

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 26 April 2017

The Council met at Eleven o'clock

MEMBERS PRESENT:

THE PRESIDENT

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

THE HONOURABLE JAMES TO KUN-SUN

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG YIU-CHUNG

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HAK-KAN, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KIN-POR, B.B.S., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE PRISCILLA LEUNG MEI-FUN, S.B.S., J.P.

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

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

THE HONOURABLE PAUL TSE WAI-CHUN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG KWOK-HUNG[#]

THE HONOURABLE CLAUDIA MO

THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL TIEN PUK-SUN, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE STEVEN HO CHUN-YIN, B.B.S.

THE HONOURABLE FRANKIE YICK CHI-MING, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WU CHI-WAI, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE YIU SI-WING, B.B.S.

THE HONOURABLE MA FUNG-KWOK, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHARLES PETER MOK, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN CHI-CHUEN

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG CHE-CHEUNG, B.B.S., M.H., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE KENNETH LEUNG

THE HONOURABLE ALICE MAK MEI-KUEN, B.B.S., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE KWOK KA-KI

THE HONOURABLE KWOK WAI-KEUNG

THE HONOURABLE DENNIS KWOK WING-HANG

[#] According to the Judgment of the Court of First Instance of the High Court on 14 July 2017, LEUNG Kwok-hung, Nathan LAW Kwun-chung, YIU Chung-yim and LAU Siu-lai have been disqualified from assuming the office of a member of the Legislative Council, and have vacated the same since 12 October 2016, and are not entitled to act as a member of the Legislative Council.

THE HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER CHEUNG WAH-FUNG, S.B.S., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE FERNANDO CHEUNG CHIU-HUNG

DR THE HONOURABLE HELENA WONG PIK-WAN

THE HONOURABLE IP KIN-YUEN

DR THE HONOURABLE ELIZABETH QUAT, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MARTIN LIAO CHEUNG-KONG, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE POON SIU-PING, B.B.S., M.H.

DR THE HONOURABLE CHIANG LAI-WAN, J.P.

IR DR THE HONOURABLE LO WAI-KWOK, S.B.S., M.H., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHUNG KWOK-PAN

THE HONOURABLE ALVIN YEUNG

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW WAN SIU-KIN

THE HONOURABLE CHU HOI-DICK

THE HONOURABLE JIMMY NG WING-KA, J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE JUNIUS HO KWAN-YIU, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE HO KAI-MING

THE HONOURABLE LAM CHEUK-TING

THE HONOURABLE HOLDEN CHOW HO-DING

THE HONOURABLE SHIU KA-FAI

THE HONOURABLE SHIU KA-CHUN

THE HONOURABLE WILSON OR CHONG-SHING, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE YUNG HOI-YAN

DR THE HONOURABLE PIERRE CHAN

THE HONOURABLE CHAN CHUN-YING

THE HONOURABLE TANYA CHAN

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG KWOK-KWAN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE HUI CHI-FUNG

THE HONOURABLE LUK CHUNG-HUNG

THE HONOURABLE LAU KWOK-FAN, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE KENNETH LAU IP-KEUNG, M.H., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE CHENG CHUNG-TAI

THE HONOURABLE KWONG CHUN-YU

THE HONOURABLE JEREMY TAM MAN-HO

THE HONOURABLE NATHAN LAW KWUN-CHUNG[#]

DR THE HONOURABLE YIU CHUNG-YIM[#]

DR THE HONOURABLE LAU SIU-LAI[#]

MEMBER ABSENT:

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HAN-PAN, J.P.

[#] According to the Judgment of the Court of First Instance of the High Court on 14 July 2017, LEUNG Kwok-hung, Nathan LAW Kwun-chung, YIU Chung-yim and LAU Siu-lai have been disqualified from assuming the office of a member of the Legislative Council, and have vacated the same since 12 October 2016, and are not entitled to act as a member of the Legislative Council.

PUBLIC OFFICERS ATTENDING:

THE HONOURABLE MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG, G.B.S., J.P.
CHIEF SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION

THE HONOURABLE PAUL CHAN MO-PO, G.B.S., M.H., J.P.
FINANCIAL SECRETARY

THE HONOURABLE RIMSKY YUEN KWOK-KEUNG, S.C., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE

PROF THE HONOURABLE ANTHONY CHEUNG BING-LEUNG, G.B.S.,
J.P.
SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING

PROF THE HONOURABLE K C CHAN, G.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY

THE HONOURABLE GREGORY SO KAM-LEUNG, G.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MR JOHN LEE KA-CHIU, P.D.S.M., P.M.S.M., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR SECURITY

MR KEVIN YEUNG YUN-HUNG, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

DR THE HONOURABLE KO WING-MAN, B.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH

