

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 17 March 2011

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

THE HONOURABLE FRED LI WAH-MING, S.B.S., 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE CHIM PUI-CHUNG

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

THE HONOURABLE KAM NAI-WAI, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE STARRY LEE WAI-KING, J.P.

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

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HAK-KAN

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

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KIN-POR, J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE PRISCILLA LEUNG MEI-FUN

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG KWOK-CHE

THE HONOURABLE WONG SING-CHI

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

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.

THE HONOURABLE PAUL TSE WAI-CHUN

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG KWOK-HUNG

THE HONOURABLE TANYA CHAN

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT CHAN WAI-YIP

MEMBERS ABSENT:

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT HO CHUN-YAN

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

THE HONOURABLE LAU KONG-WAH, J.P.

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

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE CYD HO SAU-LAN

DR THE HONOURABLE LEUNG KA-LAU

DR THE HONOURABLE PAN PEY-CHYOU

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

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

THE HONOURABLE WONG YUK-MAN

PUBLIC OFFICERS ATTENDING:

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

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

CLERKS IN ATTENDANCE:

MRS CONSTANCE LI TSOI YEUK-LIN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
GENERAL

MRS PERCY MA, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

MEMBERS' MOTIONS

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Members who are having their breakfast are giving their support to a slow food culture with their actions. We will begin the debate on the second motion without legislative effect.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Second motion: Promoting a slow food culture.

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

I now call upon Mrs Sophie LEUNG to speak and move her motion.

PROMOTING A SLOW FOOD CULTURE

MRS SOPHIE LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, I move that the motion, as printed on the Agenda, be passed.

President, by a slow culture food culture it does not really mean eating slowly. As a matter of fact, "slow food" is used as an antithesis to fast food. I am sure there are people among us who have never heard about the term "slow food" before. But I am sure they all know what fast food is. "Slow food" is so named because of a movement began by an Italian culinary guru called Carlo PETRINI to resist the fast food culture. He was concerned about the fact that not only had fast food changed our food culture but also our lifestyle as well. It also caused an impact on the ecology. So he started this slow food movement and went to places all over the world to preach the slow food culture.

I am not talking about food today. I wish to talk about food education, that is, the culture and education of food and about food. It is a way of life underpinned by the way we eat. About this idea of how food changes the way we think and even the person we are, this is what a French gourmet master who used to say, "You are what you eat."

A respect for food is a core value of the slow food movement. We can see that tonnes of food are wasted every day in Hong Kong. This shows that the

attitude we have towards food is not at all correct. Many people just want to fill up their stomach, or they want to eat quickly, or they may want to try different kinds of food, and so they do not treat food with their heart. They do not respect it. Or they may use too much seasonings and condiments that cover the true flavour and taste of food. At times, I would wonder if this is because the food concerned is not fresh enough. The result is that the problem of obesity in people has become a great challenge for every modern society. Kids in many developed countries love nothing other than fast food. This is because their parents only care about convenience or because they simply do not know anything about the culture of food. At times, I would think whether we are really savouring the taste of food, or we are trying to gratify our taste buds with condiments.

A respect for food makes us care more about the source of food and its quality. A slow food culture advocates cutting the food mileage, that is, the carbon footprints. It emphasizes the use of locally available ingredients and materials for food. Hong Kong is a culinary capital. We can find all kinds of ingredients and materials for food right here. But we have to notice that the shipment of food, no matter it is by trucks or by airplanes, would invariably produce carbon emission. So as we want to eat good food, do we have to eat food from thousands of miles away? Should we think that only exotic food is good? As a matter of fact, the simple and rustic kind of food is what we call good food.

Also, people just want to gratify their taste buds and care nothing about the culture of food. A million kinds of technology are used to interfere with the growth of things consumed as food. In the past, we did not do this kind of thing. We would eat what is seasonable. But now we use the greenhouse — and that is another source of carbon emission — to enable plants which we consume as food to grow all the year round. Sometimes hormones and other kinds of chemicals are used to make plants look good. Or genetic engineering is employed to make plants look incredibly attractive. When such things are done, do we know that apart from satisfying our senses, we are causing a lot of pollution and burden to planet Earth?

If we really know how to respect food, we would waste less. Recently, there are discussions in society on the issue of food waste. Food waste is caused by our wastage of food. We often see in restaurants how people leave a lot of

food uneaten, which is then thrown away. This is because what remains on the table cannot be used again. Come to think about this. Farmers work hard in growing the food we eat, and cattle and sheep also need a long time to grow up before they reach the meal tables. In order to meet the needs of humans for food, these cattle and sheep are often made to grow faster or they may be made to put on weight artificially. So I think that we must put in more efforts and educate people about the culture of food.

If we know how food should be respected, and if we can pause and think and hence conclude that we do not really need to consume so much food, then we do not have to be on diet or fear that we may get diabetes or a stroke. And it would not be necessary to ship so much food waste to the landfills. I understand the question which many people may have on their minds. Does slow food mean using a lot of time to prepare a meal? In fact, if we do not need to eat that much, I do not think we need too much time to prepare a meal.

There is another point. In the past, parents would teach their children not to waste food or just to eat certain kinds of food. All these are what we would say about the culture and education of food. Our previous generation knew how to respect food, but we are just being lazy in not teaching our next generation. So just what would these young people do? I believe a green and healthy life does not have to depend on government policies, measures or the law. We should start with our mindset. It is by changing our lifestyle that our behaviour can be changed. Every person has a say on this. And a slow food culture is the kind of lifestyle we need in this modern society of Hong Kong.

Today, I have raised this issue of slow food for discussion because I hope that we can pay more attention to it, starting from ourselves. Of course, apart from saying that we should respect food and know the kinds of food we choose to put into our mouths, the most important point is that we should bear some green responsibility. And this is for the sake of our health. We should begin to be aware of the needs of nature and how we should treat it. We should know how to respect nature. This is what we call a green and healthy life. It is only by doing so that we would not be doing injustice to our next generation.

The emphasis of the wording of this motion today is on education. I am sure there are conditions in Hong Kong to practise a slow food culture. After

the debate today, if Members are still unsure about what is meant by slow food, we can start by trying to understand what is organic farming and organic farms. On Sunday the 27th of March, the HK Organic Day 2011 will be held in Central. This is the fourth time the event is held in four years. And we can learn about what is meant by eating slowly and organically.

President, what I want to say in closing is that there is a growing awareness of the food crisis in different places around the world and it is reckoned that climate and energy problems would become the greatest challenges for mankind. These are problems that every country should tackle vigorously. If we will only regret when a shortage of food has appeared, then it will be too late. I think everyone of us should do our part.

As we can see how people suffer from the disasters in Japan now and in Sichuan some years ago, we should know that mankind is indeed trivial in the face of the mighty forces of nature. And given this, how can we ignore the needs of nature and indulge in thoughts of recreating nature and planet Earth? I really hope that we can start with ourselves and live up to this idea of slow food.

President, I so submit.

Mrs Sophie LEUNG moved the following motion: (Translation)

"That Hong Kong is a culinary capital, but the fast pace of life means that many Hong Kong people can only eat hastily and cannot enjoy food, and health problems have also developed as a result; the slow food culture emerging in Europe in recent years, which emphasizes slowing down the tempo, upholding a green and natural attitude of living, advocating the concepts of responsible consumption and respect for food, encouraging the use of local food materials to reduce carbon emissions caused by transportation, and conserving the traditional eating culture, is worth promoting in Hong Kong; as promoting a slow food culture needs to start with food supply, sales and promotion as well as education, this Council urges the Government to adopt the following measures in the three areas of agriculture and fisheries, the economy and education, so as to promote a slow food culture:

Food supply —

- (a) to formulate a comprehensive agriculture and fisheries policy, including formulating a land policy for the New Territories that balances farming, conservation and development, protecting agricultural land and Hong Kong's water quality, providing support for reforming the relevant industries, and increasing the production of local food materials, with a view to raising the self-sufficiency rate of food provision in Hong Kong;
- (b) to enhance the support for organic farming and encourage agricultural land rehabilitation, so as to provide the local community with fresh and safe organic food;
- (c) to capitalize on the advantages of local natural resources and encourage mariculturists to rear quality fish;

Sales and promotion —

- (d) to assist local industries in applying for certification, promote certification services among the public and in neighbouring places, assist the relevant industries in establishing sales networks and enhance the promotion of quality agricultural and fishery products, so as to enable consumers to easily identify such products and purchase them without any worry, and to build a distinctive and quality image of local food materials;
- (e) to promote the combination of eco-tourism and culinary tourism among the public and overseas visitors, such as organizing tour groups featured by Poon Choi feasts in walled villages, holiday farming and tours of organic produce markets, etc., so as to boost tourism and the catering industry and promote local economic growth;

Education —

- (f) to step up public education and promote the concept and attitude of living of a slow food culture among the public, so that members of

the public can, through dietary options, protect the environment, treasure nature and develop sustainable dietary habits;

- (g) to encourage the public to find out the sources, production and quality of food in the context of food supply chain, so that they are more able to relish and select food in the course of eating, and to provide food producers with incentives for producing quality organic food; and
- (h) to promote a slow food culture in primary and secondary schools, teach students to reduce their eating speed during lunch time, advocate the values of responsible consumption and avoiding food wastage, and supply fresh and quality food in schools as an alternative to fast food."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mrs Sophie LEUNG be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Four Members will move amendments to the motion respectively. We will now have a joint debate on the motion and the four amendments.

I will call upon Mr IP Wai-ming, Ms Audrey EU, Mr Fred LI and Mr WONG Yung-kan to speak in order, but they cannot move their amendments at this stage.

MR IP WAI-MING (in Cantonese): President, with respect to the motion moved by Mrs Sophie LEUNG today on "Promoting a slow food culture", I agree that it is good in principle. This is because a slow food culture can enable us to respect food, know how to choose food and develop a right attitude to food. This would not just be a good thing, but it is also good for our health. But why do I propose this amendment to the motion? Members may think that paid meal time and standard working hours may not have anything to do with this motion. However, I hope Members can think carefully, that in Hong Kong where speed and convenience are valued above all else, a slow food culture is not encouraged

among the wage earners in reality. Many people would rather work a minute more than to spend a minute more in enjoying their meal. This is because working more can increase their income and improve their financial situation. In such circumstances, at times I really wonder whether a slow food culture can be promoted successfully in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions has always been striving to provide for paid meal time and standard working hours for the wage earners of Hong Kong. With respect to the question of whether the wage earners should enjoy protection of their right to paid meal time, there have been nonstop controversies over the years. A complaint commonly lodged by the wage earners is that they are not happy about their short meal break. The second complaint is whether a meal break should be counted as hours worked. The most classic example, one which everybody knows, is that more than six months ago, a fast-food chain planned to cancel the paid meal time for its staff in order to get prepared for the implementation of the minimum wage. Subsequently and after pressure exerted by the community, the company withdrew its plan. The incident however made us realize that for many wage earners in Hong Kong, their right of having a meal break is not under any protection. And this is a most fundamental and legitimate right they have. How can they talk about a slow food culture with any peace of mind?

There is a recent example and it is about the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong (SEHK) extending its trading hours. Put nicely, the measure is meant to couple with the world and enhance SEHK's competitive edge. But this move has far-reaching effects on the staff working hard in the financial sector. This is because the extension of the trading hours means that their lunch break is shortened. Many people in the sector have pointed out that they need to collect information for their clients after trading is closed before the afternoon. And they have to get prepared for the commencement of trading in the afternoon. All these are part of their work. And so they have to sacrifice their personal rest time, such that they have to have their lunches in great haste. Often when we go to the MTR Station in Central during the lunch break, we would see many wage earners eating from a lunch box near a certain fast-food store. And they are standing and facing the wall as they eat their lunches. So what can we say in promoting a slow food culture to them?

On the question of having enough time to eat or choosing the food slowly, this is like a fairy tale to the wage earners. The Kowloon Motor Bus (1933) Co. Ltd. claims that the actual meal time for its staff is 48 minutes. But according to what the bus captains have told us, they may need 15 minutes to walk from the bus terminus to the place where they can have a meal. So just the round trip alone would take as much as half an hour. Then just how much of a meal break is left? Moreover, in companies like the MTR Corporation Limited, the Hong Kong Tramways Co. Ltd., and so on, the average meal time of their staff is only half an hour. Some drivers of trams complain to us that if they run from the tram terminus to a fast-food shop to buy lunch, the round trip may take 10 to 15 minutes. According to their description, often they are not chewing the food but just pouring it down their throat, only to fill up their stomach. We can imagine that under such circumstances, the insufficient meal time would only reduce their rest time and also prevent them from enjoying food. This means they are barred from experiencing what is meant by a slow food culture.

Therefore, I think that if this slow food culture is to be promoted, at a practical level, it would mean that something ought to be done about the welfare of the staff. Paid meal time should be established so that they do not need to forgo their rest and meal time just to earn more money. The employees should be given a suitable meal break so that they can enjoy their meal.

President, people in the world, and we Chinese also, all want to have meals with their families at the dinner table. But now when many wage earners do not enjoy the protection of standard working hours, they can only toil from day to night. Many of them have to work until much later than seven o'clock or eight o'clock in the evening. It is very rare that they can go home and have dinner with their families, no to say going out and dinning with their friends.

I believe Honourable colleagues would often not be able to have regular meal times because of the heavy workload they have in this Council. So there may be a need to promote this slow food culture in the Council. For the wage earners of Hong Kong, this situation of being unable to have regular meal times has caused health problems of various degrees in them. We therefore demand that standard working hours should be imposed so that wage earners can go home and have meals with their families. In our opinion, this demand has got something to do with a slow food culture as well.

Finally, President, I wish to stress one thing and that is, it is not that I do not agree with the slow food culture proposed by Mrs Sophie LEUNG, nor do I think that it should not be promoted, I just think that some other matching measures should be put in place to support it. The case is like when a famous Chinese writer QIAN Zhong-shu who once said that he did not favour the idea of children reading *Aesop's Fables* because he thought that the book would make the children develop the naivety and simple thinking that the good and evil of this world and the reward for the good and retribution for the evil were the simple rules of life found in *Aesop's Fables*. But in fact the world was very complicated and people could fall into all kinds of traps and run into all kinds of walls. By the same token, if the young people are taught about a slow food culture, then when they start to work in society later, they will only find that the reality is a very far cry from their expectation. So what do you think our young people will think? Will they be criticized for failing to grasp the way of the world and see the point of working hard to make a living, or will they be labelled the so-called "N generation"?

In such circumstances, I would think that if a slow food culture is to be promoted in Hong Kong so that the people can enjoy a healthy diet, and that they can be taught to respect traditional cooking, care about food materials and appreciate the efforts and skills of the cooks, then the Government should introduce matching measures in many other areas. This applies especially to policies in labour welfare so that the wage earners can really enjoy or experience what is called a slow food culture. Only this can any talk about slow food truly make sense.

President, I so submit.

MS AUDREY EU (in Cantonese): First of all, President, a slow food culture is actually a culture of slow living. As mentioned by Mrs Sophie LEUNG just now, the slow food campaign was initially proposed by Italians, whose actual goal is to support the food culture in some single or unique ecological zones, promote some of the traditional cuisines and small farms there while reducing carbon emissions caused by transportation and genetically modified food involving substantial use of pesticides, promoting small family-run farms, establishing seed banks, helping and protecting local food, such as unique vegetables and fruit, and encouraging people to be conscientious consumers.

Actually, the Civic Party has organized this type of activities on several occasions. We have also set up Good Food Watch (良食關注組) — the word "良" means "good" as in "good food", not "foodstuff (糧)". We have also organized and co-sponsored some local pig feasts with the goal of promoting local food materials. With the approach of our fifth anniversary, which will arrive soon, we will continue to promote activities for relishing local food. This is why we support the spirit of Mrs Sophie LEUNG's original motion. But why do I propose an amendment?

In his speech just now, Mr IP Wai-ming said that his proposal on "standard working hours and call for "paid meal time" seemed to be unrelated to the original motion. Actually, contrary to Mr IP Wai-ming's remark, they are absolutely related. The reason why I propose an amendment, similar to that of IP Wai-ming, to the original motion is if we are to promote a slow food culture, we actually need some prerequisites, that is, our actual environment can breed such a culture. In other words, complementary efforts must be made on the economic, labour and education fronts. My amendment and that of Mr IP Wai-ming are cognate in the sense that our amendments are related to the original motion.

Let us look at standard working hours. In fact, standard working hours have been stipulated in many other places around the world. Even Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines have set their standard working hours at 48. In China and Indonesia, the standard working hours are set at 40. In a number of European countries, the standard weekly working hours are set at 40. In some relatively extreme cases, such as France and Germany, the standard weekly working hours are set at 35.

Looking back at Hong Kong, according to the statistical data in the "Special Topics Report No. 50" published by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) in 2008, 900 000 employees, or 35% of our total labour force, worked more than eight hours a day; more than 150 000 people worked more than 10 hours a day; 900 000 people, or 33%, or one third of our total working population, worked more than 50 hours a week. Most of the employees who worked overtime were non-skilled and front-line workers.

According to the information in the Government's first Quarterly Report on General Household Survey, in 2010, the average weekly working hours for

"Service workers and shop sales workers" as well as "Plant and machine operators and assemblers" was 50 hours, and the weekly working hours for "Elementary occupations" and "Retail, accommodation and food services" was 54 hours. A total of 815 000 employees worked more than 55 hours a week, that is, nine hours a day excluding lunch time. Furthermore, the Survey indicated that the weekly hours of work was 60 to 64 hours for 303 000 employees, or 9.4% of them, 60 to 69 hours for 93 000 employees, or 2.9% of them, 70 to 74 hours, or over 14 hours a day, for approximately 86 000 employees, or 2.7% of them. I believe many colleagues in this Council, the Secretary and I can share the feelings of these employees.

Many surveys indicate that the median weekly working hours of employees in Hong Kong is actually 48. Before the passage of a motion on 25 June 2010 in this Council calling on the Government to legislate for standard working hours, a number of colleagues in this Council proposed that the weekly standard working hours should be set at 44 hours. On this issue, the Government should make an effort expeditiously before we can have the conditions to discuss promotion of a "slow food culture".

In her speech just now, Mrs Sophie LEUNG said that meal breaks do not necessarily have to be lengthened, as eating less can be an option. But, President, it has nothing to do with eating more or less. In fact, if one wishes to truly understand the slow food culture or a slow pace of life, one's mood, pace of life and living environment as a whole have to change in a substantial manner.

In the Hong Kong context, not only do we have long working hours and short lunch breaks, many people have to toil long hours every day before they can earn a meagre income that can barely support their family, with some of them even failing to make ends meet. Being a member of the middle class, I can see the plight of the young generation, including my own children. If you want to talk to them, they will tell you they are very busy. Even if you send them a text message, they will say they have no time to give you a reply because their bosses are still there.

Now you are telling these people in such a mood to slow down and chew their food, whether they eat more or less, and then reflect on the origins of the food they eat, whether the food is genetically modified or pesticide-free, whether they themselves are conscientious consumers, whether the sustainable

development of the farming activities in the neighbouring ecological zones can continue, and so on. How can you ask the average wage earners, even professionals — even my young family members as I mentioned just now — to act in this manner? How can you ask them to reflect on themselves when their working conditions are like that? They do not find enough time even talking to their mother.

President, this explains why I have to propose this amendment today. I would also like to make an appeal here. In Hong Kong, there are many people who are relatively affluent and have the means to do so. They are qualified and have the conditions to promote the slow food culture. However, we hope people from all walks of life in the community can have the opportunity to appreciate the underlying spirit of the slow food culture. This is why I will propose today some objective conditions to be fulfilled in several aspects. I hope colleagues supporting the slow food culture can understand this. I also hope to draw the attention of the Government, not only Secretary Dr York CHOW, who is sitting here today, as this is not just a food issue, but also that of Secretary Matthew CHEUNG to the labour front and Secretary Edward YAU's attention to the environmental front.

Very often, we look at the Government as a whole rather than from the perspective of individual departments. Hence, even though only Secretary Dr York CHOW is sitting alone here today, I still hope that after listening to Members' speeches, he can do some thinking on how to slow down the pace of work in society as a whole and the life of wage earners, or at least create some objective conditions to make them understand the underlying spirit of the slow food culture.

I also appeal to Mrs Sophie LEUNG to support by all means the activities to be hosted shortly by the Civic Party to mark its fifth anniversary — the spirit of the dinner party organized by Good Food Watch for relishing local food materials is exactly the same in, hopefully, promoting local farming and supporting local agriculture and farmers.

President, on behalf of the Civic Party, I speak in support of the spirit of the original motion. I also hope this Council can endorse the amendments proposed by My IP Wai-ming and me, including the point that objective

conditions must be fulfilled before talking about promotion of the slow food culture.

Thank you, President.

MR FRED LI (in Cantonese): President, I believe Mrs Sophie LEUNG has already introduced the origin and development of the slow food culture. Just now, some colleagues also gave some additional remarks. The original motion mentions the great significance of the elements embraced by the slow food culture, such as environmental protection, emphasis on the use of local food materials, and so on. The emergence of the slow food campaign was attributed to the opposition to fast food provided in such places as the McDonald's. With the passage of time, the slow food movement has also begun emphasizing the objection to genetically modified (GM) food and the use of pesticides. I think it is inappropriate to emphasize environmental protection while neglecting accusations against the modern food culture. Hence, I have included these aspirations in my amendment.

The notion of the slow food movement (including talking more slowly) is not a culinary culture of pursuing enjoyment. On the contrary, it represents some sort of reflection and counter-attack on the modern food industry, which emphasizes speed and homogeneity. As Hong Kong is a highly capitalist society, I hope Members representing the industrial and commercial sectors in this Council can mull over this issue if the slow food culture is to be truly implemented. This is because in order for this culture to be implemented, employees must, first of all, be given adequate time to go out to have their meals. Hence, we in the Democratic Party agree to the amendments proposed by Mr IP Wai-ming and Ms Audrey EU. If legislation is not enacted on standard working hours, that is, longer meal time for employees is not allowed, then everything is just empty talk. Here in Central, there are many office workers who have only half an hour for lunch. The number of people who prefer not going out but staying in their offices to eat lunch-boxes or hamburgers is countless, too. It is also commonplace for them to work overtime until late at night. Hence, I now call upon members of the industrial and commercial sectors who are really sincere in promoting the slow food culture to apply restraint on working hours.

Besides standard working hours, the slow food culture also emphasizes the great importance of natural food materials. A decade ago, some green groups in Hong Kong already started raising objection to GM food and calling for the implementation of a mandatory labelling system. Despite the repeated passage of motions in this Council in response to this call, we only have a dispensable voluntary labelling scheme today. No information is provided to consumers to enable them to tell whether or not the food they buy is GM. The voluntary labelling scheme is indeed a total failure. However, the situation is different in Europe, where the regulation of GM food is extremely stringent. In 2008, thanks to the efforts of a slow food association in Ireland, the Republic of Ireland banned the cultivation of GM plants throughout the country. As this is a point emphasized in the slow food culture, we should not turn a blind eye to it.

As regards the objection to the use of pesticides, the slow food culture, which emphasizes the use of natural food materials, is related to the objection to genetic modification and the use of pesticides. Under many circumstances, there is a definite link between the use of pesticides and the emphasis of industrialization on rapid and mass production of inexpensive food to satisfy the large population of cities. A couple of years ago, some green groups, primarily Greenpeace, found high concentrations of pesticides in the vegetables and fruit imported from the Mainland, which were also sold in some local supermarkets. As the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department emphasized after some random checks that the vegetables, considered to be low-risk food, were extremely safe and the pesticide residues did not exceed the limits, the Democratic Party did not call for a complete ban on the use of pesticides. Nevertheless, it would be better if organic cultivation methods can be put to better use, whether in the interest of the environment and ecology or public health.

For this reason, we hope the Government can render further assistance to organic cultivation and the certification of organic agricultural produce. Basically, there are currently no criteria for the regulation of such food.

According to a survey conducted by the Hong Kong Organic Resources Centre in 2009, more than 90% of Hong Kong people, including I myself, had bought organic food. However, the frequency of more than 53% of the interviewees buying organic products was less than once a month. In other

words, the frequency was very low. Only 2.4% of the interviewees indicated that they had bought organic products three times or more a week. Organic food was unpopular because 53.6% of the interviewees making purchases found that the packages were not affixed with certification labels; nearly 40% could not tell whether or not the products were genuinely organic; and 32% decided not to buy organic food given their apprehensions about the mixed sale of regular products and organic products.

