannabis. Selling cannabis has been legalized in the Netherlands. Young people there do not act violently after taking cannabis. They only regard it as a way to loosen up. In fact, some medical reports claim that taking cannabis is less harmful than drinking or smoking. The harm done by drinking is more serious. Secretary, let me tell you, do not believe Financial Secretary Henry TANG who often says that drinking wine has many benefits. He has saved a few million dollars because he likes drinking red wine. That is why he always says that drinking red wine brings many benefits. The truth is that drinking wine is more harmful than taking cannabis. Government officials often have to suppress certain people because of public pressure or as a way to elevate themselves to a high moral ground. In fact, we hardly know whether they have any scientific support for what they propose. I thus hold that we must thoroughly examine the impact of this scheme.

Of course, the impact of psychotropic substances on young people is substantial. Suppression is necessary. Just as "Long Hair" said, we must suppress the source. I can accompany the Secretary to go to the Huanggang Control Point at 1 am and he will see large groups of youngsters queuing up there. One night about two weeks ago, I was there at 12:30 am on my way to Hong Kong. I saw groups of youngsters, like groups of soldiers, marching past the Control Point. They gathered at the taxi stand and the bus stops at Huanggang. I have never seen such large groups of youngsters gathering. So, the youth problem cannot be solved merely by implementing voluntary drug testing scheme in Hong Kong. We should give careful consideration to the scheme in order for the scheme to be implemented smoothly.

In fact, Mr WONG Sing-chi used to object to the implementation of voluntary drug testing. During the election back then, CHAN Hak-kan proposed compulsory urine testing on young people, and WONG Sing-chi criticized him that this was against human rights. I do not understand why he supports implementing voluntary drug testing now. He has one set of standards at the election and another after the election. I wonder if this is the established stance of the Democratic Party. They have done the same in respect of the ordinance on domestic violence. They signed the petition to show support during the election, but they objected to it after the election. I hope the Democratic Party

will clarify whether they support the urine test. CHAN Hak-kan supported it but WONG Sing-chi objected to it. Does the Democratic Party support or object to it now? I hope they can make a clarification.

The League of Social Democrats has a clear stand of objecting to this measure because it will definitely induce a labelling effect, which in turn will trigger other problems. I have made similar criticisms in this Chamber for many times. Any policy formulated has to be accompanied by policy analysis, and also studies on its impact on society and social groups. The Government cannot rely solely on its subjective desire in making decisions which will affect the generations to come.

Thank you, President.

(Mr WONG Sing-chi raised his hand)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr WONG Sing-chi, do you wish to make clarification?

MR WONG SING-CHI (in Cantonese): Yes.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Before you speak, I wish to remind you that according to the rules pertaining to our debate, each Member may only speak once. I know that Mr Albert CHAN just now asked the Democratic Party to make clarification, but we still have to follow the Rules of Procedure. Mr WONG Sing-chi, you may speak and clarify the part of your speech just now which, in your opinion, has been misunderstood by another Member.

MR WONG SING-CHI (in Cantonese): President, I have two points to clarify. First, I am a registered social worker. I have already completed the renewal procedures for my registration. Second, we, the Democratic Party, are against compulsory drug testing. Mr Albert CHAN just now quoted my remarks made during the election. We are against compulsory drug testing, which is different from what he said just now. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any other

(Mr Albert CHAN stood up)

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): President, compulsory urine test is also a kind of drug tests. May I ask Mr WONG Sing-chi to clarify again?

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Albert CHAN, we cannot allow the debate to go on like this. Does any other Member who has not spoken wish to speak?

(No other Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Dr Joseph LEE, you may now speak on the two amendments. You may speak up to five minutes.