THE HONOURABLE NICHOLAS W. YANG, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

THE HONOURABLE LAU KONG-WAH, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS

THE HONOURABLE CLEMENT CHEUNG WAN-CHING, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE

THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN SUI WAI-KEUNG, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE

THE HONOURABLE ERIC MA SIU-CHEUNG, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT

MS CHRISTINE LOH KUNG-WAI, J.P.
UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MR GODFREY LEUNG KING-KWOK, J.P.
UNDER SECRETARY FOR COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

MR JAMES HENRY LAU JR., J.P.
UNDER SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY

CLERKS IN ATTENDANCE:

MR KENNETH CHEN WEI-ON, S.B.S., SECRETARY GENERAL

MISS ODELIA LEUNG HING-YEE, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL

MS ANITA SIT, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

MS DORA WAI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

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

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

TABLING OF PAPERS

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

Subsidiary Legislation/Instruments	<i>L.N. No.</i>
Insurance Companies (Actuaries' Qualifications) (Amendment) Regulation 2017	56/2017
Insurance Companies (Register of Insurers) (Prescribed Fee) (Amendment) Regulation 2017	57/2017
Insurance Companies (Authorization and Annual Fees) (Amendment) Regulation 2017	58/2017
Ferry Services (The "Star" Ferry Company, Limited) (Determination of Fares) (Amendment) Order 2017.....	59/2017
Road Tunnels (Government) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2017.....	60/2017
Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicles) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2017.....	61/2017
Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulation 2017	62/2017
Road Traffic (Traffic Control) (Amendment) Regulation 2017	63/2017
Road Traffic (Expressway) (Amendment) Regulation 2017.....	64/2017

Road Tunnels (Government) Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 1) Notice 2017	65/2017
Smoking (Public Health) (Notices) (Amendment) Order 2017	66/2017
Insurance Companies (Determination of Long Term Liabilities) Regulation (Amendment) Rules 2017	67/2017
Insurance Companies (Margin of Solvency) Regulation (Amendment) Rules 2017	68/2017
Insurance Companies (General Business) (Valuation) Regulation (Amendment) Rules 2017	69/2017
Insurance Companies (Actuaries' Standards) Regulation (Amendment) Rules 2017	70/2017
Insurance Companies (Amendment) Ordinance 2015 (Commencement) Notice 2017	71/2017
Insurance Ordinance (Amendment of Schedules) Notice 2017	72/2017
Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 (Commencement) Notice 2017 ...	73/2017

Other Papers

No. 84 — Provisional Insurance Authority
Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2017-18

No. 85 — Report No. 68 of the Director of Audit
on the results of value for money audits - April 2017

Report No. 16/16-17 of the House Committee on Consideration of
Subsidiary Legislation and Other Instruments

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**Statistical information on government lands**

1. **MR JEREMY TAM** (in Chinese): *President, regarding the statistical information on government lands, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *among the vacant government lands that are currently unleased or unallocated, of the respective total areas of those which are (i) suitable for development and (ii) unsuitable for development, with a breakdown by their planned uses (including "Residential", "Commercial", "Industrial", "Government, Institutional and Community Facilities", "Open Space", "Comprehensive Development Area" and "Village Type Development") and the District Council districts in which they are located, and mark on a map the location of each piece of land;*
- (2) *among the vacant government lands that are suitable for residential development, of the respective total areas of those (i) which have been included in the List of Sites for Sale by Application, (ii) which have been allocated to the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") for public rental housing development, (iii) which are currently leased out under short-term tenancies, (iv) the site formation of which has been completed and studies on whether such lands should be put on sale in the market or be allocated to HA are underway, (v) the site formation of which has been completed but are not subject to any development plan, (vi) site-formation works and land use planning for which have not been carried out, and (vii) long-term planning for which is underway; and*
- (3) *of the total area of the residential sites newly secured in each of the past three years through changing the planned uses of unleased government lands, with a breakdown by District Council district?*

SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT (in Chinese): *President, land is valuable resource in Hong Kong. The Government endeavours to make optimal use of land resources through continuous land use planning, allocation and management in order to meet the various development needs of society. Under the existing mechanism, the Planning Department ("PlanD") will, in accordance with the*

guidelines on the provision of various types of land uses and facilities as set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, and the requests of the relevant Policy Bureaux and departments ("B/Ds"), identify or reserve suitable sites which have been examined and confirmed to be developable for long-term planning uses in order to meet the various needs of the society including housing, industrial or commercial developments, road and infrastructure, open space, as well as "Government, Institution or Community" facilities.