The findings of the survey are pretty obvious. Despite the decade-long history of sale of organic food in Hong Kong, the organic food market is still operating in a *laissez-faire* manner. So long as any of the traders of agricultural produces, be they manufacturers, wholesalers or retailers, label the products offered by them as organic, consumers are basically unable to tell the authenticity of the labels, though organic food is sold at least double or more than double the price of other non-organic food of the same type. In the absence of regulation and unified certification of specifications, consumers cannot tell the authenticity of these products. Furthermore, there is a wide range of products, with some claiming themselves to be "green food", "natural food" or "food with no additives", but does it mean that they are organic? No one can tell, but their labels will lure people to buy them. This problem is simply caused by the absence of rules and certification.

Hence, the Democratic Party calls on the Government to formulate basic parameters and rules for the certification of organic food and establish a credible certification system. In addition to the assistance offered by the Fish Marketing Organization (FMO), set up under the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, to the development of organic farming, some certification companies in Hong Kong have also been given funding under the Agricultural Development Fund operated by the FMO to set up a certification system for local organic products. Nevertheless, this system is not binding on the certifications of organic produces by other institutions in Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas countries. In other words, there is no way for consumers to tell the authenticity of the certifications of agricultural produces issued by different certification bodies in different places when these produces are offered on the market. This is why we think that, in order to protect consumer interests, the Government must begin with enacting legislation to regulate organic certification before it can ensure the organic products purchased by the public are genuine.

President, the Democratic Party supports colleagues' amendments. I so submit.

MR WONG YUNG-KAN (in Cantonese): President, I support the motion proposed by Mrs Sophie LEUNG today. Although the subject of the motion is advocating a slow food culture, both the underlying significance and content of the original motion involve many proposals on the development of local agriculture and fisheries, which I have been repeatedly mentioning since I became a Member of this Council. My amendment today only seeks to add depth to the proposals.

Hong Kong is a place where efficiency is emphasized, so much so that we just want to finish our meals very quickly. This is evident in the fact that a fast-food shop can definitely be found nearby. Another version I would more frequently hear is that when people dine in restaurants, they just want to finish their meals quickly because the food has become increasingly tasteless. They eat simply for the purpose of filling their stomachs, not enjoyment, and they find it unnecessary to "waste" time on meals. They even lament the disappearance of the traditional culinary flavour in Hong Kong.

I have cited this example on many occasions, and that is, when we attend banquets in recent years, we would often find literally all the guests stop eating when the last dish of roasted or deep-fried chicken is served, and the entire chicken could be taken away without being touched. On the surface of it, we may think that people's appetite is getting smaller, and so we criticize people for wasting food. However, I have consulted many people and was told that the chickens nowadays taste absolutely terrible and the meat tastes as if it is rotten. Not only is the chicken tasteless to the tongue, it is considered not even a waste to be thrown away. Owing to cost problems, most restaurants nowadays use chilled chickens rather than fresh chickens because of the exorbitant price and limited supply of fresh chickens.

Since the outbreak of the avian flu more than a decade ago, the farming and sale of live chickens have become very tight, with the supply of live chickens shrinking from more than 100 000 a day at its peak to around 10 000 a day now. The price of live chickens would also surge to more than \$200 during festivals. As a result, live chickens have become an expensive food material.

In recent years, President, the risks of avian flu have come under control, and local live chicken farms have already met modernization standards. Under such circumstances, the Government should change its previous idea of insisting on the construction of a central slaughtering plant. In fact, the trade is prepared to meet public hygiene conditions of a higher standard and assisting the Government in identifying sites suitable for live chicken farming. It is only that the Government is reluctant to expand the number of chicken farms or production ceilings on the ground that the risks of avian flu must be controlled. I hope the Government can refrain from closing all the doors. Neither is it the wish of the trade (including pig farmers) to revert to its previous condition when licences were not yet surrendered. It is our hope that the Government can discuss the future development of the poultry and livestock industries, provide fresh and live foodstuff for Hong Kong, and pass on Hong Kong's culinary essence.

President, I would like to say a few words on the numerous challenges currently facing the development of the fisheries industry. Despite the industry's open indication that it can conditionally support the proposal of banning trawling, a high level of government participation in assisting the development and transformation of the local fisheries industry is required in the long run. The traditional capture fishery is indispensable to Hong Kong. Should we cherish this traditional industry to enable it to sustain in Hong Kong while appealing for conservation of the environment? If we take a look at regions worldwide where the fishery industry is thriving, we will find their governments promoting the upgrading of their capture fisheries industry while striking a balance between protecting the environment and safeguarding the industry. It is with the support of the governments in various places that the new purse-seining and even deep-sea fishing techniques have started to develop slowly. In this area, the Government's efforts are obviously inadequate. Compared with trawling, the marine works as well as dredging and mud disposal projects constantly carried out in Hong Kong play a significant role in terms of destruction to the seabed and producing a devastating effect on the marine ecology. I hope the Government can address squarely the root of the problem by first dealing with the danger posed by government works to the ocean, seriously studying the views put forward by the industry, and vigourously supporting the innovation of capture fisheries to ensure that fishermen still interested in fishing can continue to make a living.

Furthermore, mariculture is not only a major global trend, it is also a way out for the local fishery industry. Local marine produce has been enjoying an advantage in terms of regulation of food. In particular, the fact that the emergence of quality fish and organic fish in recent years has been widely received by the public has indeed given fish farmers a ray of hope in the prospects of the industry. However, the skills employed by the fish culture industry in Hong Kong are still quite backward as the Government has all along failed to give technical support to the industry. I hope the Government can further develop the local mariculture industry on various fronts.

To begin with, the existing operational arrangement in mariculture zones must be improved. At present, the biggest problem relates to restrictions on the transfer of fish rafts, thus causing precipitation problems arising from difficulty in finding room to treat the excretion of fish, thereby increasing the risk of forming an anaerobic zone. This explains why the industry called on the Government a long time ago to set up a transfer system for mariculture zones, whereby fish rafts can be transferred to other designated zones on a regular basis to allow space and time for the original mariculture zones to treat pollutants, thereby increasing the survival rate of farmed fish.

On the other hand, breeding on land can be developed. This technique, which has already existed for a long time, is quite popular in Taiwan. However, there have been no deliberate attempts in Hong Kong to promote breeding on land. As a result, the fish farming industry has been subjected to enormous restraints. Given the large number of industrial buildings currently left vacant in Hong Kong, the authorities can consider using these buildings for the development of fish farming. In fact, green-house farming has already been carried out in multi-storey buildings in some districts, and experience has already been gained in poultry and livestock farming, too. The authorities should make consideration more from the perspective of assisting the agriculture and fisheries industries to give the industries more room of development.

Thirdly, mariculture can be diversified. At present, fish is the mainstay of mariculture in Hong Kong. Despite the production of oysters in the vicinity of Lau Fau Shan, the current production can no longer compare with that in the past. In fact, the waters off the east of Hong Kong, which is very clean, is suitable for the breeding of shell fish and other aquatic products. In recent years, many people in the industry have attempted to breed sea urchins. However, the result

is considered not at all satisfactory, because the breeding zone is just too small. In addition, many people in the industry with whom I have come into contact recently have expressed to me their hope that the Government can develop the breeding of other kinds of shellfish in waters off the eastern coastal. Apart from expanding the local mariculture species, they also hope to capitalize on their growth characteristics to purifying water quality and the Government can give the green light. In addition, the industry has also mentioned the supply of fish meal, technical support for the fishery industry, and so on. I hope the Government can also study these issues seriously.

President, we support the original motion and the amendments proposed by Mr IP Wai-ming and Mr Fred LI. However, we object to the views of Ms Audrey EU because of her additional point of studying and enacting legislation before developing the mariculture and agriculture industries and the economy. Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): President, thanks to Mrs Sophie LEUNG for proposing this motion to enable us to take this opportunity of discussing a "slow food culture" to jointly explore the two issues which have a close bearing on the daily life of the public, namely how to promote a healthy diet in the community and how to promote protection of the natural environment through eating. I believe the majority of Members are now practising a slow food culture. I hope they will become happier later, or deliver their speeches more enthusiastically.

"Slow food" is a kind of food culture emerging in some developed countries over the past two decades. The emphasis of this culture is on "slow eating". It has been pointed out by some medical and health experts as well as dieticians that not only will eating too quickly cause choking and digestive discomfort, people will also eat excessive food unknowingly. Therefore, they suggest that the public should consider reducing their speed of eating. Nevertheless, this is a relatively narrow interpretation of the slow food culture. Despite the absence of an authoritative definition of slow food culture in the international community for the time being, the general interpretation of slow food culture should not be confined to the speed of having a meal. Instead, it should also cover such concepts as respect for one's body and food, advocacy for local and traditional cuisines, and the maintenance of a balance between the food

supply chain and the natural environment. Of course, developing a healthy diet is indispensable, too.

As everyone knows, a balanced diet plays an important role in a healthy life pattern. If we can follow a healthy and balanced diet, coupled with regular exercise and an ideal body weight, we can promote our physical health, thus effectively preventing incidence of such diseases as cancer, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, and so on.

Hong Kong people are accustomed to dining out. Besides the taste of dishes, there has been an increasing concern among us about nutritional values. According to a study conducted by the Department of Health (DH), more than 40% of Hong Kong people go out for lunch at least five days a week, and more than 90% of the interviewees hope to choose healthier dishes when they have meals in restaurants.

To this end, the DH launched the EatSmart@restaurant.hk Campaign in 2008 to enable the public to identify the EatSmart symbol, so that they can experience for themselves the refreshing feeling of EatSmart dishes. Over the past three years since its implementation, the scheme has gradually won the support of the public at large and the industry. Now, there are more than 650 EatSmart restaurants, 12% up from 2009.

On upgrading the environmental protection awareness at the source of food, the Government has made a lot of efforts in promoting organic farming. Broadly speaking, organic production methods emphasize preservation of the natural elements of products, nonuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in the production process, and no application of synthetic or GM materials. Organic farming, which gives the natural environment of the countryside and agricultural land better protection, is one of the methods to realize the sustainable development of the agricultural industry. Not only can it bring local farmers a unique market with potentially higher returns, it can also provide consumers one more choice of quality local produces.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has along been striving to promote the development of organic farming, advocating the use of sustainable techniques to resolve such technical problems as pest, horticulture, soil management, seed stock, and so on. In recent years, the AFCD

has started exploring organic aquaculture and assisting the industry in conducting experiments on organic aquaculture. I will explain to Honourable Members the latest progress on this front later.

President, the slow food culture is a new issue. The topics covered are very extensive. I believe its central idea should evolve around a healthy life. I am very pleased to listen to the views of Honourable Members. In my concluding speech, I will further respond to Mrs LEUNG's motion as well as the various proposals put forward by other Members.

Thank you, President.

MR CHAN KIN-POR (in Cantonese): President, I am very grateful to Mrs Sophie LEUNG and other Members for proposing the motion on "Promoting a slow food culture" and amendments respectively.

Having wide and far-reaching implications, this motion is not only closely related to the health, living habits and food culture of the public, it is even a manifestation of an art and attitude of living.

The slow food movement originated in the 1980s. In recent years, a slow food culture could be found emerging in Europe, the United States and various parts of the world. Under the vigorous promotion by its academic and cultural sectors, our neighbour, Macao, organized last year a major slow food campaign to promote to its people the spirit of respecting food, cherishing food materials, and so on, with the objective of promoting a healthy dietary habit among them.

In fact, "slow food" is not only confined to chewing slowly when one is eating. It is about everything from knowing about and selecting food materials to admiring cookery techniques and a food culture of enjoying a good meal in a cosy environment. It is also an attitude towards life.

However, the tempo of life of wage earners in Hong Kong is very fast. People can hardly sit down to have a meal slowly, not to mention knowing about the good materials and appreciating culinary skills. During lunch time, Members taking a look in the streets in Central will find that not only are food

premises packed with people, even pavements leading to these premises are "jammed".

I have been told by a colleague that a round walking trip between the West Wing of the Government Secretariat and its nearest Hong Kong-style café in Lan Kwai Fong would take 15 minutes because there are many people and vehicles in the streets. Taking into account the time spent looking for a seat and waiting for food, only about 30 to 35 minutes will be left for the meal. The actual time spent on the meal will become even shorter should one walk a little farther.

Actually, half an hour is basically not enough for a meal. But some wage earners, like taxi drivers, do not even have meal breaks. Because of the need to pay attention to the traffic conditions at all times, they particularly need a lot of energy. But very often, they do not have regular meal time. They can only have their meals wherever their vehicles take them. Some drivers even eat lunch boxes in their vehicles. Over time, their health will be adversely affected.

There is indeed a need for the Government to enhance public education and, at the same time, collaborate with the business sector in taking forward standard working hours and promoting the notion and living attitude of a slow food culture. At least, wage earners should be given regular and reasonable meal breaks.

President, to cultivate any food culture, an immediate and indispensable task is to ensure food safety. Although Hong Kong is hailed as a culinary capital, we frequently hear people complain on the mention of food in Hong Kong that they have nothing to eat because all foods are problematic.

In fact, food imported into Hong Kong from abroad has constantly been plagued with problems in recent years. After the occurrence of problems one after another with pork, fish, chicken and eggs, even vegetables have been found problematic. In a random check conducted recently by the Hong Kong Baptist University on nearly 100 vegetable samples, the level of cadmium in one of the samples from the Mainland was found to have exceeded the limit by 1.4 times. In addition, the lead levels in 11 other samples were found to have exceeded the international limits, though still below the local limit. It is found that Hong Kong's statutory standard for the heavy metal content of vegetables is quite lax.

Among others, Hong Kong's standard for lead content is 20 times less stringent than that adopted by the Europe Union.

Given that the food supplies to Hong Kong rely mainly on imports from abroad, it is indeed imperative for the Government to review Hong Kong's mechanism for testing food safety to ensure the food consumed by members of the public is safe and exert its utmost to protect public health.

Despite the rapid development of Hong Kong economy, many Hong Kong people actually maintain a simple living style. Being able to feed ourselves and having a roof over our heads should originally be our most basic requirements. But at present, property prices are very high in Hong Kong. Moreover, we have to pay a lot for food and food safety is questioned from time to time. It is indeed imperative for the Government to consider carefully the real needs of the public.

Chinese people like to say to one another "please enjoy your meal slowly" before their meals. I hope the Government can really keep tabs on the pulse of the people by making more concrete efforts to enable Hong Kong people to eat safely while really "enjoying their meal slowly", savouring every moment of their lives by adjusting their pace of life as they wish, and enjoying a healthy work-life balance in their lives.

President, I so submit.

MR CHEUNG KWOK-CHE (in Cantonese): President, there is a saying that "food is people's paramount concern". People in Guangdong Province take food most seriously. But regrettably, Hong Kong people lead a fast pace of life and have irregular meal breaks. Even if they have time to eat, they are very often in a great hurry. In particular, it is getting harder and harder for them to have a good meal while at work.

It is particularly meaningful for Mrs Sophie LEUNG to take the initiative to propose this motion today, because she can take the lead to promote this slow food culture in the industry represented by her, such that wage earners in Hong Kong can enjoy their meals at ease.

As regards how to promote the food culture, I believe the simplest and most direct way is to give wage earners longer lunch hours and stipulate standard working hours. As the saying goes, "Nobody with a head of hair will want to look bald." I believe all wage earners definitely want to spend more time on their meals while at work and even after work. If they do not need to work overtime, they will have more time to buy groceries and prepare their meals as well as spending time with their family members.

On 23 June last year, a motion on "legislating for 'standard working hours'" but with no legislative effect was proposed in this Council. This motion precisely sought to fight for Hong Kong people a more reasonable working environment and living space. I wonder if Mrs LEUNG, who expressed disapproval at that time, will change her mind and support the stipulation of standard working hours this time around as well as putting her words into action through promoting the food culture?

In fact, even if we have time, we might not be allowed to eat slowly because many restaurants create an atmosphere that make diners leave as soon as they have finished their meals. However, we cannot blame people in the catering industry. Let us imagine this. Some restaurants running on a small capital do not make much gross profit. If all diners spend an hour on their meals during the peak hours, the business of these restaurants will definitely be dealt a heavy blow.

After all, high land prices and rents are to be blamed. As rents account for a substantial part of the costs of restaurants, restaurant owners will not change this mindset should rents remain high. As a result, there is little chance for diners to enjoy their meals at ease.

President, an economist proposed earlier that the Budget should abolish salaries tax to encourage Hong Kong people to work harder and make more money. I find this proposal ridiculous indeed. Are Hong Kong people not working hard enough? In terms of working hours alone, Hong Kong ranks first among all developed cities in the world. If even such data cannot demonstrate Hong Kong people's diligence, does it mean that we have to go back to the 1960s when people worked more than 10 hours a day before Hong Kong people can be regarded as hardworking?

Let me quote the concept of "habitus" by a French sociologist, P BOURDIEU. The culture of Hong Kong people of swallowing everything and emphasizing speed and efficiency in dealing with everything has actually taken root in our way of thinking and become the "habitus" of Hong Kong people for a long time. As such behaviour has been taken for granted and even regarded as one of the merits of Hong Kong people for a long time, it is indeed not easy to change.

Hence, the promotion of a slow food culture should begin with the Government. It should change its way of thinking of sticking to the old rut and turning a blind eye to the plight of the people by stipulating standard working hours and paid meal breaks (for at least one hour), take immediate actions to improve its land and housing policies to increase supply to satisfy the needs of the market, and adopt measures to alleviate pressure of rents to enable all people in the territory to live in contentment and enjoy their lives.

We can see that only Secretary Dr York CHOW attends this meeting today on behalf of the Government. I hope the Secretary can relay our views to different Policy Bureaux, particularly Mr Matthew CHEUNG, Secretary for Labour and Welfare, for information.

President, I so submit.

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

MR WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): Good morning, President.

This motion debate proposed by Mrs Sophie LEUNG is very good indeed, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs LEUNG for proposing it. I speak in support of the original motion and Mr IP Wai-ming's amendment.

President, "slow food", that is, to eat slowly, is a very romantic idea, and I also wish to do so. However, can we really be so romantic in reality as to enjoy our food slowly? I think it is very nice of Mrs LEUNG, being a representative of the business and industrial sectors, to propose this scrupulous motion debate, and I am very grateful to Mrs LEUNG, as a concerned Member and employers'

representative, to propose such a good motion debate. I very much hope the spirit of Mrs LEUNG's original motion will be widely accepted among members of the business and industrial sectors and employers, and also realized in the employer-employee relationship.

President, I wish to cite two examples in my remarks to explain why a slow food culture, which is as ideal as heaven, can hardly be realized in Hong Kong realistically.

The first live case I would like to cite is that among the property management agents providing outsourced services engaged by public housing estates managed by the Housing Department, some — I said "some" because I have to avoid over-generalization — are most unscrupulous actually. How do they enable their staff to eat slowly? I believe Mrs LEUNG has never heard of the "slow food" practices implemented by them. Some property management agents providing outsourced services in public housing estates in Tin Shui Wai divide their staff's eight-hour shift into three segments each day, so that they work two to three hours in the morning, three hours in the afternoon and two hours in the evening. This seems to be a very good arrangement because after working for three hours in the morning, the staff have plenty of time to do their shopping and cooking and then take their meals slowly, and they also have two hours after they are off duty in the evening so that they can take their time to do shopping and cooking and take their meals slowly.

However, what is the implication of this arrangement in reality? The staff actually have to spend over 10 hours to finish the original eight-hour shift, and they are not paid for the time in between. This way, the staff can really take their time at meals. They have to go back to work again after taking their meals, and they have to spend over 10 hours at work. Besides, if the staff cannot finish their work within the two-hour segment in the evening, they have to work overtime without pay.

If this is the kind of "slow food" benefit offered, then these contract employees of outsourced services would rather not have it. If even contractors of outsourced services receiving government subsidies do so, does the Government not have a duty to address this problem? Does the Government hope that the situation would turn out this way? Therefore, I hope the Government will review the situation. This is precisely why Mr IP Wai-ming

proposed in his amendment to legislate for standard working hours. This is the first example.

I will now cite another example to illustrate why I consider the slow food culture proposed by Mrs LEUNG very romantic. Are we requiring the existing bus companies in Hong Kong to advocate "slow food" practices? They would rather that their staff gulp down their food in 10 minutes, and even unzip their stomach and dump the food into it and finish their meal in 10 to 15 minutes. Can drivers employed by the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB), Citybus Limited (CTB) and the New World First Bus Services Limited (NWFB) be so romantic as to take half an hour for meals? Certainly not.

President, it will suffice to take the Lai Tak Tsuen Bus Terminus in your constituency as an example. President, do you realize that there is no water and electricity supply in that bus terminus, and one cannot buy any food anywhere almost 1 000 m around it? That being the case, how could bus drivers have their meals? There are also mosquitoes in that place. Once, I went on a site visit to Lai Tak Tsuen together with representatives from the Transport Department, the Highways Department (HyD), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Home Affairs Department and persons-in-charge of the bus companies. We asked them why they did not provide electricity supply to enable drivers to take a short break and take their meals in a covered rest area. It would not be so harsh on drivers this way. In reply, representatives from the HyD said laying cables would cost more than \$100,000, and representatives from the bus companies even asked in return how they could spend more than \$100,000 on cabling.

It has been more than one year since last summer, and the Lai Tak Tsuen Bus Terminus — President, it is in your constituency — has been set up for a long time, and workers still have to work in such an environment where they are even unable to take their meals at ease.

Let me talk about my constituency — the New Territories West constituency. Both the first and the last stop of Route B1 running between Tin Shui Wai and Lok Ma Chau do not have proper rest room facilities for bus captains, and so drivers can only take their meals outdoors, exposed to the risk of mosquito bites. Frankly, they have to answer the call of nature, yet they are even not provided with the relevant facilities. Thus, these drivers could only

"take in but not excrete". It is already hard for them to take their meals, and it is also hard for them to find toilet facilities.

Therefore, I very much hope that Mrs LEUNG's motion on a slow food culture will really be widely publicized among members of the business sector. I believe there are still bosses who are concerned and kind, but as a matter of fact, there are many unscrupulous bosses who will not give any regard to issues relating to the meals of the public or workers.

Thank you, President.

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

DR MARGARET NG (in Cantonese): President, I speak in support of the amendments proposed by Mr IP Wai-ming, Ms Audrey EU and Mr Fred LI. President, these amendments are very important because item (f) of the original motion requires the Government to promote a slow food culture and step up public education so as to promote the concept and attitude of living of a slow food culture among the public. President, as mentioned by a number of Members just now, we have now adopted a fast food or even super fast food culture not because we are not cultured or educated, but because the social values and environment under the prevailing economic development in society do not allow us to adopt a slow food culture.

President, I came from a farmer family, and the snacks I had in my childhood, such as steamed glutinous rice dumplings, Hakka rice cakes and sweet soup, were all homemade. We did not have snacks sold in shops, and all our snacks were slow food. We did not realize that they were slow food back then. When we went to school, we even prepared our lunch at home and packed it in a vacuum flask. We did not realize that it was slow food. We always thought that these were the kinds of food one would have when one had meals at home. I still remember that when fast-food restaurants first appeared in Hong Kong, we professionals from the middle-class were strongly opposed to this fast food culture. How could a mother not prepare lunch for her children and even buy such dishes as stir-fried rice noodle with beef or whatever fried rice from fast-food restaurants and share them with her children? Later, when I thought

about it, I came to realize that this mother was probably so busy that she simply could not spare any time for cooking. So, buying lunch from fast-food restaurants would make life easier for her. Therefore, President, fast food came into being not because we were not cultured or educated, nor was it because we did not know how to distinguish tasty and nutritious food from bland, junk food, but because life was excruciating.

Therefore, I very much agree to Ms Audrey EU's amendment. This "consequence" is caused by the mindset of Hong Kong's economic development should override everything, which has given rise to the structural problems and the fast pace of life. This is the "consequence". Therefore, in order to alleviate the impact of this "consequence", we have to go back to the "cause". That is, we have to examine the objective of economic and labour conditions necessary for building a slow food culture, such as promoting standard working hours and lengthening lunch time. Therefore, just now I was indeed very shocked to hear Mr WONG Yung-kan say that he did not support Ms Audrey EU's amendment because we think legislation is the only way out. Actually, Ms Audrey EU only proposed studying these practices because if these situations cannot be improved, it would be difficult to build a slow food culture.