DR JOSEPH LEE (in Cantonese): President, we have a very comprehensive and informative debate on youth drug problem today. I hope the Secretary and the Secretary for Justice have heard the views. Mr CHAN Kin-por's and Mr WONG Sing-chi's amendments have enriched my original motion and our policy directions are consistent with each other. Mr WONG Sing-chi has specifically mentioned the need to conduct complementary school-based programmes to encourage students to stay away from drugs. Mr CHAN Kin-por has brought home the message that, just as I said, families, schools and parents are equally important, so that

As I always say, apart from inspection or policing, or combating drugs merely by searching and banning drugs, it is also very important to show love and care to the youth.

These two amendments have my total support. Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY (in Cantonese): President, I had listened attentively when Members spoke just now. First, I am thankful to Members for putting forward their valuable views on the motion and amendments. The views expressed by Members will be beneficial to the work undertaken by us in the future.

As I highlighted in the speech given at the beginning, the Government is dedicating all its effort to implement a set of comprehensively strengthened anti-drug strategies covering such areas as preventive education and publicity, treatment and rehabilitation, legislation and law enforcement, external co-operation and research, so as to combat drug abuse using a "five-pronged" strategy. On this foundation, the Government is fostering within the community a culture of care for young people, with a view to enticing support from members of various sectors in society for young people's healthy growth, so that they can stay away from drugs.

I wish to speak on the following areas which are of particular concern to several Members, namely, the school drug problem, support services for parents and families, drug tests and downstream treatment and rehabilitation support services.

The Government attaches great importance to the school drug problem. Information collected by the Central Registry of Drug Abuse reveals a younger drug abuse population, as 50% of the young drug abusers have their first attempt of taking drugs at the age of 15 or below while still in pursuit of basic education in general. Apart from family life, school life is an integral part of young people's daily living and has weighty bearings on moulding their behaviours in various stages of their growth. As regards the enhancement of anti-drug work in schools, the Education Bureau, the Narcotics Division, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Department of Health, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the other government departments concerned are gearing up efforts in the following four areas.

The first area relates to promoting in all schools the development of a "Healthy School Policy" with an anti-drug element, having regard to the development needs of students, to foster an amicable learning environment.

The second area centres on the strengthening of preventive education programmes and measures for students. They include reviewing and updating school curriculum and arrangements for Other Learning Experiences, as well as providing more systematic anti-drug programmes for students of Primary Four and above.

The third area pertains to the enhancement of support for schools. Since the 2008-2009 academic year, we have provided professional anti-drug training to teachers. This includes half-day on-site programmes for class and subject

teachers, and two-day advanced programmes for guidance and discipline teachers, school social workers and key school personnel with disbursement of teaching relief grant. Moreover, we are developing anti-drug resource kits for schools and parents and will organize related training and seminars. On the other hand, an addition of 27 posts has been made to the Police School Liaison Programme to enhance the co-ordination among the police, schools, social workers and the community, with emphasis given to the prevention and handling of the school drug problem.

The fourth area is about assisting schools in the early identification of, and provision of assistance to, at-risk students, including timely referrals and follow-up of drug-related cases. In consultation with the relevant stakeholders, the Education Bureau, the Narcotics Division, the SWD and other related departments are working together to revise the relevant guidelines and protocols, with a view to building a good network of support and referral for students and taking timely and effective follow-up actions.

Through the Beat Drugs Fund, the Government provides subsidies and important resources to members of various sectors in the community for the purpose of organizing anti-drug activities. The Government will continue to lend its support to schools through the Beat Drugs Fund for organizing various anti-drug programmes.

I am aware that the Panel on Education is very concerned about the school drug problem. For that reason, it will conduct focused discussion on this topic in due course. I believe Members who are particularly concerned about this issue may engage in in-depth discussions on this topic then.

In the work undertaken by the Task Force, we take notice of the fact that high-risk young people and even those abusing drugs are very often victims of various family problems or victims of families that fail to function properly, for example, parents lacking appropriate parenting skills, the absence of parents, incomplete families and marital discords between parents.