When long-term development projects are being taken forward, the Lands Department ("LandsD") will be responsible for leasing and allocating the relevant developable sites. These sites may be put to the market through the Government's Land Sale Programme, allocated to individual B/Ds for specific uses, or leased to non-government organizations with the support of relevant bureau(s). As regards developable land not yet leased or allocated for long-term planning uses and other Government land which has yet to be planned for long-term development uses, LandsD will, where practicable and appropriate, allocate these sites to individual B/Ds for temporary uses, lease them for various commercial purposes through tender, or lease them directly to particular organizations or bodies for temporary uses that support specific policy objectives, in order to make optimal use of the land before the long-term development is realized.

It is necessary to undergo different stages and procedures before the "virgin sites" could turn into "disposable sites" (i.e. developable land). It takes time often to tackle various technical issues, carry out site formation, provide infrastructure and other supporting facilities before development can take place. Therefore, individual unleased or unallocated government sites may have been reserved or under study for long-term uses, or under various necessary technical assessments, procedures or works for long-term development or other uses. These sites should not be considered as "idle".

My reply to the three-part question is as follows:

- (1) In response to questions raised by Members of the Legislative Council in July and October 2012, the Government has compiled statistics on a one-off basis on the unleased or unallocated Government land within individual land use zonings at the time. The Government has clearly stated that the figures neither meant that the land were "idle", nor being areas of developable land. A considerable portion of the unleased or unallocated Government land

such as man-made or natural slopes, passageways, back lanes, empty space between buildings and fragmented sites near existing streets, was not suitable for development. Individual unleased or unallocated government sites may only reflect that they were not let out under short term tenancy or for other temporary uses for the time being, but might have been planned or under planning for long-term uses, under ongoing land use review and/or technical assessment, or under various necessary procedures or works for long-term development or temporary use.

The statistics and distribution map of the above unleased or unallocated Government land were uploaded to the website of the Development Bureau in October 2012 for public inspection <http://www.devb.gov.hk/en/issues_in_focus/the_land_area_analysis/index.html>. Such compilation of figures requires significant resources. The unleased and unallocated Government land merely reflects the grant status of land at a given point of time, which may change from time to time subject to the planning of land use, and by no means shows whether the site has been committed to long-term planning use or whether it is suitable for development. Nor does it reflect the area of developable land. Therefore, we have not updated these one-off statistics on Government land.

(2) and (3)

The various land use reviews conducted by PlanD on an ongoing basis have already covered the aforementioned Government land currently unleased or unallocated, under short term tenancy, in different short-term or government uses, and other Government land not yet planned for development at the moment. Such land mainly includes plots with development potential that are situated on the fringe of the built-up areas in existing urban areas and new towns, adjacent to existing roads and other infrastructure, and having relatively low conservation value and buffering effect. Individual land parcels with development potential are subject to the aforementioned planning and assessment mechanism based on a series of considerations such as the adequacy of related infrastructural facilities and compatibility with neighbouring land uses, so as to determine their suitability for development.

As announced in the 2014 Policy Address, we have identified in total some 150 potential housing sites through land use reviews for providing over 210 000 flats (over 70% for public housing). The Government also announced in the 2013 Policy Address various initiatives to increase land supply, among which a total of 42 sites could be allocated for residential use in the short to medium term to provide about 40 000 flats (over 60% for public housing). Furthermore, the Government has announced in the 2017 Policy Address that through ongoing land use reviews, together with the newly identified potential housing sites, it is estimated that 26 additional housing sites, capable of producing over 60 000 units (over 80% for public housing), can be made available for housing development, most of which in the coming five years from 2019-2020 to 2023-2024, provided that the relevant statutory plans can be amended and/or other necessary procedures completed in time.

As at mid-April 2017, out of the above some 210 potential housing sites, 94 sites (about 178 hectares in total area, distributed among the Southern, Kowloon City, Kwun Tong, Sham Shui Po, Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan, Sha Tin, Tai Po, North, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Islands and Sai Kung districts) were already zoned or rezoned for housing development, with an estimated capacity for providing about 115 000 flats, including about 68 400 public housing units and 46 600 private housing units. Another 20 sites (about 16 hectares in total area) have commenced the statutory rezoning procedures, and will, upon completion, provide an estimated total of some 10 800 flats, including about 8 600 public housing units and 2 200 private housing units.

The remaining potential housing sites are under the necessary planning procedures, technical assessments and/or site formation and infrastructure works. As in the past, we will consult the District Councils and relevant stakeholders on the development of individual sites as and when they are ready, and submit the rezoning proposals for consideration by the Town Planning Board, with a view to making the sites available for public and private housing development as soon as possible.