What is more, if Mrs Sophie LEUNG's motion debate today only focuses on tourism, and since gourmet dishes such as shark's fin and abalone, whatever mousse and everything else have already been used as attractions (we have not tried them before), after much painstaking thoughts, slow food is now proposed. If this is the only reason for proposing this motion debate, it is indeed a motion of "Why do the people not eat meat porridge?" However, if Mrs Sophie LEUNG intends to promote a healthy food culture, a different lifestyle, a more cultured lifestyle with a touch of more humanity in society, then I would consider it very important to improve the relevant conditions. Now, we are talking about something more than a fad. We also hope our society will attach importance to human dignity and family relationships. Therefore, I think this amendment is very important.

Many Members representing the labour sector have already spoken on this point. Actually, this issue is related not only to the labour sector. Every member of the community can feel that the culture of our society is being damaged gradually. Therefore, in order to improve the situation, we must address the problem at root. Thus, I implore Mr WONG Yung-kan and the

political party represented by him to give some thoughts to this issue. Actually, Ms Audrey EU's amendment and Mr IP Wai-ming's amendment are cognate. I hope Members will be sincere towards slow food and the life of the labour sector and various sectors in the community, and refrain from supporting certain causes while opposing others for political reasons.

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

MR JEFFREY LAM (in Cantonese): President, I am very glad that Mrs Sophie LEUNG has proposed this motion debate on a slow food culture today. Chinese people attach great importance to various aspects of life, including clothing, food, accommodation and transportation, and food is one of them.

I think that insofar as this subject is concerned today, we should place the focus of our discussion on a slow food culture. Some Members have digressed from the subject and focused on other issues, and I even think that some Members have tried to politicize the subject. Back to a slow food culture, I think in taking meals, lunch or afternoon tea, it is most important to understand that God would like us to enjoy the food in front of us, and so we should enjoy it.

As a Chinese saying goes, "Do not speak at meals or in sleep". Why do people sometimes spend such a long time at meals? At banquets, sometimes people spend two hours to make a speech, and some people just keep talking and spend 45 minutes on chatting. Why do I sometimes eat so fast? Not that I do not appreciate this slow food culture, but because I have to finish the food on my plate before the other party starts talking, as I am afraid my food would be sprinkled with his saliva.

I think a slow food culture should actually be promoted. However, I think we should all the more promote the idea of "Do not speak at meals or in sleep". It is more desirable not to speak too much at meals. Therefore, I am not going to talk too much today, and that is all I have to say.

Thank you, 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 Sophie LEUNG, you may now speak on the four amendments. The speaking time limit is five minutes.

MRS SOPHIE LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, just now I heard some Members say that we should not politicize the issue, but in recent meetings, some people, particularly those young people sitting in the public gallery, tried to politicize certain trivial matters and exaggerate them. Sometimes, it is hard to deal with such situations.

I have proposed this motion debate today only for the benefit of the health of the next generation. I believe students or teachers may I also wish to call on teachers to gain a better understanding of the subject. Even Jamie OLIVER, a prominent chef in London, is concerned about whether the food students have at school should be led by a slow food culture or a fast food culture. This is for the benefit of their health. I only wish to look at the issue from this perspective, but unfortunately, Members have overplayed the issue or failed to understand a slow food culture.

President, I am very sympathetic towards the issues that many Honourable colleagues have always been concerned about. If they wish to discuss issues of concern to them, why do they not graciously propose motion debates on them and express their views to their hearts' content? I would also join such discussions. However, they have insisted on bringing up something which is irrelevant. This is not only hijacking but also a complete dismissal of the subject. I cannot support such practices, nor can I agree to them.

I think a real man should act in an upright manner. When there are issues of concern, one should bring them up graciously and fight for them. Why should one fight for them by trampling on others? Is it admirable? Is it gracious? If one cannot achieve the purpose this way, why would one bother to do so? If you do not understand this subject, you can actually do some research and try to find out what Jamie OLIVER is doing.

The problem of obesity is very serious among children in Hong Kong, and they are physically not as fit as children in other places. Just forget about other countries for the time being. Compared with children in Singapore or Japan, children in Hong Kong do not have sufficient physical education classes, and neither do they have good eating habits. Is it necessarily good for children to share a dish of fried noodles or fried rice noodles with their mother? If I really do not have time, I would wash away some seasoning with a cup of boiling water. This is no difficult task at all.

Certainly, when it comes to the issue of domestic helpers, I think it is a very serious and solemn issue and should be discussed in a separate context rather than including it in a totally irrelevant amendment, which displays a total failure to take this subject today seriously. Therefore, I cannot support these amendments which have deviated from the subject. Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): President, today's motion debate on a slow food culture is only an introduction. Just now Members have put forward various proposals covering a wide spectrum of aspects. Apart from covering the agricultural and fishery policy, food safety and environmental protection, they also cover such policy areas as education, conservation and even labour. On behalf of the Government, I will give a consolidated response.

First, the development of the agricultural and fisheries industry. Agricultural and fishery produces are the sources of food. Hong Kong started out as a fishing village, and quality local agricultural and fishery produces are very popular among members of the public. I very much agree to the point made by Mr WONG Yung-kan just now, that it is the Government's fundamental policy to support the sustainable development of the local agricultural and fisheries industry.

The Government has all along been upholding the principles of free market, and the allocation of social resources is determined by market forces. However, the Government has been committed to providing infrastructure and technical support services to fishermen and farmers to facilitate the development of modern, efficient, safe and environmentally-friendly agricultural and fishery production.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) launched the Agricultural Land Rehabilitation Scheme to assist land owners and potential tenants and members of the public who intend to lease a piece of agricultural land to reach a tenure agreement. When the farmer starts land preparation, the AFCD will provide services such as technical support and low-interest loans to the farmer, such that abandoned lands can be better utilized and local agricultural production increased.

To meet the market demand for quality and safe food, the AFCD has been identifying new species suitable for local production and with good market potential. After successful planting and breeding trials, the AFCD will promote these new species to farmers. Quality species developed in recent years include organic strawberries, small-fruited tomatoes, pumpkins, red fresh water melons and green flesh rock melons.

Regarding the sustainable development of the fisheries industry, through talks, demonstrations, seminars, training workshops and technical leaflets, the AFCD has also been introducing improved quality species to fish farmers. The AFCD also provides them with technical support and training to enhance the technical and management skills of the fishery sector. In recent years, the AFCD has also succeeded in introducing jade perch and transferred the culture and fry rearing techniques of jade perch to fish farmers. To encourage fish farmers to participate in developing local fish fry hatcheries, the AFCD has established an experimental hatchery in Ta Kwu Ling since 2008 and worked with the Fisheries Development Center in the Mainland to develop grouper fry hatchery techniques and provide training to fishermen.

Last week, I briefed the relevant panel of the Legislative Council on the latest progress in taking forward the policy initiative of introducing a trawl ban in Hong Kong waters. The Government has introduced this initiative in order to restore our seabed and marine resources as early as possible for the benefit of our next generation in the long run. To assist the fishermen affected by the trawl ban, the Government proposes to bundle the trawl ban with the introduction of a voluntary buy-out scheme as well as the *ex gratia* allowance for the affected trawler fishermen. I hope this initiative will receive the support of the Legislative Council.

Consumers are becoming more health and environment conscious. Members of the public are generally mindful of the benefits of diets on personal health, in particular, the importance of more fruit and vegetable intake. As the standards of production and monitoring regime of local agricultural and fishery products are more transparent, consumers are naturally more confident about the safe consumption of local agricultural and fishery products. Besides, fresh local agricultural products are certainly more tasty and nutritious. These have made local agricultural and fishery products more appealing than imports and have secured more market access for local fishermen and farmers. In this regard, the Government has introduced a number of initiatives to assist the industries in providing the public with quality, safe and fresh local non-staple food produce such as fruits and vegetables.

The AFCD has all along been actively helping local farmers develop quality brand names. It has implemented the Accredited Farm Scheme to promote good agricultural practice, enhance the quality of products, enable the public to identify safe and quality agricultural products and enhance consumers' confidence in the quality of these products. Vegetables accredited under this Scheme must go through quality assurance tests and be subject to pesticide residue monitoring to ensure that pesticide residue of the produce meets the safety standards. Since the Scheme was launched, a total of 251 local farms have registered under it.

Regarding the fisheries industry, the AFCD and the Fish Marketing Organization (FMO) developed the brand name of "Accredited Fish Farms" for quality local fishery products to showcase the quality and safety of local fishery products. Participating fish farms are required to adopt a set of good aquaculture practices, and quality assurance tests, including analyses of drug residues and heavy metals in fish, are conducted to ensure that all cultured fish meet food safety standards before they are sold in the market. All accredited fishery products carry tags bearing the label of "Accredited Fish Farm Scheme" for easy recognition. Since the scheme was launched, a total of 99 fish farms (33 fish ponds and 66 mariculture farms), representing 19% of the total area of local fish farms, have registered under the scheme.

The AFCD also assists the industries in promoting local fishery products, including setting up weekend farmers' markets and promoting large-scale promotional activities with a view to enabling the public to gain a better

understanding of local fishery products and promoting local brands. To advocate sustainable farming and promote quality local agricultural and fishery products, the AFCD has organized the annual FarmFest for five years in a row, attracting an entry of a total of 700 000, and the sales volume of agricultural and fishery products have repeatedly hit new highs, which is indeed encouraging.

I wish to take this opportunity to dispel public misconceptions about organic food. Overseas studies show that food produced organically and conventionally do not have any significant difference in terms of nutrition, and neither is there any significant difference between organic food and conventional food in terms of food safety. Their difference mainly lies in the method of production, processing and handling. As organic farming is more conducive to the sustainable development of the ecological environment, it is very popular among the people of Hong Kong.

The development of organic farming is one of the major initiatives vigorously promoted by the AFCD. Under the Organic Farming Conversion Scheme launched by the AFCD, the total number of organic farms in Hong Kong has increased from 71 over the past five years to 155 at present, and the daily supply of organic agricultural produces in the market has also increased from about 2.5 tonnes to 4 tonnes. It is estimated that the value involved has increased by two to three times on average.

The AFCD began to explore the feasibility of organic aquaculture and help the industry carry out the first organic aquaculture trials in 2009. The relevant products were launched onto the market at the beginning of this year, and the response has been positive. At present, two organic aquafarms have been awarded organic certificates by the Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre (HKORC). The AFCD will encourage more fishermen to participate in organic aquafarming. It will also develop more organic aquaculture products and other aquaculture products in collaboration with the industry to give the industry and consumers more choices.

The AFCD has all along been providing an annual funding of over \$4 million to the HKORC through the Vegetable Marketing Organization (VMO) to promote the development and implementation of a certification standard for organic production and processing. The Organic Production and Processing Standard adopted by the HKORC was stipulated with reference to the organic

standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and those adopted by other places in the world, after giving full regard to various factors such as actual local conditions. The number of local farms and plants that have been awarded organic certificates by the HKORC has increased from four in 2005 to 89 at present. This growth in number can fully demonstrate that local farmers and members of the public have confidence in the certification services provided by the HKORC.

We will step up public education on organic food and keep a watch on the development of the market. I know that the HKORC has all along been committed to enhancing the knowledge of local farmers, consumers and the public of the certification of organic produce and products through educational activities. One of these activities is the fourth annual Organic Day to be organized by the HKORC next Sunday with a view to enhancing the public's knowledge in this respect.

In the following, I will respond to Mr WONG Yung-kan's proposal on expanding the local poultry and livestock industries. There are now 73 licensed livestock farms in Hong Kong, with a rearing capacity of as many as 1.3 million chickens and 74 000 pigs, and the overall rearing capacity of livestock farms is generally maintained at 70% to 80% of the maximum rearing capacity.

In formulating policies on the poultry and livestock industries, the Government's primary consideration is definitely public health. I believe Members will also agree to this viewpoint. The existing low risk of avian flu and other zoonotic diseases in Hong Kong, which is not easy to come by, can be attributed to the effective implementation of various preventive and control measures over the years at the farm, wholesale, retail and import levels. As the risk of avian flu and other zoonotic diseases is always there, the Government must assess the overall risk in Hong Kong through thorough scientific argumentation. Actually, in planning, the State has already placed livestock farms in places away from urban areas. If the local poultry and livestock industries are expanded at will, the ability of Hong Kong to prevent and control zoonotic diseases and other veterinary diseases may be undermined. The Government will continue to work with the poultry and livestock industries to maintain various initiatives to prevent and control veterinary diseases and ensure that the supply of poultry and livestock will be maintained at a stable level.

President, the saying that "food is people's paramount concern, yet food safety is people's primary concern" has become popular in the Mainland recently. For Hong Kong, which is a culinary capital, food safety is vitally important. Since 2008, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) has established the Food Safety Charter to encourage food associations, food outlets, food retailers and other members of the food trade to become signatories of the Charter every year so as to provide consumers with quality services underpinned by food safety. At present, 21 food associations and 2 052 food premises have signed the Charter. Members of the public may identify the signatory status by the certificate and logo of the Food Safety Charter displayed in the shops. They may also refer to the list of signatories posted on the CFS website to choose the appropriate shops.

Besides, the Nutrition Labelling Scheme came into operation on 1 July last year. All applicable prepackaged food are required to label the content of "7+1", that is, energy plus seven specified nutrients, namely protein, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, carbohydrates, sugars and sodium, and nutrition claims must comply with the stipulated conditions. After the passage of the legislation on the Nutrition Labelling Scheme in mid-2008, the CFS has been organizing various publicity and education activities to enhance consumers' knowledge of the merits of the Nutrition Labelling Scheme and help them make informed choices using the information on nutrition labels, thereby cultivating good dietary habits.

Some Members brought up the issue of genetically modified (GM) food. The CFS has all along been committed to providing information on GM food to the public through different channels, such as seminars and roving exhibitions. Regarding GM food labelling, in 2006, the CFS published Guidelines on Voluntary Labelling of Genetically Modified Food, which serves as reference for the trade to make truthful and informative GM food labels for consumers. Besides, we will pay close attention to the relevant discussions and the latest development in the international community and will continue to conduct education activities on GM food and maintain close communication with the trade, consumer concern groups and other stakeholders.

The use of pesticides is another issue of concern to Members. The Government has always been concerned about the possible effects of pesticide residues in food to public health. The CFS regularly takes food samples, including vegetables and cereals at import, wholesale and retail levels to assess whether the pesticide residues are hazardous to human health. To better protect

public health, facilitate effective regulatory control and promote harmonization between local and international standards, the Government proposes to introduce new legislation to regulate pesticide residues in food. The CFS is conducting technical meetings with the trade to gauge their views on the proposed regulatory plan. It plans to conduct public consultation in the middle of the year and introduce the relevant legislation into the Legislative Council at the end of the year.

The Government has spared no effort in promoting healthy diets among school children. Based on the "Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health" advocated by the World Health Organization, we encourage the public to improve their eating habits. As obesity has become an increasingly serious problem among school children, it is important to help them develop and form a healthy eating habit since childhood. In collaboration with the Education Bureau, the Department of Health (DH) has implemented the "EatSmart@school.hk" Campaign in all primary schools in Hong Kong since the 2006-2007 school year. The Campaign covers four areas, namely, research and evaluation, education and support, creation of a supportive environment and publicity and advocacy. Under the Campaign, the DH compiles and regularly updates Nutritional Guidelines on School Lunch for Primary School Students and Nutritional Guidelines on Snacks for Primary School Students, which serve as important reference on the daily nutritional requirement of primary school students. Besides, the DH also provides relevant training to schools, parents and food suppliers to enhance the nutritional value of school lunch and snacks. In the 2009-2010 school year, over 400 primary schools, including special schools, have participated in the major activities of the "EatSmart@school.hk" Campaign.

To further provide guidance and assistance for schools in developing a healthier and more sustainable eating environment in schools, the DH has launched the "EatSmart School Accreditation Scheme" since the 2009-2010 school year. Under the Scheme, schools are motivated to develop top-down and bottom-up policies and measures on healthy diet, and with full co-operation between home and school, to effectively implement the food quality requirements issued by the DH regarding the supply of lunch and food available at school tuck shops or vending machines. This serves to ensure that there will be a "nutrition friendly" environment for school children in their learning and nurturing. As at the end of February this year, 180 primary schools have participated in the relevant Scheme, with 18 of them having attained accreditation.

Besides, the Education Bureau has included "Developing a healthy lifestyle" as one of the key areas in formulating the learning objectives of the curriculum in order to encourage students to achieve the objectives through actions. As regards the learning of various subjects, related topics are incorporated into the curricula such as Physical Education and General Studies. Take the primary school curriculum for General Studies as an example, the strand of "Health and Living" was designed to help students acquire knowledge and skills and develop a positive attitude in relation to healthy eating. Besides, schools also formulate school-based curriculum and implement different strategies through multi-entry points, such as moral education, civic education and diversified learning opportunities, to promote students' whole-person development and help them develop a healthy lifestyle by incorporating into the curriculum concepts and abilities such as self-care, regular living pattern and effective exercise.

The original motion and the amendments also proposed to promote leisure tourism. In recent years, quite a few such activities have emerged in Hong Kong. For example, there are operations, such as organic farming, leisure farming, fruit picking or farm tours, targeted at schools, enterprises and local tours to enhance the public's knowledge of the sources, production and quality of food.

The AFCD has also compiled *A guide to Hong Kong Leisure Farm*, which is a brochure with unique characteristics distributed to schools, District Councils and libraries for free. In May last year, the AFCD also organized a seminar on leisure farming to help members of the industry improve their farm operation and provide a platform for them to exchange their expertise and experience. Besides, the AFCD also provides technical support to people who intend to engage in leisure agricultural operations.

Moreover, the Home Affairs Department also provides information on unique scenic spots and attractions in various districts on its website "Hong Kong Fun in 18 Districts". All the 18 District Offices have been providing support to District Councils in taking forward initiatives to promote the unique scenic spots in their respective districts, including the Produce Green Organic Farm in Fanling and the organic farm in Yuen Long, thereby enhancing the public's sense of belonging to their districts and boosting local economy.

As regards overseas visitors, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has been promoting the tourism profile of combined eco-tourism and culinary tourism to attract overseas visitors interested in natural attractions. For example, it has provided the platform of "Great Outdoors Hong Kong!" to publicize the natural attractions of Hong Kong and introduce local delicacies and organic farms which are open to tourists. Besides, it has arranged for overseas media to interview local gourmets who advocate a slow food culture, so that they can share their views and experience concerning slow food, promote the diverse food culture of Hong Kong and actively encourage the industry to introduce itineraries, such as tours to enjoy "poon choi" banquets in walled villages in the New Territories.

The AFCD has also been providing appropriate training to fishermen who are interested in switching to leisure fishery operations. Since 2002, the AFCD has introduced a scheme to allow fish farmers to operate leisure fishery business at their fish rafts, provided that the mariculture environment and public safety are assured. So far, 37 licensees at 10 fish culture zones have participated in the scheme.

The original motion also proposed to enable members of the public to protect the environment and treasure nature through dietary options. I would like to take this opportunity to talk about the Government's education and publicity efforts in encouraging the public and the relevant industries to reduce food waste.

To reduce food waste and disposable lunch boxes, the Environment Bureau and the Education Bureau jointly launched the Green Lunch Charter in February last year to encourage schools to use reusable cutlery and containers and implement on-site lunch portioning by all means to reduce food waste, thereby promoting green living, impressing upon students, teachers and parents the concept of conserving food and helping students develop an awareness of the values of environmental conservation. At present, almost 300 schools have signed the Charter. The Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) has earmarked \$150 million to assist schools to install the necessary equipment for implementing on-site meal portioning. Over 200 schools have indicated interest in applying for funding under the ECF. So far, 62 applications have been approved, and 35 schools have completed the relevant installation works and will implement on-site meal portioning starting from the 2010-2011 school year.

The ECF also supports related education activities organized by non-profit-making organizations, such as the "Save Food Day" campaign. Under this campaign, participating restaurants or schools offer a discount of \$1 to members of the public or students who request less rice to encourage the public to reduce food waste. Besides, the Government is formulating a plan to provide funding under the ECF to support housing estates in recycling and handling food waste.

President, in the motion debate today, there are amendments referring to standard working hours and rest/meal break arrangements for employees. It is the Government's established policy to progressively improve employees' rights and benefits in a way that strikes a reasonable balance between employers' and employees' interests and which is commensurate with the pace of Hong Kong's economic and social development. We understand that extended working hours may have adverse impact on the family and social lives as well as health of employees. Therefore, the Labour Department (LD) has been actively promoting good personnel management and family-friendly employment practices (FFEP). Through organizing various sustained publicity programmes and the network of the 18 Human Resources Managers Clubs and nine industry-based Tripartite Committees, the LD has been encouraging enterprises to engage in frank communication and co-operation with employees in formulating measures to help employees balance responsibilities at work and in family.

Standard working hours is a complex issue. At present, employers, employees and various sectors of the community have divergent views on whether standard working hours should be introduced in Hong Kong. As the issue would have far-reaching implications on Hong Kong society and our economy, we must be cautious in dealing with it. Following the Chief Executive's announcement of the Policy Address this year, the LD has activated the policy study on standard working hours. The LD is collecting information on working hours regulation in other places and examining ways for collecting the statistics on working hours in Hong Kong.

There is no legislative provision on the length of rest/meal breaks and whether they should be remunerated. Similar to other employment terms, arrangements for rest/meal breaks are usually made through negotiation between employers and employees. They can agree on the appropriate arrangements having regard to the circumstances of individual enterprises and personal needs of employees. Besides, different industries have different modes of operation.

For example, some employees may choose to have their meals out of the workplace while employees of certain industries have to take their meals in their workplace. Employers and employees may agree on meal break arrangements acceptable to both sides through negotiation having regard to individual circumstances.

In addition, the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Cap. 509) requires that an employer shall ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the safety and health of their employees at work. In order to make employers understand their legal obligations, the LD publicizes and promotes proactively the importance of providing appropriate rest breaks for employees. Through the publication of the "Guide on Rest Breaks" (the Guide), the LD also encourages employers and employees to work out through consultation rest break arrangements which meet the different operational needs of various businesses. The Guide was formulated by the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health under the Labour Advisory Board following consultation with employers' representatives, employees' representatives and occupational safety and health professionals. The LD will continue to widely publicize the Guide through different channels.

President, Hong Kong is a densely populated city with a population of over 7 million, and coupled with rapid urbanization and economic development, we cannot solely rely on local agricultural or fishery products to satisfy the needs of the public. As the public generally expect that a diversified supply of food produce is available in the market, food supply in Hong Kong relies heavily on import from the Mainland and abroad. Nevertheless, the Government will continue to promote the development of local agricultural and fisheries industries and capitalize on the advantages of local natural resources.

I understand that the lifestyle and activity space of the public are often subject to environmental constraints. Although we always encourage the public to get closer to nature and stretch themselves and get some fresh air in country parks, some people may not have the time to do so as they have to work very hard to make a living. Nevertheless, I hope each member of the public will be able to choose an appropriate lifestyle, foster healthy living and balanced dietary habits, exercise more and cultivate healthy interests and hobbies in order to maintain the psychological and mental well-being both at work and in living. I certainly hope members of the public will stay away from tobacco and avoid alcohol abuse. To protect public health, the Government will continue to encourage and help the

public to quit smoking through publicity, education and cessation programmes and publicize the harmful effects of alcohol among the public.

President, the scope of the subject today is very broad. I believe many Members are like me in that although they advocate a slow food culture, they may not be able to adopt slow food practices. I may not be able to dine at home once a week. Just like many Members, I sometimes have to attend several events in the same evening. This merits more thinking. When I was young, I once worked in Europe, where I came to learn that in some countries, particularly Mediterranean countries, people would take a two-hour lunch break and a siesta before going back to work. Certainly, these countries are either facing economic problems or heavily indebted. However, in order to strike a balance for society as a whole, how we make policy and other decisions is vitally important. Therefore, President, regardless of whether a slow food culture is adopted, the people of Hong Kong have begun to attach increasingly greater attention to healthy diets and good living habits, and they are also very concerned about environmental protection and conservation. Various government departments will continue to vigorously promote personal and community health, food safety, environmental protection, leisure tourism and the sustainable development of the fisheries industry, to enable Hong Kong to become a more diversified, balanced and safe city.

Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr IP Wai-ming, you may now move your amendment.

MR IP WAI-MING (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mrs Sophie LEUNG's motion be amended.