In the anti-drug strategy proposed by the Task Force, we are determined to enhance the support services rendered to parents and families. The relevant work includes:

- In the anti-drug campaign with the theme of "No Drugs, No Regrets. Not Now, Not Ever.", parents are the specific target of our

promotion work. To this end, we have produced a series of television and radio Announcements in the Public Interest, posters and publicity materials of various nature targeting at parents. In addition, we have actively encouraged parents to accompany their children to visit the Hong Kong Jockey Club Drug InfoCentre;

- Financing non-governmental organizations to organize activities for parents, including workshops, anti-drug seminars and experience-sharing sessions led by parents of those young people who have weaned themselves off drugs. The Beat Drugs Fund had approved 59 programmes last year, some 20 of which were targeted at rendering support to parents;
- The Education Bureau, the Narcotics Division and the police will step up their co-operation with the Committee on Home-School Co-operation and the Parent-Teacher Associations Federations in various districts. Such activities as parent-children communication workshops and sharing sessions will be organized through these networks to heighten parents' awareness about the harmful effects caused by psychotropic substances; and
- In mid-2008, the Narcotics Division completed a research project entitled "Engagement of Parents in Anti-drug Work", which aims to explore the factors that motivate or discourage parents' participation in drug-prevention programs. We will commission the production of an educational package called "Anti-drug Resource Kit for Parents" basing on these evidence-based materials. The resource kit will be launched in the near future and relevant training will be provided.

Playing unique roles, families are the fundamental building blocks of society and exert vital influence on young people. The Task Force holds that the collaboration with other policy areas must be strengthened and assistance should be rendered to parents through various means and channels to facilitate families' prevention and handling of drug abuse and other youth problems. In this regard, the Family Council chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration was established in December 2007, with a view to advising the Government on the formulation of policies and strategies for supporting and strengthening the

functions of family. The Government will make good use of this platform to implement various measures, for example:

- Strengthening general parental education. The Narcotics Division is co-operating with such departments and organizations as the SWD and the Women's Commission to incorporate anti-drug education into general parental education, for example, teaching parents skills in preventing and dealing with children's behavioural problems, so as to assist parents in discharging their bounden duty;
- Enhancing the support for needy families. In formulating family support initiatives and measures, special attention should be given to disadvantaged families in greater need, and messages on the harmful effects of drug abuse should be conveyed to the families concerned; and
- Promoting healthy work-life balance and family-friendly employment practices, so as to allow more room for parents to communicate with their children.

Another anti-drug strategy that has aroused the concern of Members and the community relates to the various recommendations proposed by us on the drug tests. As I highlighted in the speech given at the beginning, the drug tests are proposed precisely to address the highly hidden nature of psychotropic substance abuse. Let me take this opportunity to make further elaboration.

- First, these drugs can simply be sniffed or swallowed, which renders discovery more difficult;
- Second, withdrawal symptoms are not obvious initially;
- Third, the harmful effects on the physical and mental health may not be apparent at the beginning, but may gradually surface after a few years. However, the damages caused have already been far-reaching and even permanent. I completely disagree with Mr Albert CHAN's remark made earlier on that consuming cannabis will not cause serious harmful effects; and

- Fourth, almost 60% of the young drug abusers indicated that the most frequent location for them to take drugs was at home or friends' home. Some young drug abusers even cross the boundary to the Mainland for so doing. This renders the detection of drug-abusing behaviours more difficult.

There are cases in which some young people have abused psychotropic substances for a period of time but their so doing may remain unknown to their parents and schools. In addition, due to the low motivation of young people to seek assistance, the existing support network may be unable to reach them. Worse still, drug-abusing behaviours, which are highly infectious in society and among peers, may remain hidden in the community and schools. Such behaviours may be hazardous to immature young people and this leaves a vital crack in our anti-drug work. We believe that drug tests can be considered a new tool that serves to assist us in finding out whether or not a young person has abused drugs more expeditiously, more directly and more objectively, thereby making early intervention possible. This can avoid the situation where remedies are provided only when irremediable damages have already been caused to the physical and mental health of young people or when drug-abusing behaviours have already been passed on to their peers.