Mr IP Wai-ming moved the following amendment: (Translation)

"To add ", although" after "That"; to delete "but" after "a culinary capital,"; to delete "as well as education" after "sales and promotion" and substitute with ", education as well as work"; to delete "and" after "quality organic food,"; and to add "; Work — (i) to establish a measure on 'paid meal time' for all employees and encourage employers to provide employees

with meal breaks of sufficient duration, so that employees can, after working hard, have an adequate and appropriate amount of time to enjoy food and, at the same time, do not have to eat hastily due to no-pay meal breaks and the need for rushing back to work after taking meals; and (j) to expeditiously set 'standard working hours' to enable all employees in Hong Kong to work, rest and eat according to schedule, so as to rectify the situation of Hong Kong people eating at irregular times and skipping sleep and meals due to work, and to enable people to have more opportunities to eat with their families, with a view to promoting a slow food culture" immediately before the full stop."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Mr IP Wai-ming to Mrs Sophie LEUNG'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)

Mrs Sophie LEUNG rose to claim a division.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mrs Sophie LEUNG 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 Margaret NG, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, Mr WONG Yung-kan, Dr LAM Tai-fai, Mr Paul CHAN, Mr CHAN Kin-por, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che, Mr IP Wai-ming and Mr IP Kwok-him voted for the amendment.

Dr Raymond HO, Mrs Sophie LEUNG, Dr Philip WONG, Mr LAU Wong-fat, Ms Miriam LAU, Mr Abraham SHEK, Mr Vincent FANG, Mr Jeffrey LAM and Mr Andrew LEUNG voted against the amendment.

Mr Paul TSE abstained.

Geographical Constituencies:

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, Mr Fred LI, Mr James TO, Mr CHAN Kam-lam, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Ms Emily LAU, Mr TAM Yiu-chung, Ms Audrey EU, Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Mr LEE Wing-tat, Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming, Mr KAM Nai-wai, Ms Starry LEE, Mr CHAN Hak-kan, Mr WONG Kwok-kin and Mr Albert CHAN voted for the amendment.

Mrs Regina IP voted against the amendment.

Dr Priscilla LEUNG abstained.

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

THE PRESIDENT announced that among the Members returned by functional constituencies, 19 were present, nine were in favour of the amendment, nine against it and one abstained; while among the Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, 19 were present, 16 were in favour of the amendment, one 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 negated.

MS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): President, I move that in the event of further divisions being claimed in respect of the motion "Promoting a slow food culture" or any amendment thereto, this Council do proceed to each of such divisions immediately after the division bell has been rung for one minute.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Ms Miriam LAU be passed.

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

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority respectively of each of the two groups of Members, that is, those returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, who are present. I declare the motion passed.

I order that in the event of further divisions being claimed in respect of the motion "Promoting a slow food culture" or any amendment thereto, this Council do proceed to each of such divisions immediately after the division bell has been rung for one minute.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Ms Audrey EU, you may move your amendment.

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

Ms Audrey EU moved the following amendment: (Translation)

"To delete "Hong Kong is a culinary capital, but the fast pace of life" after "That" and substitute with "as the viewpoint of Hong Kong economic development overriding everything prevails, which has given rise to structural problems and the fast pace of life, it"; and to delete "adopt" after "the Government to" and substitute with "study the objective of economic and labour conditions, etc. necessary for building a slow food culture, such as promoting standard working hours and lengthening lunch time, before adopting"."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Ms Audrey EU to Mrs Sophie LEUNG'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)

Mrs Sophie LEUNG rose to claim a division.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mrs Sophie LEUNG has claimed a division. The division bell will ring for one minute.

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 Margaret NG, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, Dr LAM Tai-fai, Mr Paul CHAN, Mr CHAN Kin-por, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che and Mr IP Wai-ming voted for the amendment.

Dr Raymond HO, Mrs Sophie LEUNG, Dr Philip WONG, Mr WONG Yung-kan, Mr LAU Wong-fat, Ms Miriam LAU, Mr Abraham SHEK, Mr Vincent FANG, Mr Jeffrey LAM, Mr Andrew LEUNG, Mr WONG Ting-kwong and Mr IP Kwok-him voted against the amendment.

Mr Paul TSE abstained.

Geographical Constituencies:

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, Mr Fred LI, Mr James TO, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Ms Emily LAU, Ms Audrey EU, Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Mr LEE Wing-tat, Mr KAM Nai-wai, Mr WONG Kwok-kin and Mr Albert CHAN voted for the amendment.

Mr CHAN Kam-lam, Mr TAM Yiu-chung, Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming, Ms Starry LEE, Mr CHAN Hak-kan and Mrs Regina IP voted against the amendment.

Dr Priscilla LEUNG abstained.

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

THE PRESIDENT announced that among the Members returned by functional constituencies, 20 were present, seven were in favour of the amendment, 12 against it and one abstained; while among the Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, 19 were present, 11 were in favour of the amendment, six 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): Mr Fred LI, you may move your amendment.

MR FRED LI (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mrs Sophie LEUNG's motion be amended.

Mr Fred LI moved the following amendment: (Translation)

"To add ", given that" after "That"; to add "and movement" after "the slow food culture"; to delete "emphasizes" after "recent years, which" and substitute with "emphasize"; to add "opposing genetically modified food, opposing the use of pesticides, educating the public on the hazards of fast food," after "caused by transportation,"; to delete "is" after "traditional eating culture," and substitute with "are"; to delete "in applying" after "to assist local industries" and substitute with ", including helping the organic farming and aquaculture industries to apply"; and to add "support the food certification industry to develop in this regard, explore how to formulate basic specifications, rules, conformity assessment procedures as well as unified standards and signs for organic food certification to prevent manufacturers from deceiving consumers by passing off the sham as the genuine," after "for certification, "."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Mr Fred LI to Mrs Sophie LEUNG'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 WONG Yung-kan, as Mr Fred LI's amendment has been passed, I have given leave for you to revise the terms of your amendment.

MR WONG YUNG-KAN (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mrs Sophie LEUNG's motion as amended by Mr Fred LI be further amended by my revised amendment.

Mr WONG Yung-kan moved the following further amendment to the motion as amended by Mr Fred LI: (Translation)

"To add "; Food supply — (i) to actively explore, on the premise of complying with modern management and public hygiene requirements, expanding the production scale of the local poultry and livestock industries; (j) to encourage mariculturists to rear organic fish and marine produce such as shellfish, and to create favourable conditions for preserving traditional capture fisheries; and Sales and promotion — (k) to actively promote the development of leisure agriculture and fishery industries, and assist the local agriculture and fisheries industries in their transformation" immediately before the full stop."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That Mr WONG Yung-kan's amendment to Mrs Sophie LEUNG's motion as amended by Mr Fred LI be passed.

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority respectively of each of the two groups of Members, that is, those returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, who are present. I declare the amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mrs Sophie LEUNG, you may now reply and you have five minutes 58 seconds.

MRS SOPHIE LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, first of all, I have to tender my apologies to you, for forgetting to declare that I am the Chairman of the Governing Board of the Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre, and in this capacity, I hope to remind Members that many Honourable colleagues have some misunderstanding about a slow food culture. Members may wish to visit our Organic Day exhibition on 17 March in Central.

President, in some 20 minutes just now, the Secretary has spoken on almost everything that may somehow be related to the subject under discussion today. Regarding this issue, I hope we can act out of sincerity and cultivate our moral character. In particular, I hope we can deal with this issue from a broader

perspective of personal responsibilities towards nature and the perspective of the so-called slow food culture.

However, President, it is most unfortunate that Members could only see the superficial meaning of the subject. President, you always teach us to avoid going by the superficial and literal meanings of words. Yet, I consider it a pity that this was practically how Members got the whole issue wrong. However, there is an upside to it. At least, Members can learn something. I have joined this Council for over a decade, but some people still cannot remember my name clearly. At least, we can take it slowly, and after some 10 years or so, we may really be able to understand what is meant by a slow food culture.

Actually, President, I very much hope the Secretary will act out of sincerity like us and speak up and talk about Hong Kong is an international city. Our taste may be very global, and we are also in a better position to raise issues such as what attitude should we adopt towards food and how we can discuss with the Mainland — the place from which most of our food produce is imported — on ways to promote organic farming and organic fishery and agricultural products. In this regard, we should strive to foster better mutual understanding and help our State enhance food safety. I believe we are in the position to do so, and I believe we have the vigour required. I also believe we can achieve this as long as we act out of sincerity.

Actually, I expected very much the Secretary could rise to talk about these, rather than just reading from a script compiled on old information collected by his various assistants. I also hope Members of this Council will make better use of the meeting time here in the Chamber and refrain from always reading from the scripts prepared by their assistants. This is also something I hope Members will contemplate.

President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mrs Sophie LEUNG, as amended by Mr Fred LI and Mr WONG Yung-kan, 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): Members may have to have fast food for lunch today. *(Laughter)*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Motion for adjournment.

I have given permission for Ms Miriam LAU to move a motion for adjournment for debating two issues. The debate on the motion will be divided into two sessions. The first session is to debate the impact on Hong Kong of the Fukushima nuclear plant explosion in Japan and its leakage of radiation as well as the Government's contingency measures raised by Ms Miriam LAU, and the second session is to debate the refusal of Philippine government officials and rescue crew involved in the Manila hostage incident to come to Hong Kong to testify in the Coroner's Court raised by Mr James TO.

As regards the speaking time, each Member may only speak once in each of the two sessions, subject to a speaking time limit of five minutes in each session, and the designated public officers making replies have up to a total of 15 minutes to speak.

Under Rule 16(6) and (7) of the Rules of Procedure, I determine that if at the expiration of 75 minutes from the moving of this motion, there are still Members who wish to speak, I shall extend the period of the debate until all Members who wish to speak have spoken, and the designated public officers have given their replies.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): It is now 11.04 am, the debate shall now proceed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now call upon Ms Miriam LAU to speak and move the motion.

MOTION FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE COUNCIL

MS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): President, I move that this Council do now adjourn for the purpose of debating the following two issues: (a) the impact on Hong Kong of the Fukushima nuclear plant explosion in Japan and its leakage of radiation as well as the Government's contingency measures raised by me; and (b) the refusal of Philippine government officials and rescue crew involved in the Manila hostage incident to come to Hong Kong to testify in the Coroner's Court raised by Mr James TO.

Ms Miriam LAU moved the following motion: (Translation)

"That this Council do now adjourn for the purpose of debating the following two issues:

- (a) the impact on Hong Kong of the Fukushima nuclear plant explosion in Japan and its leakage of radiation as well as the Government's contingency measures (raised by Ms Miriam LAU); and
- (b) the refusal of Philippine government officials and rescue crew involved in the Manila hostage incident to come to Hong Kong to testify in the Coroner's Court (raised by Mr James TO)."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That this Council do now adjourn.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): We now proceed to the first session, that is, to debate the impact on Hong Kong of the Fukushima nuclear plant explosion in Japan and its leakage of radiation as well as the Government's contingency measures raised by Ms Miriam LAU.

Members who wish to speak on this issue will please press the "Request to speak" button.

MS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): President, before I give my remarks, I wish to express my deepest condolences for the deceased and injured in this massive earthquake and tsunami in Japan and my heartfelt sympathy to the victims in Japan. I also hope that the nuclear radiation crisis triggered by the earthquake will be resolved soon.

Actually, the explosion and leakage of radiation in the Fukushima nuclear plant in Japan has not only shown no signs of abating but has even escalated to a point which is almost beyond control. We can hear bad news nearly every day.

According to the latest information, all the six reactors are at serious risk. At a certain point, the level of radiation recorded in the vicinity of the site was 6 600 times above the normal level, and the 50 workers who remained on-site once had to evacuate. All these show that the Fukushima nuclear crisis has gone out of hand.

Our officials held a press conference yesterday afternoon to give an account of the latest development and reassure us that according to their assessment, even if the Fukushima nuclear incident should develop into the worst-case scenario of a Level 7 crisis, it would not have any serious impact on Hong Kong. A few Bureau Directors also made some clarifications and assurances at noon yesterday.

However, after listening to those official remarks, I maintain that there is still much room for improvement. I do not mean to raise alarmist talk, but many

experts have pointed out that the Fukushima crisis may evolve into the most serious Level 7 nuclear disaster, which may be worse than the massive explosion at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant years ago. The Energy Commissioner of the European Union Günther OETTINGER said the nuclear crisis in Japan had totally run out of control, and he even described it as an apocalypse.

Besides, as many as 30 Japanese tourists were found to be contaminated on arrival in Taiwan, and the radiation level on one of them was four times above the normal level. In Hong Kong, however, screening for tourists is only conducted on a voluntary rather than a compulsory basis. Besides, it is only conducted on tourists but not on goods. It seems that a review should be conducted in this respect to examine whether any improvement is required.

Besides, although the Secretary for Security insisted that there is no need to issue at this stage the black Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) for the entire territory of Japan or Tokyo, which is under a radiation threat, a number of countries have begun to evacuate their nationals and personnel from Tokyo. Is it sensible for us to insist on not to issue the black OTA for Tokyo? I strongly hope that the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) will review the relevant arrangements.

As the saying goes, "we cannot be too careful, and we cannot afford to miss anything out". I think members of the public also hope that our Government will adopt both long-term and short-term strategies to forestall short-term problems on the one hand and make long-term planning on the other. The Government may also seek funding approvals from the Legislative Council to enhance its manpower and procure the relevant equipment when necessary.

As Members may know, nuclear radiation is different from floodings or earthquakes. With the latter, the impact may be temporary, but with the former, "once leakage occurs, there will be dire consequences". When animals, plants, soil, sea water, and so on, are contaminated, they will contain radioactive substances many years afterwards or cause different kinds of food to be indirectly contaminated with radiation, thereby posing a threat to human safety.

At present, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) samples food products imported from Japan for examination of radiation level, but how long will such

surveillance last? The Secretary for Food and Health said yesterday that surveillance will be carried out over a period of time in the future. However, will surveillance cease after a certain period of time? The Controller of the CFS said earlier that long-term surveillance and examination of radioactivity level will be carried out on food imports from Japan. However, I do not know who was telling the truth. The Liberal Party hopes that the Government will carry out surveillance on a long-term basis and examine the radioactivity level of all the food imported from Japan in the coming few years so that our food safety will not be compromised.

President, it is very important that a high level of transparency is maintained in information dissemination. If rumours occur, serious threats will result. Therefore, I welcome the announcement of the Security Bureau yesterday on the uniform reporting arrangement under which a press release will be issued every day to inform the public of the latest development and the most accurate information to avoid the spreading of rumours which would cause anxiety among members of the public. I hope this arrangement will be carried out on a sustained basis until the situation of Hong Kong stabilizes.

Finally, Premier WEN Jiabao has decided to launch safety checks on all nuclear facilities throughout the country. I hope the authorities will learn from Japan's experience and review the safety measures in the Daya Bay Nuclear Power Plant and examine whether any improvement should be made.

President, I so submit.

MR WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): President, first, I express my mourning and deep condolences to the citizens affected and stricken by this serious disaster in Japan. At the same time, I express my respect for the 50 brave heroes who are working very hard to bring the situation under control at the Fukushima Nuclear Plant.

President, I wish to use these five minutes to talk about two issues. First, I wish to point out — I have purposely brought along the news headlines of today's newspapers — that the Executive Meeting of the State Council has made four decisions. Premier WEN Jiabao can really sense the urgency of the people and think in the way the people think.

Of the four decisions made by the State Council concerning the Fukushima Nuclear Plant, the first one, according to the reports in the press, it reads to this effect, "First, immediate organization of a comprehensive safety inspection of nuclear facilities. Through a comprehensive and detailed security assessment, we will find out security weaknesses and take relevant measures to ensure absolute security."

In this connection, I believe there is no reason for the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant, which is located 50 km from Hong Kong, to deviate from the decisions made by Premier WEN in this Executive Meeting of the State Council and refuse to carry out inspections. Therefore, although the CLP Power Hong Kong Limited pointed out earlier on that a series of tests on the safety system had been completed recently, this series of tests on the safety systems were carried out prior to the disastrous incident at the Fukushima Nuclear Plant. Since such a decision was made at the Executive Meeting of the State Council yesterday, I believe the SAR Government should urge the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant to comply with the decisions of the State Council by carrying out inspections expeditiously.

Moreover, the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant, like the Fukushima Nuclear Plant, belongs to the category of second-generation nuclear plants and was commissioned 18 years ago. And given the serious nature of this incident, I believe it is necessary and worthwhile to learn from this lesson. Since the Executive Meeting of the State Council has also made such an urgent decision, I believe the Hong Kong SAR Government must comply with this decision by urging the Daya Bay Nuclear Power Plant to comply with the requirements of the State Council and carry out inspections immediately, then give an account to the public to put their minds at ease. This is the first part of my speech.

Coming to the second part of my speech, from yesterday, the Government began to introduce voluntary radiation checks on tourists and travellers from Japan. I believe this arrangement actually reflects the lack of a sense of crisis among government departments in dealing with this issue. Compulsory checks have already been introduced in Taiwan and several dozen people were found to have been contaminated by radiation. However, why are only voluntary checks carried out on tourists and travellers from Japan? This is really incomprehensible.

Moreover, why are voluntary checks carried out only on travellers but no compulsory checks are carried out on luggage and goods? I think this reflects the fact that in ensuring public safety, the Government is slow and insensitive in its responses, so this warrants criticisms. I hope the SAR Government will hear the voices made by us this morning, change the present approach immediately and introduce the measure of compulsory checks on people, objects, goods and luggage.

At the same time, I believe that in respect of the travel alert, the authorities should also escalate the travel alert to the black OTA and even extend its scope to Tokyo and the areas affected by radiation. I believe the areas covered by the black OTA should be adjusted accordingly. If the Government still moves slowly and remains insensitive in its responses, I think it will fall far short of the expectations of the Hong Kong public and leave us deeply disappointed. I hope the Government can hear our appeals. Thank you, President.

MR KAM NAI-WAI (in Cantonese): President, here, I extend my profound condolences to the Japanese people again. I believe it is not just those 50 brave heroes but all Japanese and expatriates living in Japan who have to keep up their efforts, and they also need greater support from other countries.

Yesterday, we asked some urgent questions on the counter-measures taken by the Government. Yesterday, I also asked the Government if it had assessed the impact of the radiation leaks, and if there were adequate manpower, equipment, medicine and supplies. Unfortunately, it turned out that at that time, Secretary Ambrose LEE could not answer them and he had no such information on hand, so it was really astonishing to me. I learnt that subsequently, the Department of Health published some figures, which show that the Government has 140 000 iodine tablets in stock. I believe the Government should carry out a comprehensive stock-taking in response to this incident to see if our equipment for coping with radiation leaks is adequate. It should also publish the relevant figures, in particular, those on the types of equipment that we presently have, for example, the stock of such simple items as protective clothing. The Government should let the public understand the actual situation by adopting transparent approaches. This is a basic requirement.

The second issue is related to drills. Yesterday, Secretary Ambrose LEE also talked about whether or not it was necessary to carry out a territory-wide drill and I learnt from the press today that some officials think that such a drill may cause panic. In fact, the drills that I am talking about are actually similar to those conducted in the past, for example, drills on incidents at the airport, drills on incidents on the MTR and in all of them, members of the public were involved. All these drills were not territory-wide drills but all members of the public could see on television the approaches adopted in the drills and I believe that this is necessary. We are advocating the concept of preparedness. Although it is not a must to carry out a territory-wide drill immediately and the urgency is still not yet so great, it is important to conduct drills on radiation leak prevention to educate the public on how to take preventive measures. Hong Kong people have not the least awareness and concept in this regard but Daya Bay is only a stone's throw away. Although Fukushima is quite far away from us and the radioactive substances will not be carried to Hong Kong in the near future, the concept of preparedness is very important.

President, another point is that just now, some Honourable colleagues have pointed out the need to examine the safety of the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant. I am not going to repeat this but I have another great concern, that is, the government proposal that the proportion of nuclear energy in the energy mix be increased from the 23% at present to 50% in 2020. This is the Government's direction of development. From past experience, from the Chernobyl nuclear plant incident in the Soviet Union era, through the Three Mile Island incident to the Fukushima incident now, it can be seen that should any incident happen in relation to this kind of energy, which the Government claims to be clean but green groups consider to be extremely polluting, an uncontrollable situation may arise. I hope the Government can conduct a review again to see if it still wants to put forward its proposal of increasing the proportion of nuclear energy from 23% to the extremely high level of 50% in 2020.

The Government should make greater efforts in energy conservation and use natural gas and renewable energy sources from now on. It should take measures in response to the Fukushima incident immediately and give up the idea of simply continuing to use more nuclear energy. From the Fukushima incident this time around, it can be seen that in the example of Japan, where nuclear energy accounts for 30% of the electricity used, even though an accident has happened to just one nuclear plant, it is already necessary for Tokyo and even the

northeastern area to be subjected to rolling blackouts for six hours every day and this is a situation that Hong Kong can by no means cope with. Therefore, I propose here that we should make ourselves prepared by doing a proper job in drills and promoting an awareness of the preventive measures against nuclear incidents. In addition, we have to do our best to conserve energy, instead of increasing the ratio of nuclear energy.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): President, first of all, I extend my profound condolences to the family members of the deceased in Japan. The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions has written to the trade unions in Japan to extend our condolences to them. This incident has made us feel that in this world, there are uncertainties beyond human control. Human beings, in living on the Earth, use their cleverness and intelligence to do a lot of things that destroy the Earth through technology but as it turned out, human beings are actually very insignificant in the face of Nature.

As this incident unfolds, it is no longer just a problem of an earthquake, rather, the problem of radiation leaks from the Fukushima Nuclear Plant was also triggered. We all know that the people in Tokyo of Japan are all feeling jittery and there are few people in the streets. It can thus be seen what a great threat will be posed to human beings should a nuclear disaster occur because the radioactive substances leaked will become airborne and no one knows where they will be taken to. Should one be contaminated, there is no telling when the effects on health would surface and we only know that the risk of cancer will increase and many other health problems will also be triggered. Although they may not lead to immediate death, they pose a great threat to the health of human beings.

I remember clearly and distinctly that back then, when the construction of the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant was proposed, we organized a signature campaign against it at the Star Ferry Pier and at that time, the response was overwhelming. That was around 1986. At that time, I alone was carrying six writing pads for distribution to members of the public and there was no need to get them back one by one afterwards. Members of the public would pass them around among themselves, taking turns to put down their signatures. In fact, at that time, the public already had this kind of fear. The Government defended itself, saying that it was due to their lack of understanding of nuclear energy that they had such

great fear. However, if we review the many catastrophic incidents in the past, they actually reminded us time and again that nuclear energy is a time bomb that can explode at any time.

Explosions in nuclear power plants may not necessarily be caused by earthquakes. A lot of human errors can also lead to nuclear incidents and radiation leaks. We can all still remember clearly the Three Mile Island incident in the United States in 1979 and the Chernobyl nuclear plant incident in 1986. Coincidentally, such incidents happened about once every decade. Each disaster showed us how terrifying it could be, making us realize how great a threat will be posed to people around it and how serious the consequences are should this time bomb explode.

Therefore, I believe that the opposition to the construction of the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant was a wise move. Now, the State Council has announced its decision to suspend the approval of nuclear plant projects, but this only applies to future projects. What about those under construction now? I gather that those under construction now must meet new safety standards by all means. Of course, this is desirable but the question is: No matter how safe they are, this time bomb will eventually explode.

There is nothing as absolute safety in this world and it is only when human beings face the disasters caused by Nature or human errors that they realize what is meant by "one small oversight despite meticulous planning". Therefore, to suspend the approval process and require those under construction to meet safety standards is still not enough. In particular, given that two more nuclear power generating units will be constructed in the Pearl River Delta Region, with one of them located 300 km from Hong Kong, whereas the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant is 50 km away from Hong Kong, these plants are very near and pose a very great threat to Hong Kong. I believe the Government should shelve all ideas of buying more nuclear energy and propose to the Central Authorities that the construction and operation of all nuclear facilities should be stopped, that such facilities should be closed down and that they should be replaced with other energy sources.

The Government cannot harbour the wishful thinking that everything will be safe after this incident has come to an end. Otherwise, should any problem occur in the future and the time bomb explode, we will have to pay a price. It is

hoped that the SAR Government will not be so lazy and short-sighted and it should request the Central Government to stop the construction of all nuclear plants immediately.

MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): President, first of all, on behalf of the Neighbourhood and Workers Service Centre and personally, I extend our profound condolences to the Japanese people. Concerning the earthquake, tsunami and threat of radiation leaks facing the Japanese people, I felt a great pain in my heart. Earthquakes and tsunamis are natural disasters and sometimes, it can be said that they are inevitable. However, this is not so with regard to nuclear radiation and I think nuclear radiation is a man-made disaster. This is not the first time that such a man-made disaster has occurred in history. As many Honourable colleagues said earlier on, more serious incidents include the Three Mile Island incident and the Chernobyl nuclear plant incident. Each time this kind of incidents occurred, the number of casualties always ran to hundreds of thousands. If my memory is correct, the Chernobyl nuclear incident caused disastrous consequences for more than 200 000 civilians. Many of them unfortunately perished and many others suffered long-term physical injuries, tormented by various kinds of long-term effects, such as cancer, and dying a slow death. This kind of suffering is even more indescribable. Therefore, we really cannot take this problem lightly anymore.

Just now, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that in the 1980s, many members of the Hong Kong public strongly opposed the construction of a nuclear plant at Daya Bay but unfortunately, the authorities kept stressing that nuclear energy was safe. It is true that in the past decade or two, it has been safe but there is no guarantee about the future. Just as in this incident at Fukushima, in the past, the nuclear plant was safe but the problem is that it is no longer so and when it is no longer so, what should we do? This is the problem.

The same applies to the present situation. The SAR Government has reiterated time and again that the authorities are monitoring the level of radiation. It is fortunate that the present radiation level is still normal, but may I ask the Government what counter-measures it has in place in the event that the radiation level rises? Yesterday, Secretary Ambrose LEE did not give us any reply on what we should do and in the event that the radiation level rises, what

counter-measures are in place. The Government tells the public that there is no need to take iodine tablets, but I am afraid when it is really necessary to take iodine tablets as a counter-measure, it would already be too late. Here, I wish to ask the Government through the President if the radiation level really and unfortunately rises, what counter-measures can the public take? Since yesterday, and to date, the Government still cannot tell us specifically what we should do. And yet unfortunately, Secretary Ambrose LEE even said yesterday that no territory-wide drills would be carried out. Even if we forget about this, does the Government have any guidelines on what the public should do? So far, the Government has turned in "a blank answer sheet" on this, so I think the Government should draw up emergency guidelines on preventive measures to let the public understand clearly how they should respond should the radiation level announced by the Hong Kong Observatory rise. There is no problem if the Government does not carry out a territory-wide drill but even if we ask for less, can the Government educate students or conduct small-scale drills through schools? This is not infeasible. Schools also conduct fire drills and if they can do so, why can they not conduct drills in this regard? For this reason, I strongly request the Government to explain to the public as soon as possible how we should respond if the radiation level unfortunately rises. I also strongly demand that preventive drills be conducted in schools first.

Second, in the long run, we also know that should an incident happen at the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant, there is nowhere for Hong Kong people to run to and they can only jump into the wide open sea. This incident tells us that "something might go wrong somehow". In the unfortunate event that an incident happens, what should we do? Similarly, I hope the Government can tell the public how to cope with this problem. So far, the Government has not laid down any guidelines other than only reiterating repeatedly that the nuclear plant is very safe. However, frankly speaking, it is certainly safe if nothing happens, but if something untoward happens, it will no longer be safe. In that event, what should we do? I hope the Government can lay down preventive measures in the near future to tell us how we should respond. In addition, in the long run, the Government should study in what ways the operation of the plant can be halted. We should no longer use nuclear energy for electricity generation but should use other energy sources instead. Otherwise, with the lack of substitutes, we will become increasingly dependent on nuclear energy for electricity generation. Therefore, the Government must propose other options urgently to replace

nuclear energy. Otherwise, this problem can never be solved and we will be constantly under threat.

President, I so submit.

MR LEE WING-TAT (in Cantonese): President, I hereby extend my profound condolences to the Japanese people.

After the occurrence of the incident, yesterday, I pointed out in an oral question that our State was developing nuclear energy vigorously in Guangdong and that the Hong Kong Government also bought electricity from the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant through the CLP Power Hong Kong Limited. In view of this, I asked a question to which Secretary Ambrose LEE replied that he would follow up. And I also hope the authorities will make a public statement or give an account on a question, namely, although there are representatives of the Hong Kong Government on the Board of Directors of the Guangdong Nuclear Investment Company Limited, which operates the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant, in the past few years, each time when an incident of minor leak occurred at the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant, no immediate notification was given in transparency.

President, I also said in my speech yesterday that most incidents at nuclear plants involved two types of problems that occurred repeatedly, one being natural factors and the other, human factors. Human factors mostly involve the people operating a nuclear power plant and no matter how senior the people in the management are, they are always inclined not to notify the relevant parties immediately. This is no exception even in the incident that happened in Japan on this occasion, so this is an issue that calls for serious attention. Therefore, I hope that Secretary Ambrose LEE and the company operating the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant can sign a document similar to a memorandum to specify that in the future, no matter what the scale of an incident is, the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant must notify the Hong Kong Government immediately. This is a more responsible course of action.

The second issue is the development of nuclear energy. Late last year, the Hong Kong Government released a consultation paper which proposed that in respect of electricity consumption in Hong Kong in the next two decades, the proportion of nuclear energy be developed gradually from the present level to

50%. By international standard, this is a very high level. Of course, as far as I know, the rate of utilization of nuclear energy in France or some countries is as high as 60% or 80%, but we must ask ourselves if we are prepared to take such a risk. Many members of the public may think that basically, the nuclear plants are built far away from Hong Kong and they are even some 200 km or 300 km away. However, we must bear in mind that in this nuclear incident in Japan, even though Tokyo is located as far as 200 km or 300 km from Fukushima, it is beginning to feel the effects of high levels of radiation. In addition, as responsible consumers, we really should not care about themselves only. If we use large amounts of nuclear energy inappropriately, this is tantamount to encouraging the parties concerned to build more nuclear plants on the Mainland.

President, what we have to consider now is the issue of substitute energy sources. I remember that your party comrade, Miss CHOY So-yuk, told me during a visit to Northern Europe that among the existing natural energy sources, the biggest problem with solar energy was its conversion rate, that is, in the process of converting solar energy into electricity, there were a great deal of loss and wastage, that if the conversion rate could be raised by means of technology, solar energy was actually also an excellent and inexhaustible energy source. In view of this, should the Secretary of Environment conduct more studies on this issue? Apart from using renewable energy sources, through significant reductions in electricity consumption in cities, it is also possible to reduce the rate of electricity consumption. I believe the Secretary has the ultimate responsibility in this regard. There is not much difficulty in taking the easy path of nuclear energy, but the challenge in taking more difficult paths, such as reducing vehicle use and electricity consumption, which I often talk about, is far greater. However, the Government should have the resolve to deal with this problem solemnly and seriously. Only in this way can our next generation be benefited even more. Thank you, President.

MS AUDREY EU (in Cantonese): President, before all else, on behalf of the Civic Party, I extend my profound condolences to all friends and people who suffered the loss of their homes and loved ones in Japan, and express our admiration for the 50 unsung heroes at the Fukushima Nuclear Plant.

Yesterday, we raised three urgent questions in the Legislative Council and the responses given by the Government made us feel rather worried in many

ways. As the situation is still unfolding, I hope the Government can reconsider its position, particularly in several aspects. The first is checking if travellers and luggage coming from Japan are contaminated by radiation. The latest situation is that we know some travellers from Japan were found to carry radiation in excess of the safe level in Taiwan. I hope that at the airport in Hong Kong, compulsory checks can be carried out on both travellers and goods.

Another aspect is the travel alert. I do not quite understand the reply given by Secretary Ambrose LEE yesterday because at that time, Honourable colleagues asked him why the black OTA had not been issued for the whole Japan but only for a few prefectures. In reply, he said that if the black OTA was issued for the whole Japan, all Hong Kong people would have to be evacuated and even the officers deployed there to help Hong Kong people would have to be evacuated. I think this does not have to be linked to the black OTA because the purpose of issuing travel alerts is to let all Hong Kong people know that they should not go to the places in question, for example, Tokyo. Yesterday, we can see on television that there was not a single soul in the streets of Ginza, so in these circumstances, I find it difficult to understand why the Government still insists on not issuing the black OTA.

Another aspect is the dissemination of information. Yesterday, during the oral question time, Dr Margaret NG also asked if telephone hotlines would be set up. We know that at present, the Government has adopted a co-ordinated approach in disseminating information every day but apart from this, there are many things that the public also want to know, particularly given that a lot of incorrect information is being circulated quickly and a lot of people may feel worried, so they need clarifications. I hope the Government can consider the provision of telephone hotlines and websites to tell the public what they can do and what they should not do. This is very important, particularly given that the situation is evolving all the time.

President, I think one very important aspect is that people throughout the world are watching the developments at the Fukushima Nuclear Plant closely. Yesterday, Secretary Ambrose LEE said that the incident had been classified as Level 4 but in fact, we Members have doubts. From the relevant information, it can be seen — although the information had passed through many parties, that is, through television stations, newspapers, and so on — the incident does not appear to be a Level 4 one because a Level 4 incident is only confined to within the plant

but judging from those explosions, we know that the area outside the plant is also affected. Now, some experts have come out to say that it is likely the situation would be even more serious than that of the Chernobyl incident back then because the amounts of radiation and nuclear energy involved are even greater.

What we need to reflect on is that irrespective of the design and preparations made in advance, once-in-a-century or once-in-a-millennium incidents can still happen. They may be unpredictable to us, but accidents will still happen. We can also see that in the wake of the incident, many countries in the European Union have begun to study if the use of nuclear energy can be ceased. For example, originally, Germany planned to reopen and continue to use those old nuclear energy facilities but this has been put on hold; Switzerland has to defer its nuclear plant programme and Austria has also invited the European Union to help it carry out safety inspections. In addition, countries that suspended the development of nuclear energy include Italy, Poland, Thailand, South Korea, Brazil, and so on. I am also happy to learn from news reports this morning that our Premier WEN also said that safety inspections had to be carried out.

In the consultation paper provided by the Government to us earlier on, it is said that the proportion of nuclear energy may be increased from some 20% to 50%. This really arouses great concern among Hong Kong people. In particular, in view of this incident at Fukushima, we know that no matter how prepared one is, once an incident happens, things can really get out of hand and there is practically nothing that can be done. Moreover, the scourge will last not just to one or two years. I believe the scourge of this incident is not limited to health only, rather, the economy will also be dealt a heavy blow and Hong Kong will also be affected. Therefore, I hope the Government can think twice about the development of nuclear energy. Thank you, President.

MS EMILY LAU (in Cantonese): President, on behalf of the Democratic Party, I extend my profound condolences to the Japanese and on behalf of many members of the public, I also express our admiration for the fortitude and excellent qualities displayed by the Japanese in such a difficult situation. I believe they can serve as an example for the peoples of Asia and other countries in this kind of adversities.

Today, many reports in the mass media point out that at present, Japan is at a loss as to what to do about the present crisis and the situation has completely got out of hand. Their Emperor Akihito has also appeared on television in a nationwide broadcast to call on the people to have courage and express his great concern. The Emperor also said that he too did not know how this matter would unfold and that it was unpredictable. He also hoped that this incident would not deteriorate. Of course, the implication is that the Emperor is feeling really worried.

Earlier on, Ms Miriam LAU also cited the remarks of the Commissioner for Energy of the European Union, who described the present situation as an apocalypse. Yesterday, we also told the authorities that the situation might not really belong to Level 4, as the Government initially put it. However, Mr Ambrose LEE said that the authorities were capable of handling even the worst situation well. I hope so, President, because the European Commission said that it would carry out safety tests on the 153 nuclear reactors within its boundary. Some countries like Germany and Switzerland have also suspended the construction of new nuclear plants. However, if China merely pauses to carry out checks, is this enough?

Today, we can read some reports in the press saying that when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) attended a conference in Japan in 2008, it pointed out that in the past three decades, Japan had updated its safety guidelines on such areas as the arrangements for and equipment of its nuclear plants only three times. They pointed out that it was lagging behind the times and doubted if Japan could handle a major crisis. This happened in 2008.

Last year, I also read the comments of the IAEA on China. They pointed out that the manpower in the nuclear plants in China was inadequate and the prevalent training capacity could not catch up with the pace of nuclear plant development. Insofar as the safety of nuclear plants is concerned, the human factor is very important. To speed up programmes without due regard arouses concern about the quality of management. All of us can hear this.

The issues raised in 2008 were not dealt with, so problems have arisen now. Last year, there were also comments relating to the Mainland, so we are very concerned about how our State will deal with this issue. As regards Hong

Kong, what should it do? Today, there is also a relevant report on a warning issued by the Volcanic Ash Advisory Centres in London on Wednesday, which says that the radioactive substances from the nuclear leaks in Japan will endanger China, Japan, Russia and a number of regions. In that case, should our aircraft take off?

I hope that first, the authorities will immediately call in the experts, academics and members of the industries in various fields for a meeting on such areas as aviation, tourism, food, safety, and so on, then hold briefings every day and provide telephone hotlines to inform the public of the latest information, as some Members suggested. I have already said to the Chairman of the House Committee that we should hold a special House Committee meeting. I hope that no matter if the meeting will be held next week or any other time, the authorities can put forward a comprehensive plan and inform the public of it through the Legislative Council.

The worst scenario may really happen — of course, we hope it would not — but I hope the authorities can deliver a message to society, that is, the Government is really keeping track of the situation, so it must not lag behind the developments.

MR PAUL TSE (in Cantonese): President, I already expressed my concern about the situation in Japan and extended my condolences yesterday, so I am not going to repeat them here.

I wish to focus on issues related to tourism. President, many members of the Hong Kong public wish to extend a helping hand to the victims in Japan and hope that they can bring revenue to them through tourism, so as to help them somehow. However, if we go to Japan now, we will only add to the troubles and confusions there and cannot help the people or Government there in any way. In view of this, Secretary Ambrose LEE's comments yesterday on why he had not issued the black OTA for the whole Japan are really infuriating. He put all the blame on the public, as though the public were greedy and, having paid for their tours, were not willing to waste their money for nothing, so they shifted the responsibility to the Government. He also said that the OTA system was not a refund mechanism. However, should the Government not sense the urgency of the public?

A great many members of the public joined a tour not because they are not afraid of dying or want to have fun too much, rather, they made their holiday and financial plans long ago. Now, they are gravely worried, but there is no good solution. Why can the Government not do something to make things easier for the public, so as to allay their doubts, not to mention those of the industry, flight crews, tourist guides and front-line workers?

Secretary Ambrose LEE gave a very ridiculous analogy, saying if the black OTA was issued for Japan, how could the Government send officers of the Immigration Department to Japan? However, why did the Government send officers to the Philippines to undertake a lot of work after it had issued the black OTA for the Philippines? Rescue officers have received adequate training and they are different from ordinary travellers in terms of their precautions and arrangements in various aspects.

President, the Secretary also said that travellers would make their own judgment. In that case, why is it necessary to establish the travel alert mechanism? What is the use of this mechanism? This mechanism is intended to provide guidelines for the public to follow. Has the Government not kept increasing its tobacco duty to induce the public to quit smoking? President, why does the Government not let the public make their own judgment in this regard?

President, the Secretary has all along insisted that it is a correct course of action to issue the black OTA for the Philippines, saying that many people died in the Philippines, so Hong Kong people are very concerned. May I ask the Secretary how many people have to die before a black OTA will be issued for Japan? Yesterday, seven people died in Bahrain and the Government immediately changed the OTA to a black one. Secretary, do some Hong Kong people have to die before a black OTA will be considered? How many people have to die before it will be considered? We all know that the issue of the black OTA for the Philippines was a political move, a hasty decision made by the Government at that time. Subsequently, the Government had no way to back down with good grace, so it can only stick to this stance doggedly. I call on it not to do so anymore and it should make a true assessment of the OTA System and study what Hong Kong should do about its travel policy in view of the prevailing circumstances, then provide guidelines to the public. The

Government should make assessments bravely instead of sticking to its stance doggedly, still less should it do anything for the sake of face.

The OTA System shows the extent of threat in a certain area. Is the present level of threat significant or severe? President, Japan experienced a magnitude 9 earthquake and there have been continual aftershocks. The disaster facing Japan is almost an annihilating one. Did more people die from the natural disaster or did more people die from the man-made disaster? The incident in the Philippines was man-made and so was the one in Bahrain, and we have hastily issued the black OTA for these two places. However, natural disasters are ruthless and they kill countless people. Anyone can fall victim.

Japan is located on an active volcano and seismic belt. There are 180 volcanoes throughout the country and 80% of them are active. In addition, Japan is now facing the problem of radiation contamination. To Hong Kong people, Japan is a major travel destination. In these circumstances, anyone with a little common sense and sense of crisis should not blame the public for disregarding their lives and safety on account of a little money. Even if one should err, he would rather err on the safe side. The direction we should take is to err rather than being foolish. We should not blame the public anymore. The Government should assume its duty by taking the lead in making brave decisions. Even if it does not issue a black OTA for the whole Japan, it should at least issue a black OTA for Tokyo and the northern part of Japan, rather than dilly-dallying and sticking to its stance for the sake of face. Thank you, President.

MRS SOPHIE LEUNG (in Cantonese): Yesterday, my friend forwarded to me an e-mail written by a Chinese lady who has stayed in Japan for three years and who has been working as an English teacher there. The original e-mail was in English and I will try to translate it. I quote, "My home is mostly destroyed that I cannot stay there. I am putting up at my neighbour's place. We share everything, clothes, food, house and drink without making any distinction. We share the same room and all the chores. In the daytime, we help to clear the nearby area. Every household would leave the door open. There is no looting, but care and courtesy. Elderly people wearing blue caps call on each household to express their concern and help with the chores. There are intermittent

supplies of water and electricity. Households with water supply would post a note on the door of their own accord to tell neighbours to come and get water. There is no jostling and everyone remained courteous. Aftershocks kept occurring but life goes on peacefully and as usual. Some people even took the time to walk their dogs. The night is very quiet; there are no cars or lights, just like the old days. Stars spangle the sky and the air is fresh. The sky has never been so blue. I am happy to experience such a time of nothingness and see that the Japanese have no fear whatsoever. They only have perseverance. I also feel deeply the forces of the universe, which has its own plans and that the re-birth of the world may have already dawned." End of quote.

President, yesterday, I also read a report in a weekly magazine. It says, "What can withstand the challenges equally well is the simple ancient ways of the Japanese that they learnt during the Han and Tang Dynasties: The *Los Angeles Times* reports that a heavy bookshelf toppled onto elderly and alone Hiroko Yamashita, pinning her down. When paramedics finally reached her, agonizing hours later, did she complain about their late arrival? No. She only apologized to them for the inconvenience, and asked if there weren't others they should be attending to first."

"All these cannot but make one ask: China has surpassed Japan as the world's second largest economy but when will the quality of the Chinese catch up with the standard in Japan?"

What about Hong Kong? The report went on to say, "The serious earthquake occurred on Friday afternoon, and the SAR Government issued the red travel alert. The level has not reached the black level, so coverage was still provided by insurance companies and tour groups to Hokkaido still departed as scheduled the next day. When reporters from television stations asked the tourists if they were not worried about the deterioration of the situation and having no flights to return to Hong Kong, the answer was: No, the Government will send chartered flights to pick us up." This is how Hong Kong people are like.

Concerning this incident, we should reflect on how insignificant we are, so how can we achieve so many things? How can we ask a small government to do so many things?

Is this article actually chiding the Government for its illusion of grandeur? Can it help just in about anything out? On the world map, Hong Kong is only a tiny dot, so is the Hong Kong Government capable of helping out Hong Kong people in various places of the world? Is it really so able? I ask it to act within its ability.

In fact, sometimes, Hong Kong people do not regard their personal safety as their own responsibility, so we should ponder over this. Similarly, the Government also has to consider if it has overestimated its own ability and given us unrealistic expectations? I think we should think more about this. Thank you, President.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): President, on behalf of the People Power, I express my profound condolence and mourning for those people who were killed and injured in the earthquake in Japan, and our utmost admiration for the people who are sacrificing their health and even their lives in their arduous struggle.

President, here, I wish to make four appeals regarding this disaster in Japan. First, I call on all peoples, in particular, friends in China and Hong Kong, not to rub salt into the wound. Recently, I read some comments on the Internet that made me feel very sad. Some people expressed their delight in this disaster which has caused numerous deaths and injuries in Japan and even celebrated over this. I believe the ordinary Japanese people are blameless and our national calamity and the invasion of China in the past are completely unrelated to the disaster facing the Japanese people now. Anyone with a conscience should not feel happy about the disaster in Japan on this occasion on account of our national calamity in the past or the suffering that one's relatives went through during Japan's invasion of China. I think we should not have such thinking.

Second, I call on Hong Kong people to make donations because Japan has suffered tremendous economic losses due to this disaster and the rescue efforts are also very difficult. Monetary donations can help the victims tide over the difficulties.

Third, I call on the Hong Kong Government to change the decision it made yesterday. Earlier on, many Members also pointed out that the Government should issue the black OTA for the whole Japan. My office also received complaints from many members of the public and some of them were about to set

off for Japan in these several days. They believe that presently, it is not advisable to travel to Japan as a whole and their lives and safety will also be affected. The information available yesterday shows that the likelihood of an outbreak of a nuclear disaster in Japan is very great. In view of such new information, the Government should no longer stick to its stance doggedly but should really change its original decision immediately.

Fourth, I call on the Chinese Government and Hong Kong Government to abandon their policies on nuclear energy. In the past two decades, a spate of disasters have occurred, with serious disasters occurring at Three Mile Island in the United States and Chernobyl in the Ukraine separately. The present situation in Japan also shows amply that the potential dangers of nuclear energy are indeed infinite. Should any incident happen, the harm done to the environment and human beings cannot be underestimated. We should not pitch ourselves against Nature on account of financial interests, nor should we use the lives of the people as the stake.

The number of nuclear plants located near Hong Kong is indeed astonishing. At present, of the 12 nuclear plants in operation on the Mainland, three are located in Guangdong and two in Fujian. Of the 23 nuclear plants under planning, five are located in Guangdong, two in Fujian, one in Guangxi, two in Jiangxi, and two in Hunan, making up a total of 12. Together with the five nuclear plants already in operation mentioned by me earlier on, the total is 17. These nuclear plants are all located within an area of several hundred kilometres from Hong Kong, so should any serious incident occur, Hong Kong people have practically nowhere to run to. The loss in human lives and financial losses resulting from this kind of disasters can be very great. In the long run, the Government should use natural energy resources to generate electricity or use other means of electricity generation and abandon its nuclear energy policy. The People Power will also launch a campaign shortly to demand the termination of the policy on nuclear energy.

MS STARRY LEE (in Cantonese): President, earlier on, an unprecedented major earthquake occurred in Japan, resulting in a large number of casualties. Like other Hong Kong people, I watched one scene after another on television and felt very heartbroken. Here, I extend my heartfelt condolences to the people of Japan, particularly those Japanese who lost family members and friends in this

earthquake and tsunami, and I also hope that the Japanese people can brace up and tide over the present difficulties.

In the past few days, the DAB has collected many signatures from members of the public in local communities. This morning, I also went to the Consulate-General of Japan together with Mr TAM Yiu-chung to deliver the condolences and well wishes of the Hong Kong public to friends in Japan and to tell friends in Japan through the Japanese Consul-General that in fact, Hong Kong people also feel as pained as the Japanese are because we all live in the global village. The Consul-General of Japan also felt deeply about the well wishes presented by Hong Kong people and thanked all members of the Hong Kong public for their concern. The Consul-General also said that the Japanese Government would do its utmost to deal with the nuclear plant incident, which all of us are very concerned about.

This incident is still unfolding and every day, pieces of news and new developments are emerging. Like everyone else, I am very concerned about the situation in Japan. Just now, many Members pointed out that it could be seen from the news reports on television that the reactions of the Japanese to this natural disaster are quite calm. The convenience stores in the disaster-stricken zone resumed business again the next day and everyone queued up in an orderly way for their turn to buy daily necessities. Sometimes, I wonder if we would also buy daily necessities in such an orderly manner if such an incident were to happen in Hong Kong or in other places, and whether or not people would moan and complain instead?

Some members of the mass media interviewed some Japanese who had lost their family members or homes. Although they were very sad, they did not complain much because they understood that Japan was located on the seismic belt. In fact, in the past, Japan also encountered many natural disasters. Perhaps as a result of the understanding that they must live with natural disasters, they have become strong and calm and everyone knows how to cope.