Of course, drug tests can also serve to remind young people that their drug-abusing behaviours may come to light and serious legal consequences may be resulted. This can achieve the purpose of prevention and deterrence.

At present, the Government has commenced follow-up work on the recommendations proposed on the drug tests at various levels. Our targets set for 2009 include: First, the medical support services provided at the seven Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers (CCPSA) will include arrangements made for the individual-based voluntary drug test; second, we will commission a research project to study feasible options for the school-based voluntary drug test; and third, we will conduct public consultation on the detailed proposals for the compulsory drug test.

As I mentioned just now, many people are very concerned about the provision of sufficient downstream treatment and rehabilitation services in the face of an increase in the number of drug abusers identified in the enhanced upstream work. Mr WONG Sing-chi particularly raised in his amendment the

suggestion of providing additional resources to offer complementary facilities for the school-based voluntary drug test.

I must emphasize that the authorities have all along paid attention to the changes in the demand for treatment and rehabilitation services and will make appropriate allocation of resources. As I highlighted in the speech given at the beginning, when the Task Force was carrying out its work, it was announced in the 2008-2009 Budget that some \$26 million would be allocated for the purpose of enhancing the provision of a series of downstream services.

In this financial year, the Government will continue to inject new resources for implementing the recommendations proposed by the Task Force, in a bid to enhance the provision of treatment and rehabilitation services. First, the SWD is planning to introduce medical support services at the CCPSAs within the 2009-2010 financial year. To this end, a funding of some \$4.7 million has already been earmarked in the Budget. In addition, the SWD is making preparations for the introduction of a two-year pilot scheme within the second half of the 2009-2010 financial year, so as to provide more focused, structured and intensive probation service for young offenders convicted of drug-related offences. For this purpose, a funding of around \$900,000 has already been earmarked in the Budget. Meanwhile, the Hospital Authority will reserve part of the additional funding allocated by the Government to further enhance the services provided by the Substance Abuse Clinics within this financial year.

The need of increasing the resources allocated to schools and outreaching social workers is particularly raised in the amendment proposed by Mr CHAN Kin-por. As a matter of fact, the Task Force fully appreciated the important roles played by schools and outreaching social workers at the front line in preventive education, as well as the detection and identification of at-risk young people at the earliest opportunity. School social workers can join hands with school staff to have initial contacts with needy students and provide counselling services to them. Thereafter, referrals may be made to other collaborating departments or organizations, so that those needy students can receive appropriate services. Through on-the-spot contacts and immediate intervention, social workers can establish a trustful relationship with young people by rapport building and this is beneficial to cultivating their motivation to abstain from drugs. On the other hand, the provision of referral services allows other collaborating departments or organizations to take in-depth follow-up actions. It has also been included in the long-term recommendations proposed by the Task

Force that the allocation of resources to schools and outreaching social workers should be considered in the light of the service demand.

In monitoring changes in the demand for downstream treatment and rehabilitation services and considering the need for new resources, we have to ensure the effective and efficient use of the present resources. The current Methadone Treatment Programme and the treatment services provided by the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers both target at abusers of heroin. However, the past 10 years has witnessed a decline in the number of abusers of this drug. One of the recommendations raised by the Task Force pertains to reviewing the allocation of the relevant resources and we will take follow-up actions on this. In so doing, we will factor in the large number of heroin abusers remaining and the functions of the Methadone Treatment Programme in preventing crime and the transmission of serious communicable diseases.

In conclusion, the Government will continue to monitor various treatment and rehabilitation services, including those provided by the CCPSAs and the Substance Abuse Clinics, as well as other related youth services, including students' demand for such services and those rendered by outreaching social workers. We will even identify the areas requiring an allocation of additional resources or deployment of resources in the light of the latest drug trend. When resources permit, we will consider a further enhancement of those services.