Hong Kong is really fortunate in that at least up to now, it has not encountered any major disaster that makes us lose our family members or homes. Hong Kong people must really treasure this blessing because good fortune cannot be taken for granted.

Apart from the problem of radiation leaks, as a mother, I am also particularly concerned about the safety of baby food. Yesterday, Secretary Dr York CHOW gave his reply to our question on food safety, in particular, the safety of milk powder and dairy products, which is of great public concern. We all understand that the only food for babies is formula milk and baby food. If these kinds of food are contaminated, it will be very difficult to estimate the effect on babies' lives.

Babies are different from adults. Now, we may have eaten less food imported from Japan and will look at the origin of the food before buying it. Adults can make choices on their own, but it is not possible for babies to make choices. Some babies have been taking formula milk imported from Japan and these days, we can watch on television news about how a lot of mothers went on a panic buy of Japanese formula milk.

Yesterday, Secretary Dr York CHOW pointed out in his reply that should the radiation spread further, thus contaminating water sources or grass, after cows have drunk such water or eaten such grass, it was likely that the dairy food produced will also be contaminated. Yesterday, the Secretary also mentioned that the Government was keeping in touch with Japanese companies to obtain the latest information.

I hope very much that the Government can adopt a special approach in view of the special circumstances in relation to dairy products, in particular, formula milk and baby food, because babies can only have formula milk for food. I hope Secretary Dr York CHOW can tell me in his reply later that the Government will adopt a special approach for baby food and formula milk in view of the special circumstances.

I hope the Secretary will not just carry out checks on formula milk coming from the disaster-stricken zone but also on formula milk coming from the whole Japan, then publish the relevant test data to inform parents of the latest test results of baby food, so that all of us can eat food with the peace of mind because the lives of babies are indeed very fragile. I hope the Secretary can give us a positive reply in this regard.

President, I so submit.

MR TAM YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): President, on 11 March, a tsunami occurred in the wake of a magnitude 9 earthquake in the waters off east Japan. Subsequently, it also triggered a series of explosions and radiation leaks at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant at the northeastern coast of Japan.

Looking at such scenes was indeed heartbreaking. Last Monday and Tuesday, for two days in a row, the DAB launched a territory-wide condolence signature campaign, which was supported by numerous members of the public. Many people wrote down brief words of condolences. We collected a total of more than 10 000 signatures. Ms Starry LEE also mentioned this event just now. Ms LEE and I handed the signatures directly to the Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong and we also handed in a letter addressed to the Japanese Prime Minister, expressing the wish of the DAB to, via the Consulate-General of Japan, express our profound condolences to the people of Japan and the families of the victims. We all hope that the people of Japan can rebuild their homes as quickly as possible. Despite the tremendous destructive power of this natural disaster, we find the perseverance of the people of Japan most admirable. We also made it clear to the Consul-General that if necessary, we would be happy to provide any further assistance in the future.

Having gone through the reports on television and in the press, I think the explosions at the Fukushima nuclear plant were extremely unusual and I was a little bit surprised. Originally, I thought that Japan had very high standards in management and technology. However, after this incident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, it seems that their persons-in-charge had failed to control the situation. At the beginning, they repeatedly said that it was just a minor incident. However, judging from the present situation, the incident is far from simple. I heard someone say that since the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant had been in operation for quite a long time, so they had planned to discontinue its operation, therefore, its repairs and maintenance were not carried out properly.

Moreover, it seems the information disseminated by Japan was very limited. This morning, I heard a report on the radio saying that the Executive Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency — who is also Japanese — had arrived in Japan. He considered the situation very serious and that the incident was by no means a simple one. However, many reports have pointed out that the information disseminated by Japan is quite limited and even though

the outside worlds want to provide assistance, nobody knows how to approach this matter.

This incident has also given us a lot of food for thought. Yesterday, we heard Premier WEN Jiabao indicate that strict investigations and surveillance would be carried out on all nuclear plants in the country and nuclear plant projects under construction would also be reviewed. I consider this course of action correct as we must take precautions to prevent mishaps from happening.

Of course, nuclear energy will remain a very important part of our energy mix in the future. It is reported that in such countries as France, 80% of its electricity supply is derived from nuclear energy and more than 30% of the electricity supply in Japan is provided by nuclear energy. The nuclear plant nearest to Hong Kong is located at Daya Bay. In the past six months, some minor incidents have also occurred in that particular nuclear plant. This Council has also asked the Secretary for Security questions on this matter.

In the sessions of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Beijing, I proposed a bill on improving the regulatory regime for the safety of the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant and the proposed bill has been referred to the relevant administrative authorities of the State. We hope that in future, the reporting system can be improved and the notification mechanism made public, and also the number of non-routine inspections can be increased. We think that if a good job is done in these areas, should an incident happen, the situation can be reined in and kept under control more easily. Thank you, President.

DR PRISCILLA LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, on behalf of the Professional Forum, I extend our profound condolences to the people of Japan and also the unsung heroes who are working hard at Fukushima to contain the radiation.

We know that people in Japan are now living in dire straits. We can all see from news reports on television that the power of a tsunami is really far greater than we could imagine. On the day when I first heard of the earthquake in Japan, Mr Abraham SHEK had just returned to Hong Kong and it was the day for a meeting of the House Committee. He said he had just come back and

asked me to attend the meeting. It turned out, just an hour before that, an earthquake had occurred in Japan.

At that time, I had not yet realized the severity of the earthquake. Subsequently, I watched it on television and it was also from the descriptions of some fellow Japanese professors that I realized the severity of this earthquake. It is really like a movie directed by Akira KUROSAWA, which we liked to watch very much when we were young. I remember that Akira KUROSAWA had shot a movie about doomsday, in which there was radiation wherever the Japanese run to, so people just said their last words, and then jumped down. I remember this scene very vividly.

On seeing this real-life catastrophe, I came to appreciate why the Japanese have always been living on edge in their history. It is really miserable for one's land is located on seismoactive faults where disasters of such severity may strike one after another at any time. From this, I can see that Hong Kong is actually a greatly blessed place. Take a look at Sichuan and Indonesia, and we can understand that we are basically in a very safe zone.

Yesterday, I listened to a radio programme, in which a Hong Kong resident named Janet was being interviewed. In the first interview with her, she described everything in Tokyo as fine. But in the second interview with her yesterday, she said she had decided to leave Tokyo for Singapore, then come back to Hong Kong. Even at the risk of being fired, she was not prepared to risk her life anymore. She also added that many Hong Kong people and expatriates working in Tokyo were actually buying tickets to fly out of Japan.

Expatriates can leave, but the Japanese people cannot. Nature also seems to be very cruel to them because the snowfall has made the radiation spread on land. Many countries have sent people there to help. However, in my opinion, although we certainly have to give a helping hand, we also have to consider if this is an issue that planet Earth has to face together. The radiation and the pollutants will spread to the land and underground water. In fact, this is not a problem that will remain in Japan alone, rather it is actually a global problem. With the spread of radiation, the plants that grow out of contamination will have problems, thus leading to an ecological problem. Radiation is actually a problem that knows no boundary. Therefore, this is actually a problem for all mankind.

At this time, we must reflect on this and consider to what extent we actually want to rely on the nuclear energy technology. Before the occurrence of this kind of disaster and before we witnessed such a serious disaster, many people may not be aware of the danger. However, since such a serious disaster has occurred, it is really better to avoid nuclear energy by all means. People may ask me if we should revert to some kind of low technology. Talking about technology, I think scientists will be flexible and in the face of difficulties, they will find a way out. I believe they can surely find a solution.

I have visited Hebei before. I visit that place every year. I can see that the installation of solar power facilities at the local villages is actually quite well done. I have read some information which says that a breakthrough in solar energy technology may come within three years. Therefore, I think (*The buzzer sounded*)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Your speaking time is up.

DR PRISCILLA LEUNG (in Cantonese): Yes. President, I so submit.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): President, today is not the time for us to express our feelings. We are here to discuss the short-term and medium-term contingency measures, rather than a long-term energy policy. President, we will discuss this issue in the next few months. What measures should be and can be introduced in the short term? I have just been informed that in the North District, truck loads of salt were driven away and in Sham Shui Po, there was panic buying of chicken powder. If the Government cannot calm the public and be forward-looking enough to do things that it should, even if something happens some 3 000 km away from Hong Kong, it will still cause chaos here.

The first point that I wish to make is that I hope the Secretary can issue immediately today a black OTA for the whole Japan, or at least for Tokyo and the areas to its north. Do not stick to your stance doggedly. Do not ignore the personal safety of the public. Do not say that the public want to use the mechanism like an automatic teller machine. Do not smear the public. I urge the Government to do this immediately today. I have heard many Members

speak and their grounds are very clear. Due to the uncertainty and the potential hazards of this incident, even by common sense, one should know that this change must be made at once.

Let me elaborate further. The United States has also urged its citizens not to go to Japan. The United States and Japan are "intimate brothers". The Embassy of the United States in Japan has the largest staff worldwide, including regional safety officers, nuclear energy officers, military attachés and a large pool of intelligence assets. Moreover, there are also satellites over Japan to monitor the reactors at the Fukushima Nuclear Power plant every second. They keep making analyses, conclusions and judgments and they have a large team of experts. They also think that citizens of the United States should not travel to Japan, so this is equivalent to our black OTA. I hope the Government can issue a black OTA immediately today; otherwise, it will cause members of the public to lose confidence. In that event, the originally stable Hong Kong society will also become chaotic.

Secondly, many Honourable colleagues also talked about monitoring goods. Of course, on a lighter note, my office has received some calls from members of the public who said that not just food but cosmetics also had to be monitored because cosmetics were applied to the face, so they were worried about them too. What they mean is that goods in general rather than food alone should be monitored.

Thirdly, we have to review our legislation. If the crisis escalates, does our existing legislation authorize us to conduct mandatory radiation checks at the airport or the ports? I spent half a day on a brief study of this matter and found that our legislation is inadequate. There is of course no problem with voluntary checks. However, if mandatory checks are introduced, is the relevant legislation adequate? Is urgent legislation required? If so, should it be enacted in these few days?

Fourthly, the Government has to do more in assessing the sources of food in the near future. If members of the public lose confidence in food from certain places, do we have adequate substitutes from other sources? Is it necessary to activate certain mechanisms and form an inter-departmental team to study this issue in a more forward-looking and proactive manner?

Lastly, on short-term and medium-term issues, I hope that, in order to put the public's mind at ease, the Government should discuss again with the Mainland authorities the safety assessment for the Daya Bay Nuclear Plant, as per the instructions of Premier WEN, and the issue of notification as mentioned by Honourable colleagues. Can efforts be further strengthened in these areas?

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): President, I would like to explain several things. First, many people are concerned about the food issue and this is certainly understandable. But the cargoes, baggage and visitors from Japan are also very important sources. Mr James TO asked earlier whether it is possible to conduct checks on them. If this is not possible under the existing legislation, I think we certainly have to legislate for this purpose.

I am very disappointed as there are only two Directors of Bureaux in this Chamber today. These Directors of Bureaux are well-versed in certain policies but when we asked them to come to the Legislative Council to account for the policies in which they are well-versed, they acted evasively by only arranging for civil servants to attend the meetings. Today, they should actually bring along some experts to this meeting. The reason is, frankly speaking, although my friends have kept on providing me with information by e-mails, I do not understand such information and even for some of the terms, I can understand only the alphabets but not their meaning. Those terms are so technical. I will pass the information to the Directors of Bureaux and the President later on. The President has studied science and he may understand it.

I have read the radiation safety guidelines issued by a medical and healthcare institute in Massachusetts. It was e-mailed to me late at night by a doctor who had been trained in Hong Kong and he asked me to hand it to the Government. In fact, the Government must have these safety guidelines, just that the Government, unlike this professional, or unlike this unimportant professional who had been trained in Massachusetts, will not immediately think that this document may help "Long Hair" with his speech and then give it to him. Those of them who have come to this Chamber today are all political bureaucrats, or Directors of Bureaux under the accountability system. Have they brought along experts to this meeting? If I can understand such information and put questions to them based on it, they would not have the knowledge to give me answers.

The Government has always told us to be rational in discussion. It is now time to conduct rational discussion as experts all over the world have to be brought together to tackle the disaster. The Secretary said the same thing to me in this Chamber today. Mr Paul TSE asked Secretary Ambrose LEE yesterday whether or not the OTA for Japan could be raised to black, and today, he asked the Secretary again whether it could be changed to black. I also asked the Secretary whether it could be changed to black. Must the Secretary follow what the Mainland does? But even the Mainland has evacuated its nationals. Is it a must that the Secretary can issue a black OTA only after the same is announced in the Mainland? Does it have to be like this? Does he not make any independent judgment? Does he think that the Mainland would lose face if it is announced by us but not in the Mainland? Is that the case? If so, the Secretary should tell us honestly, so that I will go to the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region today to tell it not to feel this way.

I do not mean to politicize this issue. This is a fact. The case of the Manila hostage incident is just the same. Has he thought about all this in the interest of Hong Kong people? This is indeed questionable. When he was asked which pro-democracy activists are not allowed entry to Hong Kong, he responded that he had no comments to make. But insofar as this incident is concerned, he really does not need to do this, right? Can the Government require visitors to undergo radiation checks on arrival by asking them to go through a corridor for a radiation scan and providing cleansing to visitors who are found to be contaminated? Can this be done? When can this be done? When can this be done for cargoes and baggage? The situation of visitors may not be that bad as they can take a bath. Is he going to do this or not?

I am not going to talk about other issues. What are the contingency measures of the Government now? If there is anything that Hong Kong is incapable of doing this time around, then Hong Kong may really have to leverage on the Motherland. He has difficulties politics-wise, but this is not my problem. Does he need foreigners to Right, let us then make use of the information of foreign countries. If I can find information from overseas nuclear safety councils, I will immediately read it out in Chinese. Do they have websites? Can the Government ask them to provide information? In times of a crisis, it is most imperative for the Government to tell the truth. The incidents such as those occurred in Chernobyl and Three Mile Island are precisely instances of the

relevant parties not willing to reveal the truth. Even when this crisis of radiation leak first broke out in Japan, the operators of the nuclear plant also did not wish to make public too much information. This is human nature, but the Government has to intervene.

When dealing with these 113 demonstrators of us, the Government has put in all its efforts, revealing even details that people do not wish to know. But what strategies does the Government have to cope with these crises? I have none. Let me make it clear that I do not have any strategy at all. I have to thank the President for allowing us to discuss this issue. If not, what other opportunity will there be for discussion? I think there is a bad habit in this Council that we need to change and that is, the mindset that it is useless after all the discussions. We are duty-bound to speak up for Hong Kong. Even if I am so dumb as to raise a thousand concerns, I may still make a useful contribution, because when I asked a very stupid question, it may prompt other people to break the silence. President, I thank you for permitting us to hold a discussion. Otherwise, the Government would go on messing around.

MR TOMMY CHEUNG (in Cantonese): President, I appreciate the grave concern expressed by Hong Kong people over the impact of the Fukushima nuclear crisis in Japan on food safety in Hong Kong.

In fact, since this incident occurred, the industry has consistently maintained close liaison with the Government, trying to provide support by all means to enhance food surveillance and control measures, while stepping up efforts to establish a Japanese food importers association as the Government's counterpart in the industry, with a view to ensuring that all important information can be disseminated to all importers speedily.

The Liberal Party and I consider that the authorities should expeditiously make use of these channels to exchange views with the industry, in order to formulate and publish a package of sound contingency measures and draw up specific precautionary and control measures targeting different levels of crisis. The authorities should also ensure that despite an expansion of the area within which food is contaminated by radiation, the authorities will still have adequate ability and resources to perform the gate-keeping role effectively.

We must understand that a lot of confusing information has been circulating in the community now and some academics have even pointed out recently that as many kinds of Japanese food may enter Hong Kong as parallel imports, they proposed a complete ban on the import of food from Fukushima to prevent contaminated food from entering the territory undetected.

However, I have learnt from the industry that, as it is still winter in Northeast Japan, farming has ceased on a lot of farmland and so, the chances of problematic food being imported from the disaster-stricken area after the earthquake are not high. Furthermore, as the imported food was purchased in the market, which means that the food had gone through the stringent control system in these places, the industry does not consider it necessary to impose at the present stage a ban on the import of food from the disaster-stricken area. On the contrary, the industry is concerned that as there is still remaining stock of food imported from Fukushima before the earthquake in the local market, if a ban is rashly imposed on the import of food from Fukushima, it may confuse the consumers and create an even greater panic.

In my opinion, instead of just looking on as public discussion heats up on the control measures, the authorities should draw on the experience during the outbreak of SARS and publish on a regular basis the findings of food tests and information on food safety, and take prompt actions to teach the public how they can distinguish stock of food imported from the disaster-stricken area before the earthquake and help them in making such distinction, so that confusion can be reduced. Meanwhile, official liaison with Japan should be enhanced to follow up whether or not they can still maintain a high standard of food safety and to provide concrete and accurate information to ease public anxieties.

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

Indeed, the concern of the public is understandable given an increasingly high level of radiation in places surrounding the disaster-stricken area in Japan. It is still unknown as to whether the radioactive materials will continue to spread through seawater, wind and rain, and underground water.

The Controller of the Centre for Food Safety, Dr CHAN Hon-ye, also expressed concern earlier about the risk of radioactive materials spreading to Hong Kong once they reach the soil or seawater and enter the food chain. Therefore, regarding the authorities' plan to spend a few years' time monitoring the level of radiation in food imported into Hong Kong from Japan in the long run, the Liberal Party and I consider this appropriate.

Moreover, the industry has been very concerned about the ever changing developments and people in the industry are worried that we may not be able to grasp the relevant information in time and find out whether or not the food sources are contaminated by radiation. In this connection, I hope that the authorities can forge co-operation with the relevant authorities in Japan and in other places, so as to closely keep track of the scope of food contamination. Efforts should also be made to enhance the notification mechanism, so as to ensure that the news about radiation-contaminated food can be reported and made public at the first opportunity. It is also necessary for the authorities to sharpen their sensitivity and be prepared to provide suitable guidelines to the industry anytime to help the industry purchasing problematic food.

Deputy President, to parents in Hong Kong, their greatest worry is whether or not the formula milk to be exported to Hong Kong from Japan will be contaminated by radiation in future. It is, therefore, most imperative for the authorities to find out from formula milk suppliers the volume of stock and the situation of contamination in places where the formula milk is produced. The purpose is to ascertain whether a problem of unstable supply will arise in the long term and enhance the transparency of the sources of supply. This will enable parents to make their own assessment on whether or not they should switch to other types of formula milk. The authorities should also step up publicity and provide knowledge of formula milk through various channels, including television or radio.

In any case, the emergence of panic buying of formula milk shows that it is very easy for panic to be caused among the public when there is a lack of information, and the authorities should keep this lesson in mind. We can foresee that given the impact of such factors as the destruction of a vast expanse of farmland and food shortage, the volume of food exports from Japan will drop for a certain period of time in future. Will this lead to the further tightening of global food supply and cause the prices of food to rise more drastically in Hong

Kong? The authorities should conduct assessments expeditiously and look into the counter-measures.

Deputy President, I so submit.

MR WONG SING-CHI (in Cantonese): Deputy President, the nuclear plant explosion and radiation leak crisis caused by a tsunami in Japan is judged by many different people as an apocalypse. Of course, as a Christian, I hope that Members can pay attention to this. I hope Members can rethink their life and think about what in this world will need our input and efforts. I think this is worthy of our concerted efforts, in order to protect the future of mankind and continuation of life.

Obviously, this incident has given rise to an unprecedented crisis for us. But apart from the fact that this crisis will pose a lot of difficulties to us, what is most worrying to us is that we actually do not have much information. I hope that Secretary Ambrose LEE and Secretary Dr York CHOW can explain the situation to Hong Kong people in great detail later on, so that we can clearly understand the information pertaining to the nuclear leak, including what problems Hong Kong will face and what Hong Kong should do and what counter-measures the Government has in case the nuclear leakage worsens.

Around 20 years ago when I first took up the office as a member of the then District Board, I already drew the Government's attention to the issue of whether Hong Kong people should develop an awareness of crisis, so that they can be mobilized for crisis prevention when such a need arises. We have indeed experienced several crises, including the financial turmoil, SARS, and avian flu, and now, all places in the world are facing this crisis of radiation leakage. I think while many civil servants or organizations are doing a very good job now in Hong Kong, the awareness actually remains inadequate among many members of the public.

I would like to cite as an example a very serious case that happened today and that is, as also mentioned by Mr James TO earlier on, in all supermarkets today — I think this is going to happen in all supermarkets — all the salt and chicken powder has been sold out. I received telephone calls from many kaifongs in New Territories North just this morning. They told me that all

supermarkets, be they in Shek Wu Hui, Luen Wo Hui or in nearby housing estates, have all run out of stock of salt. Outside the supermarkets now, people are buying carts and carts of salt and taking them back home. We also see people carrying salt across the boundary. It is learnt that they are taking the salt to Shenzhen and other parts in the Mainland for speculation.

Just now when I chatted with Mr LEE Wing-tat — he studied Chemistry — I asked him why people are flocking to buy salt. He said that salt is actually sodium chloride and contains sodium iodides but in only very small traces. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that it is indeed very stupid to think that taking salt can ward off radiation because it cannot produce such an effect even if one consumes it to the extent of causing renal problems. But regrettably, shoppers are now spurring a run on salt. Why do I suspect that all supermarkets in the territory will run out of salt? Because I just called my wife who is in Sham Shui Po and asked her to take a look at the supermarkets, and she told me that all the salt had been sold out. Then, many people in other districts also told me that salt was already out of stock in their districts.

The Secretary must really tell and explain clearly to Hong Kong people and Mainland residents through the Legislative Council later what little purpose this panic-buying of salt will serve. I think salt does not have much effect in terms of radiation prevention. If radiation leakage has reached a very serious level, I do not think that it can really be of much help and worse still, it will cause harms. But why is it that in the Mainland — as already reported in the press today — the residents are climbing onto the shelves to snatch salt? What happens now is that not only has a "milk powder rush" emerged, as Mr Tommy CHEUNG has said. Will similar news be circulating again, thus causing panic among Hong Kong people, causing panic among comrades in the Mainland and causing panic among people all over the world and as a result, everyone blindly engages in panic-buying? This is a problem we are set to face. Since our Government has boasted that it is very rational and systematic, I hope that Secretary Ambrose LEE can tell us later from a security perspective what Hong Kong people should do in the face of radiation leakage and how Hong Kong people can calmly face this incident.

I very much admire the Japanese people. Despite facing such a situation and their lives being endangered, they do not climb onto the shelves to grab goods that are essential to their living. They still queue up and wait and even

share the goods with others. But why is there such panic in our country and in the surrounding places where everyone is desperately engaging in panic-buying? We are not in a life-and-death moment and yet, such a situation has arisen. I think we need to do some soul-searching. Hong Kong should play an active role in clearly disseminating all information to Hong Kong people and comrades all over the country by all means, so that they will know that they should not create panic (*The buzzer sounded*)

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Your time is up.

MR WONG SING-CHI (in Cantonese): because if they do, they would have died before the nuclear leakage disaster actually strikes.

MISS TANYA CHAN (in Cantonese): Deputy President, first of all, we must, of course, put the minds of the people at ease. We, being Members, must not induce fears among the people. Over the last few days, I must say that I actually have panicked a bit — though not really to the extent of panic, I do have some worries — because I know too little indeed. I do not know what nuclear power is. I always do not know much about it. Even though I am a member of the Panel on Environmental Affairs and I have recently read relatively more information on nuclear power, I actually do not know much about what effects it can cause and how radiation can affect us.

Over the past few days when I was home, I often watched local television programmes and also television programmes from other places. Normally, I will definitely surf the Internet too, but I did not browse the website of the International Atomic Energy Agency before. But I have browsed its webpage, in order to find out some latest information.

I saw two scenes yesterday which I still cannot forget today, and I do not think I can ever forget them. In the first scene, after the earthquake had hit Fukushima, a five-storey hospital was ravaged by the tsunami to the extent that it was flooded up to the fourth floor. Some people were not injured. A man reunited with his wife the day before yesterday and she gave birth to a child just

yesterday. He thinks that it is indeed meaningful for his child to be born in such a difficult situation and that this may bring hope to them.

The second scene that I saw yesterday showed a mother taking his son to school. We all know that the Japanese go to school in very tidy uniforms. Although such a serious disaster had struck them, the children went to school as usual. When this mother was interviewed by a reporter, she wept while she gave a reply, and it was only after her son had gone into the school that she burst into tears. She said that she was actually very frightened but she did not want the child to feel that his mother was scared. She hoped to make her child feel as if nothing had happened and that he could live each day happily as usual. That mother said this in tears. I think this kind of fear depends, to a certain extent, on how far the people trust their government.

At this point in time, I think the panic among Hong Kong people is somewhat unwarranted. This panic actually stems from firstly, how much information we have, how well we know about it, and how effectively the information is circulated; secondly, whether or not we can see that the Government has the ability and determination in governance. Certainly, we saw the Undersecretary for Security say yesterday that they would publish on a periodic basis the information and findings available to them in the next few days. But can this reporting mechanism be extended to the end of the crisis, rather than just implementing it only in the next few days? Besides, can the Government show us that it really has the determination and the ability to govern?

It is very rare for both of the Directors of Bureaux to be here in this Chamber today. But should an inter-departmental co-ordination group be set up? Why is it that up till today, either Chief Secretary for Administration Henry TANG or the Chief Executive has not said a word? Is it that they will come forth to say a few words only when everybody is panic-stricken? We always say that the Government should sense the urgency of the people. Although the public do not consider this a matter of great urgency, we still hope to see that the Government can set up an inter-departmental working group with the involvement of experts and release information of our concern at a fixed time on a daily basis.

Secretary Ambrose LEE mentioned yesterday that the Pearl River Delta (PRD) may not be affected by an earthquake of magnitude 6. Over the last few

days, I have watched an English television programme in which a foreign professor was interviewed and talked about earthquakes. He is an expert on crustal movement. He said that whether in terms of the magnitude, time and even the place of the earthquake, this earthquake in Japan was not expected by him, not even the place where it happened. Therefore, I found it difficult to subscribe to the view that no earthquake of magnitude 6 or greater will happen in the PRD and we may therefore expect to see the development of more nuclear plants there. I hope that the SAR Government can negotiate with the Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station in the Mainland and seek permission for expert representatives from Hong Kong to conduct checks jointly with them in order to prove the safety of its operation and publicize the relevant information to the public as soon as possible.

I so submit.

MR FRED LI (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I will be brief, because Mr WONG Sing-chi has already spoken on this earlier on. However, I would like to follow up a couple of points. Secretary Dr York CHOW, the Government must expeditiously clarify some issues.

I have also rung up my constituency, Kwun Tong, as I received a call from WONG Wai-yin, a member of the Yuen Long District Council, who told me that Yuen Long has run out of salt. Many housewives have lodged complaints to us, and I think friends in the DAB have also received such complaints. From what I can see, this also happens in Kwun Tong and not just in the urban area. Why is there such panic?

If, according to Mr WONG Sing-chi, some people think that consuming salt can protect them from radiation, that is obviously wrong. In my case, for instance, as my diastolic blood pressure is slightly high, there will be a great problem if I take in more salt because before I am adversely affected by radiation, my condition would have become critical.

So, what I am trying to say is simple. I hope the Secretary can issue a statement as soon as possible to clarify some misconceptions or misleading information which suggests that a certain thing can prevent radiation and drives

people to a panic-buying spree in order to ward off radiation — I am not talking about formula milk as formula milk is a different matter. The Government must promptly make clarifications at the first opportunity to call on the public not to panic. This motion is not meant to cause panic among the public, but to tackle the problem according to our understanding. A salt rush or consumption of salt without sense by many people will, on the contrary, cause negative effects.

I so submit.

MR PAUL CHAN (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I wish to offer my deepest condolences to the Japanese people and also other people who have been made victims by this earthquake, tsunami and nuclear incident, and my best wishes are with them. From this nuclear incident in Fukushima triggered by the earthquake, there is indeed a lot for us to rethink, including how a balance can be struck between economic development and environmental protection, and the way forward for the sustainable development of Hong Kong. The helplessness felt by human beings before the merciless natural forces has made us think about how we should live our life, reminding us that nothing can be taken for granted and we must always cherish our loved ones.

Today, as we live in Hong Kong which lies in a non-active seismic zone, we do not have to worry day and night about the onslaught of disasters. This is a great blessing. But in this tiny, densely populated place, it is very easy for people to make irrational reactions like a swarm of bees. So, it is all the more necessary for us to rethink how we can prevent Hong Kong from falling prey to man-made disasters.

As colleagues mentioned earlier on, the State Council decided in its executive meeting yesterday that the medium- and long-term plan for nuclear development will be adjusted and the nuclear safety regulations will be formulated expeditiously while the approval of all nuclear power projects will be temporarily suspended before the nuclear safety regulations are approved.

I remember that the Government carried out a public consultation exercise on "Hong Kong's Climate Change Strategy and Action Agenda" last year, proposing that nuclear power shall take up about 50% of the fuel mix for power

generation in 2020. There are still nine years before 2020, and this period of time is neither long nor short. Although the Government should have long-term plans, given the occurrence of incidents which made it worthwhile for us to review our planning again, the Administration should not turn a blind eye to these developments. Rather, it should examine the relevant plans and reassess the relevant proposals.

On the other hand, as a number of colleagues have mentioned, the measures for reporting incidents of the Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station have given cause to criticism in many aspects. Since there is unfortunately this vivid example of Fukushima before our eyes, I think the Government should take one more step forward to review how, in the light of the latest circumstances, the notification and contingency measures can be further improved and the transparency enhanced.

As I said earlier on, we Hong Kong people do not have to worry day and night about serious disasters, but we hope that our Government can take precautions early, maintain vigilance in peace times and make preparations properly, especially as it seems that so far, we have not yet formulated measures to cope with nuclear incidents that may occur in neighbouring regions or countries, and we also lack experience in this respect. The Government should expeditiously consider and draw up the relevant measures, while explaining clearly to the public how they should face such a situation and telling them not to panic unnecessarily. As for members of the public, when seeing other people in adversities, we should not throw ourselves into confusion and engage in panic-buying, for this will only unnecessarily add to our fears.

Deputy President, I so submit.

DR RAYMOND HO (in Cantonese): Deputy President, this massive disaster in Japan has resulted in many deaths and the exact number of lives lost has yet to be ascertained. First of all, I wish to express profound condolences to them and I also wish to extend my sincere wishes to the families of the injured and the deceased. In facing this disaster which is so complicated, the Japanese people have shown to be very calm and demonstrated a high standard of cultural literacy. This has commanded my great respect.

Let me first make a declaration. I am the Chairman of the Nuclear Safety Consultative Committee of the Guangdong Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station (DBNPS) and the Lingao Nuclear Power Station. This extraordinarily enormous earthquake in Japan caused an extraordinarily enormous tsunami which was unprecedented. It can be said that the tsunami had exceeded the scenario projections in the original design of the nuclear plant in question. This may be the reason causing the complete failure of the cooling system of the boiling-water reactor of the nuclear plant which then led to an explosion of hydrogen, causing damages to the reactor building and releasing some radioactive matters. This has resulted in a very serious problem.

After the incident of Three Mile Island of the United States in 1979 and that of Chernobyl of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1986, people have become more concerned about nuclear power and considered it a matter that needs to be handled stringently. The DBNPS commenced operation in 1994 and adopted an advanced French design. We all know that France has 58 pressurized water reactors of the same type and this design of reactor is commonly adopted in France. The DBNPS has strictly complied with the most stringent standards recommended by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Association of Nuclear Operators, and has since 1999 obtained ISO14001 environmental management system accreditation.

In 1989, the operator of the DBNPS established the Nuclear Safety Consultative Committee. Some members of the Committee had witnessed the entire process of development. Certainly, I am no expert in this field but during the course of monitoring, we had paid particular attention to a number of issues. First, whether or not its design was in compliance with the most original design in France. In this regard, there were French experts supervising work on the site, and the construction of the power plant was also monitored by many overseas experts.

We can see that the design of the DBNPS carries at least four independent power systems, two of which are high voltage systems whereas the remaining two are diesel driven. The power plant has three loops, namely, the first loop, the second loop and the third loop. The outer shell is the strongest, which is a 900 mm-thick pre-stressed reinforced concrete wall with a 6 mm-thick inner steel lining, which is built to very high safety specifications. It was pointed out at

that time that it could withstand the impact of a 747 airplane ramming into it. The outer shell is very important.

A boiling-water reactor is used in Fukushima, Japan. That was a technology developed 40 years ago and there used to be no containment casing. In 2001, however, an inner containment casing was built but its capacity is far smaller than that of the DBNPS, and of course, its ability to withhold the release of radioactive elements is also comparatively smaller.

I am not an expert, but I think that the design of the DBNPS is far safer because its cooling system and power system are sound, with drills and maintenance work being carried out frequently. Besides, checks are conducted regularly and there is monitoring at many levels. We attach great importance to whether or not manpower training is adequate and also whether or not man-made mistakes will recur. We will repeatedly ask them questions revolving around these issues.

I think we have a firm and stable geological foundation especially because we are outside the Pacific Ring of Fire (or the seismic belt). I believe our conditions now cannot be compared to those in Japan, and I think Members can understand this. Our concern about the conditions in Japan is understandable, but judging from our current conditions, I think such concern is unwarranted because the DBNPS is located 50 km away from Hong Kong.

Thank you, Deputy President. I so submit.

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

PROF PATRICK LAU (in Cantonese): Deputy President, from what we have just learnt from the news reports, and as also mentioned by Members, a "salt rush" has suddenly appeared in supermarkets in Hong Kong and this shows the concern of the public. This is true.

In my opinion, the most important issue is the proposal made in the Policy Address of raising the share of nuclear power in power generation to 50% in 2020. With regard to this proposal, the authorities should perhaps look into it

again, because many countries and the European Union have immediately convened urgent meetings to discuss the issue of nuclear safety. Many European countries, such as Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Poland, have announced one after another the suspension of nuclear development projects. Of course, nuclear power is also a matter of great concern in Asia. China has announced that monitoring is being carried at 27 of the 37 nuclear power stations in Guangdong Province. There is a need for all countries to examine this issue.

I think Hong Kong should rather seize this opportunity to upgrade the applied studies on renewable energy. The reason is that the use of various types of environmentally-friendly natural energy, including solar energy, wind power, hydro power, geothermal power, ocean energy and biological energy, to replace non-environmentally-friendly ways of power generation is something that warrants our immediate actions. I consider this most important conversely.

If the authorities can, in the long-term plan, replace the inclusion of nuclear power for power generation as proposed in the Policy Address by energy permitted in the circumstances of Hong Kong, I think this can inspire greater public confidence. This is very important. Otherwise, if we continue to cling to this idea Various countries are looking into this issue, but we have yet to put across a message to tell the people what kinds of energy we will use to replace it. I think the authorities can take this opportunity to do this.

I think the Government should educate the public, telling them that they should not be over-sensitive and that they need not rush to buy iodide tablets. Perhaps the Secretary can explain clearly later what exactly the Government will do to protect us. I understand that the airport has now put in place a system to screen visitors for contamination by nuclear radiation, and visitors can choose to undertake the test. I have also learnt from news reports that some visitors were tested to be contaminated by radiation when they returned to their country. I hope the Secretary can clearly explain these issues later.

It is most imperative to give reassurances to the public and tell them what they can do. What do we need to do when a natural disaster, an earthquake or an accident happened in Hong Kong? Our firemen have had a lot of drills but actually, can we do more by way of education to enable the public to understand such issues as earthquakes, natural disasters and contamination by nuclear

radiation? We should do this for one important reason and that is, we should make preparations for contingency purpose.

I also have the impression that Hong Kong has not conducted relevant studies. Hong Kong is densely populated but the authorities have not thought about how safety can be maintained in the city in the event of a massive disaster in future. In this respect, many colleagues of mine in the Department of Architecture where I used to work would like to do research studies in this area to look into how buildings and space should be made use of to inculcate this idea in the public, so that they know what they should do in the event of a natural disaster.

Deputy President, I so submit. I hope the Government can (*The buzzer sounded*)

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Time is up.

PROF PATRICK LAU (in Cantonese): Thank you.

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

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Members have already spoken in this session. I now call upon the Secretary for Security and the Secretary for Food and Health to reply. This session of the debate shall come to a close after the Secretaries have spoken.

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY (in Cantonese): Deputy President, a severe earthquake of magnitude 9 occurred at the coast off the Miyagi Prefecture in Japan. The earthquake generated a tsunami causing huge damages and serious casualties in Japan, especially in the northeastern part. This most unfortunate natural disaster has caused an incident at the Fukushima nuclear plant, and not

only the Japanese Government but also many governments are paying close attention to the developments of the incident. I fully appreciate the concern expressed by a number of Members earlier about the possible impact of the Fukushima nuclear incident on Hong Kong. I will explain the response of the SAR Government in four parts, while the Secretary for Food and Health will later on give a response on the impact of this incident on human health.

First, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant incident in Japan. Japan is a member state of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We understand that since the massive earthquake occurred on 11 March, the Japanese Government has been notifying the IAEA of the nuclear power plant incident and publicizing the latest news to the international community through public channels.

According to the information released by the Japanese Government, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant suffered the major impact of the earthquake. The nuclear power plant has six reactor units. Based on information from various sources and local nuclear expert's assessment, despite the fact that there have been reports of explosion or fire at the reactor units over the past few days, there is no evidence to show severe damage of the outer shell of the reactor or hence emissions of radioactivity caused by the release of a large amount of radioactive matters from the reactor core. Japan has classified this event as a level 4 "Accident with Local Consequences" on the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale. The Japanese authorities have taken measures to evacuate residents within the 20-km zone around the nuclear power plant and request residents living within the 20 km to 30 km range from the plant to stay indoors, which is consistent with the international standard. At the same time, the Japanese Government is publicizing twice a day the radiation dose rate measurements of different parts of the country, and is continuously monitoring the developments of the incident. It is learnt that the Japanese Government has invited nuclear experts from the IAEA to provide assistance in Fukushima.

(THE PRESIDENT resumed the Chair)

The SAR Government understands that the developments are evolving daily. We will continue to closely monitor the developments, especially the

announcements made by the IAEA and the Japanese Government, as well as the experts' opinions, in order to make assessments and adopt decisive measures on an objective and scientific basis, with a view to protecting the health and safety of Hong Kong people.

Second, assisting Hong Kong residents in Japan. After the earthquake on 11 March, the SAR Government activated the 24-hour Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre in the afternoon on the same day to closely monitor the developments of the incident and co-ordinate the contingency measures of the Government. Twelve members of staff of the Immigration Department (ImmD) have been despatched to set up help desks at the Narita and Haneda airports with staff of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Tokyo to render any practicable assistance to Hong Kong residents in need there.

As at 9 am on 17 March, the ImmD has received 5 801 enquiries and 1 239 requests for help from Hong Kong people, with 461 cases lodged by people who have temporarily lost contact with their relatives who are Hong Kong residents in Japan. The ImmD has passed the information to the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo to seek their assistance in locating these Hong Kong people. We have reached most of these Hong Kong people who have lost contact with their families, and there are only 14 cases in which the Hong Kong people concerned have not yet been reached. It is believed that most of them live in the outer skirts of Tokyo.

We have also been maintaining close contact with the airlines. Except the affected northeastern part of Japan, the flights from different parts of Japan to Hong Kong have so far remained normal, with a total of 14 normal flights to Hong Kong every day. We secured the co-operation of the local airlines and two additional flights from Tokyo to Hong Kong were arranged in the evening of 16 March (that is, last night) to bring home Hong Kong residents who wished to return earlier. We understand that Tokyo is a popular tourist destination of Hong Kong people. In view of the red OTA issued by the SAR Government for places including Tokyo, we appeal to Hong Kong citizens to avoid non-essential travel to Tokyo. We again appeal to Hong Kong tourists who are in Tokyo to stay calm and pay attention to the announcements by the local government. Hong Kong people should return to Hong Kong earlier if they have no special need to stay in Japan. Those residents in need of assistance may contact airlines

or our assistance hotline "1868" for help. We will closely liaise with the local airlines to provide sufficient flights and seats to travellers in need.

As I mentioned just now, the 20-km zone around the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant has been cordoned off by the Japanese authorities since 12 March and visitors are barred from entering the area. Hence, the risk of visitors in popular travel destinations, such as Tokyo which is 250 km away from the nuclear power plant or Osaka which is even farther away, being contaminated by direct radiation should not be high. Judging from the present circumstances, it is not necessary to impose compulsory radiation checks on travellers from Japan, and Hong Kong residents should not be over anxious.

As for the local situation in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has set up 10 radiation monitoring stations over the territory which operate around the clock and transmit data back to the HKO every minute. The HKO has also collected air samples to examine for radioactive elements. After the earthquake, the HKO has been closely monitoring the Japanese Fukushima nuclear power plant incident and has activated the Monitoring and Assessment Centre to monitor the radiation level within the territory. The HKO has also increased the examination frequency from once every few days to once a day. Up to now, the HKO's monitoring results have indicated that the radiation level in Hong Kong is normal.

Besides, we understand that the National Nuclear Safety Administration of the Ministry of Environmental Protection has required the other provincial environmental protection departments to strengthen the monitoring work. The monitoring results in various places, including the coastal regions, in the Mainland have indicated no abnormal radioactivity within the territory of China. Hong Kong is farther away from Japan than the Mainland coastal regions and thus our assessment that Hong Kong will not be affected by the radiation from Japan is consistent with the Mainland monitoring results.

The HKO will continue to closely liaise with the Mainland meteorological authorities and the HKO will immediately follow up if an abnormal radiation level is detected in the Mainland. If necessary, the HKO will further step up monitoring by sending mobile survey teams to measure the radiation level and radioactive plume within the Hong Kong territory.

On the safety of the Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station, as stated by Dr Raymond HO earlier on, we have, in fact, put in place a contingency plan. As I already explained it in reply to a question from a Member yesterday, I will not go into the details again.

I also talked about the OTA when I replied to an oral question yesterday. I have noted the comment made by some media today that I had vilified some members of the public. In this connection, I have to clarify that this is not my intention, and I have not said anything to that effect. If some members of the public feel offended by what I said, I wish to offer my apology to them.

Besides, a number of Members made an appeal to us earlier, asking us to raise the OTA to a black alert for the whole of Japan. I have noted Members' views but in fact, the OTA is an objective assessment. We monitor the situation in Japan every day and I noted this morning, that the level of nuclear radiation is normal in Tokyo or the peripheral areas. I appreciate Members' concern, and ongoing reviews will be conducted.

Lastly, I would like to say that the World Health Organization (WHO) stated yesterday that there is no evidence at this time of any significant spread of nuclear radiation from the nuclear incident in Japan. The WHO particularly encouraged governments and members of the public to take steps to halt rumours, which will cause unnecessary public anxieties. We believe that Members, like us, will agree that the developments of the incident should be assessed on the basis of objective facts.

Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Cantonese): President, I will supplement the speech of the Secretary for Security by explaining the impact of nuclear power on human beings and food.

We appreciate the public's concern about the impact of radiation from the damaged nuclear plant in Fukushima, but I think the public do not have to be over-worried. If the leakage of radioactive matters really happens at a nuclear power plant, they are released in a way similar to smoke emitting from a chimney

and dispersing into the atmosphere and then being carried away by wind. However, these radioactive matters will be diluted as they naturally mix with the air and their concentration will decrease rapidly. Normally, the concentration of radioactive matters decreases and their impact on health lessens as they move farther away from the reactor and the longer the time has passed after the occurrence of the incident.

Hong Kong is 3 000 km away from the Fukushima Prefecture, and the chance of our direct exposure to radiation is very slim. The observations of the Hong Kong Observatory also show clearly that even the air currents arriving in Hong Kong in the next few days will come from sources which are quite far away from Japan. Therefore, this will have very little direct impact on us.

As for Hong Kong residents who have been to Japan, they will not be subject to significant radioactive contamination if they did not stay on the site of the incident or in the 20-km zone around the nuclear plant. As a matter of fact, the 20-km zone around the Fukushima nuclear plant has been cordoned off by the Japanese authorities and visitors are barred from entering the zone.

As regards the World Health Organization — as also mentioned by Secretary Ambrose LEE earlier on — the measures taken by the Japanese authorities are consistent with the advice of international public health experts. If visitors returning from Japan feel unwell, they can undertake voluntary radiation checks at the health desk set up by us at the airport. The port health staff of the Department of Health will also provide medical information to allay the unnecessary concerns of visitors. If necessary, arrangements will be made to send visitors to the designated hospital for treatment and follow-up depending on the circumstances. So far, none of the visitors who voluntarily undertook the test has been found to be contaminated by radiation.

We are also concerned about the reports on Taiwan today. In this connection, we will follow this up with Taiwan in order to understand whether their testing method and standards are different from ours.

Naturally occurring radioactivity is common in the environment. Our body metabolic processes can often repair any potential damage caused by low levels of radiation exposure. Unless a high level of radioactivity is taken in, the impact on health is insignificant.

In respect of food, we have since 12 March stepped up surveillance and tested the radiation level of fresh food imported from Japan, including vegetables, fruits, and milk. As at yesterday, we tested a total of 72 consignments of food and results show that all are satisfactory. The relevant information has been uploaded onto the webpage of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS).

We will continuously make reference to the risk assessment and target food items produced after the explosions of the nuclear plant and which stand a risk of contamination. The CFS will continue to monitor food imports from Japan — not only food from places in the vicinity of Fukushima but also food produced in all parts of Japan.

Some Members have mentioned formula milk. We will continue to pay attention to this. We will make an announcement on any findings we have obtained.

Lastly, I must emphasize that the public should not take iodine tablets on their own initiative because its long-term absorption in human body will affect the functioning of the thyroid. Taking iodine tablets will not reduce the level of contamination by radiation. These tablets are only meant to be taken by people who perform rescue operations on the site when there is a special need.

Panic-buying of salt or other goods is all the more unnecessary. I think excessive consumption of salt will even affect health. Moreover, it is unnecessary for the public to rush to buy any kind of food, because most of the food in Hong Kong has a stable supply and do not come from Japan.

President, we will closely monitor the developments of the incident and when necessary, we will make announcements to the public. I would like to mention that the medical profession, or more precisely, the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, will publish their medical analyses on a public occasion tomorrow, so as to give the public a better understanding of the impact of radiation on human health.

Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): We now move onto the second session to debate the issue raised by Mr James TO relating to the refusal of Philippine government officials and rescue crew involved in the Manila hostage incident to come to Hong Kong to testify in the Coroner's Court.

Members who wish to speak on this issue will please press the "Request to speak" button.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): President, this urgent debate which concerns public interest should have been conducted last Wednesday. I will bear in mind one point, and I believe other Members will do so, too, and, that is, a death inquest is being conducted in the Coroner's Court, and our speeches, including my speech, will not affect the operation of the Coroner's Court and fair administration of justice.

President, the Coroner's Court is a court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the sovereignty of China. The Coroner's Court is now hearing a case involving some Chinese nationals being killed in the Philippines. On the part of the Philippines, their President and government officials of various ranks have, on numerous occasions, given an undertaking to the Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines, officials of the Central Authorities in China and the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region respectively that assistance would be rendered to the death inquest and other investigations conducted by us.

President, time is running out. Let me cite the remarks made by the Coroner, Mr Michael CHAN, in Court this morning. He said, to this effect, "We cannot keep on waiting for the witnesses indefinitely. If no more Philippine witness will show up to give evidence in these two days, the case will be summed up on Friday."

President, we have only one channel and that is, the diplomatic channel. What I wish the Government to reply today is whether the SAR Government has reported this to the Central Government and called on the Central Government to exert pressure and conduct mediation through the diplomatic channel, so that the 116 Philippine witnesses on which summonses are served by the Coroner's Court can testify in Hong Kong or testify through video link.

President, why did I say that we need to elevate it to the diplomatic level? It is because in early March, the SAR Government already summoned the Consul-General of the Philippines in Hong Kong through the Chief Secretary for Administration to specifically and expressly point out to him that the President of the Philippines had made an undertaking to the Chief Executive of the SAR in November last year that assistance would be provided, but so far, this undertaking has not been honoured.

What the SAR Government must reply and tell the Hong Kong people is how it is going to do its utmost. If the Government acts like a tape recorder, just as it did in the last debate, and completely fails to respond to the questions and concerns raised by Members but only says once again that it will make an effort through various channels, Hong Kong people could hardly feel convinced.