President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now call upon Mr WONG Sing-chi to move his amendment to the motion.

MR WONG SING-CHI (in Cantonese): President, I move that Dr Joseph LEE's motion be amended.

Mr WONG Sing-chi moved the following amendment: (Translation)

"To add "the youth drug problem has been plaguing the Hong Kong community for a long time," after "That,"; and to add ", which includes providing additional resources and complementary measures to tie in with

the voluntary school-based drug testing programme to help drug-abusing students and curb the spread of the menace of drugs in schools, so as" after "anti-drug policy"."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Mr WONG Sing-chi to Dr Joseph LEE'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.

(Members raised their hands)

Mr Albert CHAN rose to claim a division.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Albert CHAN has claimed a division. The division bell will ring for three minutes.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): A quorum is not present in the Chamber. Clerk, please ring the bell to summon Members back to the Chamber.

(When the summoning bell was ringing, some Members rose to talk to other Members)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Members, the meeting is still in progress. Mr Albert CHAN, the meeting is still in progress.

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

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): A quorum is now present. Will Members please proceed to vote. The division is on the amendment moved by Mr WONG Sing-chi to Dr Joseph LEE's motion.

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:

Dr Raymond HO, Dr Margaret NG, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, Ms LI Fung-ying, Dr Joseph LEE, Mr Jeffrey LAM, Mr WONG Ting-kwong, Mr CHAN Kin-por, Mr IP Wai-ming, Mr IP Kwok-him, Dr PAN Pey-chyou and Dr Samson TAM voted for the amendment.

Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che abstained.

Geographical Constituencies:

Mr Fred LI, Mr James TO, Mr LAU Kong-wah, Mr Andrew CHENG, Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Mr LEE Wing-tat, Mr Ronny TONG, Mr KAM Nai-wai, Miss Tanya CHAN, Mr WONG Sing-chi and Mrs Regina IP voted for the amendment.

Mr Albert CHAN, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung and Mr WONG Yuk-man voted against the amendment.

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan and Ms Cyd HO abstained.

THE PRESIDENT, Mr Jasper TSANG, did not cast any vote.

THE PRESIDENT announced that among the Members returned by functional constituencies, 13 were present, 12 were in favour of the amendment and one abstained; while among the Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, 17 were present, 11 were in favour of the amendment, three against it and two abstained. Since the question was agreed by a majority of each of the two groups of Members present, he therefore declared that the amendment was passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr CHAN Kin-por, as Mr WONG Sing-chi'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 may speak up to three minutes to explain the revised terms in your amendment. You may now move your revised amendment.

MR CHAN KIN-POR (in Cantonese): President, I move that Dr Joseph LEE's motion as amended by Mr WONG Sing-chi be further amended by my revised amendment. The revised amendment mainly proposes to provide support for parents and families and allocate additional resources to social workers. These points are consistent with my speech earlier. Hence, I have nothing to add. Thank you, President.

Mr CHAN Kin-por moved the following further amendment to the motion as amended by Mr WONG Sing-chi: (Translation)

"To add "and measures providing support to parents and families as well as allocating additional resources to social workers, particularly school and outreaching social workers," after "drugs in schools,"; and to add "and rebuild a healthy atmosphere in schools" immediately before the full stop."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That Mr CHAN Kin-por's amendment to Dr Joseph LEE's motion as amended by Mr WONG Sing-chi 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): Dr Joseph LEE, you may now reply and you only have three seconds. This debate will come to a close after Dr Joseph LEE has replied.

DR JOSEPH LEE (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. Luckily, the Civic Party is still here today to vote. Thank you. (*Laughter*)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Dr Joseph LEE, as amended by Mr WONG Sing-chi and Mr CHAN Kin-por, be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): 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, 6 May 2009.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-seven minutes to Two o'clock.