President, time is running out. This debate, which should have been held last Wednesday, aims to enable Members to express all their demands to the SAR Government and call on the Government to resort to the diplomatic channel, urging the Central Government to exert the greatest pressure and conduct mediation on the basis of Sino-Philippine relations and because a country has not honoured its promise, so as to do justice and find out the truth for these Chinese nationals in Hong Kong who were killed overseas based on the best possible evidence that can be obtained in a formal hearing.

MS AUDREY EU (in Cantonese): President, the adjournment debate that we have just held and this adjournment debate now both underscore the vulnerability of life. Very often, we run into accidents in unforeseeable and unpredictable circumstances.

When these Hong Kong people were taken hostage in the Philippines, many Hong Kong people were having dinner or watching television at home. They witnessed the whole process. They were very concerned and supportive of the actions taken by the SAR Government at the time. They also hope to find out the truth in order to do justice to the deceased and the injured. The commencement of the death inquest into the hostage incident in the Philippines coincided with some other important news in Hong Kong and the international community. Therefore, many people may not have truly or wholeheartedly paid attention to this death inquest.

Let us recap the past developments. In the beginning when the conduct of an inquest was planned, the Coroner issued a total of 116 summonses to summon witnesses from the Philippines to give evidence. On 28 December last year, the Secretary of Justice of the Philippines, Leila DE LIMA, said that 20 witnesses would be sent here to give evidence, which she considered to be enough, adding that assistance would be provided under the framework of mutual legal assistance between Hong Kong and the Philippines. On 30 December, the President of the Philippines, Benigno AQUINO III, remarked that it would be unnecessary to send so many people here. On 16 January this year, the Mayor of Manila, Alfredo LIM, said that he would not come to Hong Kong, adding that this would be an encroachment on the sovereignty of the Philippines. But when all these happened, we did not hear the SAR Government announce any action to be taken, unlike what it did at the time when the hostage incident broke out. We all remember that when the hostage incident was still unresolved, our Chief Executive telephoned President AQUINO III, hoping to talk to him over the telephone but was refused because AQUINO III said that it was not in line with the diplomatic protocol. During discussions in the Legislative Council after the incident, I raised this point and asked whether the SAR Government should discuss this with the Central Authorities or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to find out what procedures should be adopted and whether a review could be conducted on the procedures for handling emergency cases.

From the occurrence of the hostage incident in December last year to the conduct of the inquest now in March, a period of time has passed. The SAR Government should be able to see that the Philippines may renege on their promises any time by not providing full assistance and not fulfilling the mutual legal assistance arrangements between the Philippines and Hong Kong under Cap. 525 of the Laws of Hong Kong. Such being the case, what can the SAR Government do? In fact, during the period from December last year to March this year, we have not seen any action taken or procedure carried out by the SAR Government.

Therefore, I thank Mr James TO for making once again a request for conducting this urgent adjournment debate. I hope that Secretary Ambrose LEE can explain to us later whether or not he has requested the Philippine Government to send their witnesses to Hong Kong through the Central Authorities or the departments under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From what we have seen,

some Philippine police officers said that they would come to Hong Kong to give evidence, but then they said in the last minute that they could not come because they did not have so and so in black and white. The Coroner said that he would wait until tomorrow and so, we have only a few hours left. I understand that Secretary Ambrose LEE is very busy as he has to deal with many things but can he, during this period of time It is regrettable that we did not have a chance to hold this debate before but at least in this interim, can the Secretary make the best use of this occasion now to explain to us what the authorities will do to ensure that the Philippine Government and its officials will keep their promises, in order to do justice to the deceased and the injured?

Thank you, President.

MR TAM YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): President, after the tragedy in which Hong Kong hostages were killed in Manila, Hong Kong people were very angry and concerned, hoping the truth of the incident could be uncovered thoroughly. Subsequently, we were informed that a death inquest into the incident would be conducted and that relevant persons would come to Hong Kong from the Philippines to attend the inquest. But regrettably, there have been some twists and turns lately. Hong Kong people, who are very concerned about the developments, hope that the Philippine witnesses can come to Hong Kong to testify, so that the Government can investigate the truth of the incident thoroughly.

We are very concerned about the refusal of some of the witnesses to come to Hong Kong. Because of this, our party comrade, Mr LAU Kong-wah, wrote to the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in HKSAR and appealed for assistance in resolving the problem. Furthermore, we wrote to the House Committee Chairman on Tuesday enquiring whether the House Committee could discuss the manner in which we can further express our views.

We also noted that Mr James TO was very concerned about this matter. Initially, he sought leave from the President for a debate to be conducted under Rule 16(2) of the Rules of Procedure (RoP). Subsequently, in accordance with the relevant provision of the RoP, the President considered that his request out of order. I believe the problem could have been resolved more easily had Mr James TO been able to make his request for a debate to be conducted under

Rule 16(4) of the RoP. Anyhow, according to our convention, once a ruling has been made by the President, we will generally respect his decision because the President has, in accordance with the RoP, consulted the Secretariat and Legal Advisor before making the decision.

I have seen in the newspapers a lot of criticisms of the President. I think those wordings, such as criticizing the President for being cold-blooded, should not be used because they have gone too far. I hope our convention can continue to ensure smooth operation of the Legislative Council.

Lastly, I hope the SAR Government can step up its efforts in relaying this matter to the Central Authorities and, through their assistance, induce the relevant Philippine witnesses to come to Hong Kong to testify, thus enabling us to find out the truth of the incident through the inquest.

Thank you, President.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): President, regarding this hostage incident, I had asked Secretary Ambrose LEE repeatedly right at the beginning these questions: How did the SAR Government liaise with the Embassy in Manila on the day of the incident? Did the SAR Government liaise with the Embassy or *vice versa*? However, I have not received any reply from the Secretary yet.

I have also noted that after the incident, the Chief Executive said on a public occasion — apparently during his duty visit to Beijing — that he was very grateful to the Central Government for providing assistance after the incident. In other words, he was implying that no assistance was rendered before the end of the incident. Of course, we should collect evidence from the witnesses in the Philippines to examine how they mishandled the incident. But how can we tell how our Government and the Central Government mishandled the incident?

Let me digress for a while. I found a lady I knew in the public gallery of the death inquiry. She was working for 7-Eleven when I was performing night shifts. I was very pleased to meet her because she was fine. Of course, I must seek justice for Hong Kong people. However, we must think about this: Could it be possible that the Central Government was unaware of this matter? Instead of criticizing the President of the Legislative Council for not giving permission

for this adjournment debate to be conducted, why do we not ask whether the Central Government is aware of this matter? It is even aware of what I said. They will either ask what "Long Hair" has said in this Council or say that "Long Hair" is stirring up trouble again. The Central Government should be in the know. To be an imperial official, one must always avoid mention as taboo of those who are superior and in authority. I have no intention to criticize the communist Government over this matter. However, they must be joking if they say that they are not in the know.

When I met Dr Margaret NG in the Ante-Chamber, I said that the existing Government would behave like a parent when people did not want it to do so. In other words, it behaved like a robber or brutal force in ruling us. Let us look at how tough it was in dealing with the 113 demonstrators. How free it was when it attacked us afterwards, seizing every occasion. Now, we want the Government to sense the urgency of Hong Kong people, but can it possibly do so? Senior government officials have imposed on me their bureaucratic airs and graces. They have even been speaking nonsense, saying that they have to "defend and fight". Buddy, what does this expression mean? I know what "defending" in the Court and "fighting" mean. Buddy, was it "struggle" you wanted to say? You should not say that if you have no knowledge of it. Otherwise, how can your words be interpreted?

President, I mean no clichés. I am only worried about this, and that is, the Government's incompetence, the people's helplessness and the Philippine Government's shamelessness may cause people to discriminate against the Filipinos in Hong Kong. I hope people in Hong Kong will never behave in this manner, because I have had personal experience of this. I had once paid a visit to the Philippines to take part in an investigation into how the Philippines Government connived at its military policemen killing people unlawfully. In a press conference held on the mezzanine floor of a bookshop, I was told that 52 reporters had already died unnatural deaths that year. I then asked: Did it not mean that one reporter died weekly? They said yes, but still the murderers had not been arrested.

Honourable Members, human lives are very important, and so are the lives of the Filipinos. If even they have no way to investigate their own Government's abuse of power to kill people, I wonder how the Philippine Government can help us. I want to say, given that our State has done nothing to

investigate this massacre publicized worldwide, it is meaningless for us to blame the Filipinos here today. It is only meaningful to blame the Philippine Government and those authoritative governments.

Thank you, President.

MRS SOPHIE LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, the Manila hostage incident last year is a pain for all Hong Kong people. On the one hand, we grieve for those who were killed in the incident; and on the other, we feel sorry and sad for the families devastated. However more words cannot comfort them for the pain they suffered as a result of the loss of their loved ones. I only hope they can be strong and get on with their lives.

Although the incident took place more than half a year ago, what happened that day still remains vivid before our eyes. There are still a lot of doubts and queries about the incident. Many people clenched their teeth in anger while watching the live television broadcast. The post-incident investigation conducted by the Philippine Government as well as its way of handling can simply not dispel misgivings. This explains why the death inquest has been launched in the hope of doing justice to the deceased and finding out the full story of the incident.

However, we cannot but feel helpless when we see the Philippines' indifferent attitude. The Chief Executive has already called on the authorities, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also negotiated with them. We have already done whatever we can. Even though this incident is considered an international incident, there are international laws governing the international community. What can we do if the Philippine Government ignores us? They simply have the cheek to refuse to co-operate. What can Hong Kong people do except feeling angry? We can only see the true face of the Philippine Government. They are simply shameless. Even if witnesses are allowed to come to Hong Kong to testify, they can, similarly, refuse to co-operate. We can only work hard to do everything properly and do our utmost to complete the tasks we have in hand.

However, it is really unexpected to me that this adjournment debate proposed today has given the press and radio stations the opportunity to make a great fuss and even use such sensational expressions as "cold-blooded", thus

giving the community as a whole a distorted picture of the operation of the Legislative Council, which must act in accordance with the Rules of Procedure (RoP). As the RoP was determined and endorsed by all Members of this Council, we are obliged to abide by and respect it. Whoever participates in the decision-making process, all procedures must comply with the RoP.

If we as law-makers lay down rules and then resort to making a scene because we cannot get what we want, I hope the President can invite all colleagues to think about this carefully — if we agree to do so, that is, renege on the rules laid down by ourselves, would it not be the same as ditching the RoP into the sea? Are we throwing away the dignity of the Legislative Council and forgetting the belief law-makers should uphold? Should we not be held responsible for such a low popularity of this Legislative Council?

Yes, we all hope the Philippine authorities can let witnesses come to Hong Kong to testify. However, I believe members of the public also respect us not only as law-makers, but also as law-abiders. We must handle everything strictly in accordance with the rules. I very much hope Members can seriously reflect on this while making efforts of lobbying.

Thank you, President.

DR PRISCILLA LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, despite the passage of half a year, I still wish to pay tribute to the eight noble spirits. Although the lives of these eight Hong Kong people have disappeared suddenly from the world, the spirit they have left for Hong Kong people will set a good example for our next generation.

Actually, I was very much impressed by the resilience demonstrated by the mother of Jason LEUNG, who is still in hospital, as well as the elder brother and mother of Masa TSE every time I saw them publicly declare their stance. I have also heard the elder brother of Masa TSE express repeatedly in radio programmes his determination to seek justice. Instead of spreading hatreds to other Philippine people, he was very cautious about his words. He has merely reiterated his hope of seeking justice. I think they are very rational and their attitude is very worthy of respect.

In my opinion, the Philippines, especially its government and top leader, has been evading the matter again and again. Insofar as this incident is concerned, although we have rationally expressed no hatred towards the country, we are indeed facing an enormous crisis of confidence in the Philippines as a country and a government as well as its competence.

Hence, the inquiry conducted in Hong Kong by the Coroner's Court gives the Philippine Government precisely an opportunity to let Hong Kong people know that they still have a bottom line. During a meeting with one of the government representatives from the Philippines a month ago, I could not help asking him, who was supposed to promote some Philippine events, whether the Philippine witnesses would come to Hong Kong to attend the inquest. I said I was very sorry that this precisely explained the frustrations felt by Hong Kong people.

Basically, if we follow the progress of the death inquest, we would find that the Philippine Government did not mean to deliberately create such a mess. It is just because the Philippine Government is incompetent. We would only find ourselves more saddened by media reports of the claims made by medical experts that one or two lives might possibly have been saved should timely rescue be provided. Despite the availability of only scattered pieces of information about the truth, in the face of such a serious mistake in handling the incident, even ordinary people will not accept the attitude of the Philippine Government in handling the incident that day. The complete failure of its mayor to heed the warning given by the younger brother of the killer eventually caused casualties, which should not have occurred at all.

The incident is still hurting Hong Kong people's confidence in the Philippine Government. Concerning the refusal of Philippine witnesses to attend the death inquest, I think that assistance should be offered to the family members of the deceased. Whether the evidence is to be given via video link or by personal appearance in the inquest, the Philippine Government should respect Hong Kong people.

In the past three decades, there have been economic exchanges between Hong Kong and the Philippines. Many Hong Kong people hire Filipinos as domestic helpers. Our children also grow up with them like family members. Now, this relationship is going to suffer a severe blow. They will have to pay a

price should they refuse to come to Hong Kong to testify. Even though the Hong Kong Government has no power to compel them to come to Hong Kong, and the discussion currently held in the Legislative Council might not have any binding effect, Hong Kong people might resist dealing with the Philippine Government or organizations in the future as a result of this.

Although the events originally to be jointly organized were entirely unrelated to these matters, the discussion did not bear fruit eventually. I hope the Philippine Government can hear that a price has to be paid for the refusal to attend the inquest. This is because whenever that point is brought up, we will mention this. Both parties will thus lose interest, and the discussion will be shelved in the end. Why? Because the relationship between the two places has been affected in concrete terms as a result of this. I hope we can exert our greatest efforts. I also hope the Philippine Consul-General can listen to our discussion and advise its Government to allow witnesses to come to Hong Kong to testify (*The buzzer sounded*)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Time is up.

DR PRISCILLA LEUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you, President.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): President, other than expressing our regret and anger, there is almost nothing we can say about the Philippine Government. I think the only thing we can do today is condemning the Philippine Government for its irresponsible behaviour.

Let us review the incident. Actually, throughout the entire process from the commencement of the hostage rescue operation to the investigation and witnesses coming to Hong Kong to testify, people can see that the Philippine Government has been extremely irresponsible. It is most puzzling to us as to why the Philippine authorities should have provoked the gunman, apart from acting in a less than professional manner, during the rescue operation. To date, this remains a mystery. Had the gunman not been provoked, how would such an unfortunate accident have occurred? During the investigation, we can see that this was taken lightly and what we were told was incomplete and inaccurate.

Not only is the entire mystery not resolved, but the truth is not uncovered either. No one knows what happened and, obviously, justice cannot be done.

When it comes to sending people from the Philippines to testify in Hong Kong, the Philippine Government was actually extremely unco-operative right from the beginning by imposing numerous obstacles on witnesses invited to testify in Hong Kong. I remember there were originally more than 100 persons on the list, but none of them was willing to come to Hong Kong in the end. Subsequently, five witnesses expressed the willingness to come but eventually failed to keep their words. It is uncertain whether two witnesses will testify today. The entire process has led people to wonder why the Philippine Government should have behaved in this manner.

I also find it very disappointing that we seem to be in a very helpless position in the whole process. Is the SAR Government really so helpless? I wonder if the Secretary can explain if we must deal with these issues through the Central Government's diplomatic channel. Has any action been taken to deal with these issues? Has our demand been relayed to the authorities concerned?

I remember one scene in which the Philippine Government sent its official (I do not recall if he is a foreign affairs or tourism minister) to request the Chinese Government not to impose death penalty (there is no need to further discuss this as we have all along been demanding the abolition of the death penalty). There had been negotiations on this. In fact, there are many things over which the Chinese Government can discuss with the Philippine Government. But why can the discussion on requesting the Philippine witnesses to testify in Hong Kong not bear fruit?

We really feel that the Secretary for Security must give Hong Kong people an account on this. Does the Chinese Government have its own diplomatic considerations that justice could not ultimately be upheld for the SAR Government over this incident? Please do not say that I am "framing" the Central Authorities. I really have no idea. I am only demanding a clear explanation. What I said just now was absolutely out of pure suspicion. I do not have any evidence at all. However, the recent developments have really made people feel that there is no reason for us to feel so helpless. Hence, I hope the Secretary can give us an explanation.

Lastly, President, I have to say that despite my condemnations just now of the Philippine Government, I still hope that the feeling between the peoples will not be hurt. This is most important indeed. Compared to Hong Kong people, Philippine people absolutely suffer even more for such an incompetent and irresponsible government. I think the Philippine people, who believe there will be hope after the collapse of the Marcos regime, have yet to get justice. To date, the Philippine Government is still a corrupt government.

Despite our extreme sorrow and anger, I must point out in the end that our anger is not targeted at the Philippine people. I do have feeling as well as respect for them. We are merely furious about the irresponsible Philippine Government.

Thank you, President.

MS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): President, the entire Manila hostage incident, from the Philippine authorities' rescue of hostages to post-incident performance, has fully revealed the true colour of the authorities of being incompetent and useless and having no self-reflection and commitment. In short, they are crap. Actually, I am most unwilling to use such expressions, but I can really not think of any other expressions that describe the performance of the Philippine Government.

After the tragedy, the Hong Kong Coroner's Court has also revealed the extremely careless attitude adopted by the Philippine authorities in the process, from rescuing the injured to performing autopsies on the deceased and transporting the corpses. According to the expert witness in Hong Kong, if Masa TSE, the tour leader, and Jessie LEUNG and YEUNG Yee-wa, both tour members, had received immediate rescue treatment, they would have different degrees of chances of survival. In the end, because of the poor rescue efforts in the Philippines, the three of them missed the chances of survival. This is really heartbreaking.

With the passage of so many months, we do not want to talk about the incompetence of the Philippine authorities anymore. Now, the family members of the deceased, the injured tour members and all Hong Kong people only hope to

dig out the truth of the incident for the deceased and injured and do them justice through the Hong Kong Coroner's Court. But at the same time, we have to face the Philippine Government trying every means to make the 116 key Philippine witnesses unable or refuse to come to Hong Kong to attend the inquest. People are really filled with grief.

When leading a delegation to Hong Kong late last year, the Philippine Secretary of Tourism still indicated that the Philippine authorities would assist Hong Kong in conducting the death inquest this year. However, when summons were issued by the Coroner's Court, the Secretary of Philippine Department of Justice went back on her words, saying there was no need for all the witnesses to come to Hong Kong. Furthermore, the Mayor of the City of Manila and head of the police have all along been adopting an unco-operative attitude. They simply put up a hard-line attitude right at the beginning by refusing to come to Hong Kong. Their attitude is disgusting.

In the end, all the 116 witnesses refused before the inquest to come to Hong Kong. Even though the Government made every facility possible to make concessions in order to find out the truth, such as making a special trip to the Philippines to arrange for testifying via video link, as well as securing before the inquest the verbal promises of the witnesses in the Philippines, all the witnesses suddenly "pretended to have gone missing" on the day when they were supposed to testify, with none of them present at the inquest, not giving even one reason. This is really outrageous and completely nonsensical.

Not only are the actions taken by the Philippines completely disrespectful to the deceased and injured as well as their family members, but they are an act of contempt of and insult to all Hong Kong people. With eight innocent, living people killed in its capital under the watchful eye of all people, this country has even refused to fulfil its fundamental responsibility of sending witnesses to Hong Kong to testify in order to sort out the facts. Being a real insult to its national prestige, such an act has also brought shame to its nationals.

Lastly, we strongly appeal to the SAR Government to do its utmost to seek assistance from the Central Government to solemnly request the Philippine Government through every diplomatic avenue possible to take immediate action

to complement the inquest conducted by the Hong Kong Coroner's Court by arranging for the witnesses to come to Hong Kong to testify and provide the information and exhibits required by the Coroner's Court, in order to fulfil its responsibility and do justice to the deceased and injured.

President, I so submit.

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

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (In Cantonese): If not, Members have already spoken in this session. I now call upon the Secretary for Security to reply.

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY (in Cantonese): President, first of all, I wish to thank those Members who have spoken. I have noticed that Members have expressed concern and various views on the Philippine witnesses, who are invited by the Coroner's Court to attend the death inquest into the Manila hostage incident, refusing to testify in Hong Kong.

The SAR Government understands that Hong Kong people are greatly saddened by the Manila hostage incident. To find out the truth through the open and fair judicial proceedings of the Coroner's Court is a common wish shared by the SAR Government and Hong Kong people. On the premise of not affecting judicial independence, the SAR Government has been communicating and co-ordinating with the Philippine Government through various channels, in the hope that the Philippine witnesses can positively respond to the invitation of the Coroner's Court.

With regard to some of the comments made by Members earlier on, I would like to make the following response. On 23 August 2010 (last year), a 21-member Hong Kong tour group to Manila was taken hostage. The incident ended with eight tour group members being killed and seven injured. The bodies of the eight deceased tour group members were returned to Hong Kong by

a chartered flight on 25 August. The Coroner had, by virtue of the Coroners Ordinance, issued an autopsy order and requested the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) to investigate into the incident.

Under the strong co-ordination of the Office of Commissioner of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, the HKPF have worked closely with the Philippine authorities on the basis of international police co-operation protocol. With the agreement and assistance of the Philippine authorities, the HKPF immediately commenced the relevant work, and four delegations were sent to Manila to gather information and evidence. At the request of the HKPF, the Philippine authorities also provided their documents on the incident, including sworn statements and reports during their investigation in the Philippines, to assist the independent investigation by the HKPF.

After the HKPF had submitted a report on the investigation to the Coroner's Court on 5 November 2010, the Coroner, having considered the report, determined on 30 November 2010 that a death inquest into the Manila hostage incident should be conducted on 14 February 2011.

During his attendance at the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation meeting in mid-November 2010, the Chief Executive received a positive response from the President of the Philippines who assured him that the Philippine Government would render assistance to facilitate the Coroner's death inquest in Hong Kong. During the meeting with the Secretary for Tourism of the Philippines who visited Hong Kong in mid-December 2010, the Chief Executive again received an assurance that the Philippine authorities would fully co-operate with the death inquest.

To our understanding, the Coroner issued summons to 116 Philippines witnesses in mid-December 2010, that is, three months before the commencement of the death inquest on 14 February 2011. On 20 February 2011, the Vice Consul of the Consulate-General of the Philippines in Hong Kong informed the Coroner's Court that 72 witnesses decided not to testify in the inquest while the rest of the witnesses had yet to reply.

The Chief Secretary for Administration met with the Consul-General of the Philippines in Hong Kong on 3 March 2011 to urge the Philippine Government to take all necessary actions to assist the death inquest. The SAR Government has

been following up this matter with the Philippine Government through the Consulate-General of the Philippines in Hong Kong and urging the Philippine authorities to give a prompt response on this matter.

In the meantime, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Central Authorities and the Chinese Embassy in the Philippines, we also expressed to the Philippine authorities our wish that they could agree and provide assistance to the Philippine witnesses testifying in Hong Kong.

In fact, the SAR Government has been following up with the Philippine authorities the witnesses' attendance at the inquest in Hong Kong through various channels. For instance, one of the witnesses expressed his willingness to testify through video link as he would not be able to come to Hong Kong. After the Department of Justice (DoJ) received on 11 March 2011 the consent from the Department of Justice of the Philippines for this witness to testify through video link, the HKPF and DoJ officers of Hong Kong departed for Manila on 13 March 2011 to ensure that the taking of evidence would be carried out in an appropriate manner and in accordance with the relevant procedures. As at 16 March, one witness had testified in the death inquest through video link. Our officers in the Philippines are actively following this up with the Philippine authorities and we believe there will be other Philippine witnesses testifying through video link.

The SAR Government has been liaising with the Philippine Government through various channels (including the diplomatic channel) to actively follow up the attendance of Philippine witnesses at the death inquest in Hong Kong.

We believe the Coroner's Court will, having considered all relevant evidence and information, deliver a fair verdict on the cause of the deaths and make the truth of the incident known to the community.

President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): As the debate on the motion has exceeded one and a half hours, in accordance with Rule 16(7) of the Rules of Procedure, the Motion for Adjournment shall not be put to vote.

NEXT MEETING

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now adjourn the Council until 11 am on Wednesday, 30 March 2011.

Adjourned accordingly at eight minutes to Two o'clock.