Leasing of government properties by the Government Property Agency

2. **MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG** (in Chinese): *President, at present, the Government Property Agency ("GPA") usually leases out the shops, canteens and offices ("commercial premises") in the government properties under its management on three-year tenancy contracts awarded by open tenders or invitation of quotations. Some tenants of such premises have relayed to me that the lack of security of tenancy renders it difficult for them to make long-term business plans, and the relationships they have established with their customers will end upon expiry of the tenancy contracts. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *as I have learnt that the Housing Department ("HD") will discuss the renewal of tenancy contracts with the sitting tenants of its commercial premises six months before the expiry of tenancy, and will leased out the commercial premises concerned through open tenders only when the two parties have failed to reach a new tenancy agreement, whether GPA will consider adopting this practice; if so, when this will be implemented; if not, of the reasons for that;*
- (2) *given that HD grants its new tenants of commercial premises rent-free periods determined according to the sizes of the premises concerned, whether GPA will adopt this practice; if so, when this will be implemented; if not, of the reasons for that;*
- (3) *of the respective numbers of commercial premises that GPA leased out through (i) open tenders and (ii) invitation of quotations and, among such premises, of the number of those which were leased out to new tenants with rental income less than before;*
- (4) *of the respective numbers of commercial premises that GPA failed, in each of the past five years, to lease out through the two aforesaid methods;*
- (5) *whether GPA has assessed the loss of rental income arising from the failure to lease out its commercial premises through the two aforesaid methods in the past five years; if so, of the outcome; if not, the reasons for that;*

- (6) *of the administrative costs involved in the open tenders and invitation of quotations conducted by GPA for its commercial premises in each of the past five years; and*
- (7) *whether GPA has assessed the quantity of construction waste generated by the renovation and removal works carried out by new and old tenants of its commercial premises; if so, of the quantity concerned in each of the past five years?*

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Chinese): President, my reply to each part of the question raised by Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung is as follows:

(1) and (2)

When leasing out government premises for commercial uses by way of commercialization, the Government Property Agency ("GPA") generally adopts the open tender approach in accordance with the relevant government procedures and regulations, and invites bids from interested parties for the properties concerned about three to four months before the expiry of the existing tenancy. The existing tenant and other interested parties may participate in the bidding. Under the fair play principle, GPA does not discuss with the existing tenant on tenancy renewal matters before expiry of the tenancy concerned.

In setting the tenure of the tenancy, GPA endeavours to strike a balance among considerations such as impact on the tenant's business operations, maintaining a fair bidding process in leasing out the properties, and the variety of choices provided to service users, etc. To uphold the principle of fair competition, GPA generally adopts the open tender approach to determine whether to let the properties concerned to the existing tenant or to a new tenant, unless there are full justifications to suggest otherwise.

As regards rent-free period, there is no such provision in the lease terms concerned of the open tender. The prospective tenants may

reflect the considerations of rent-free period in their bidding prices, having regard to the lease terms of the open tender.

- (3) The following table sets out the respective number of lettings of shops, canteens and offices through open tender and quotation in the past five years, and in which the number of lettings to new tenants with lower rents received than before:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of lettings of shops, canteens and offices by open tender</i>	<i>Number of lettings of shops, canteens and offices by quotation</i>	<i>Number of lettings to new tenants with lower rents received than before</i>
2012	47	Not applicable	4
2013	30	Not applicable	2
2014	31	4	5
2015	20	22	8
2016	14	18	3

Note:

GPA started adopting quotation for leasing out government properties in 2014, prior to which all lettings were conducted by open tender.

Rents paid by tenants are affected by various factors such as lease terms, property uses, characteristics and conditions of properties, property market conditions, etc. Hence, rental income from properties may fluctuate.

- (4) and (5)

The respective number of shops, canteens and offices that GPA could not successfully lease out by open tender and quotation in the past five years are set out in the table below:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of unsuccessful lettings of shops, canteens and offices by open tender</i>	<i>Number of unsuccessful lettings of shops, canteens and offices by quotation</i>
2012	0	Not applicable
2013	3	Not applicable
2014	0	0

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of unsuccessful lettings of shops, canteens and offices by open tender</i>	<i>Number of unsuccessful lettings of shops, canteens and offices by quotation</i>
2015	0	3
2016	0	1

Note:

GPA started adopting quotation for leasing out government properties in 2014, prior to which all lettings were conducted by open tender.

In general, the market rents of properties are reflected in the bids obtained through open tenders or quotations. Since nobody was interested in renting the properties concerned at that moment, no rental losses were incurred to the Government in these unsuccessful cases.

The properties of the seven aforementioned unsuccessful cases were then handed back to their managing departments to arrange for suitable gainful uses in accordance with the relevant regulations.

- (6) GPA has been handling the tendering and quotation tasks with its existing manpower, and has met the related expenses from its existing resources. The department does not have the statistics on the breakdown of expenditure for these tasks.
- (7) The tenant shall be responsible for any renovation or dismantling works required for the leased government property. GPA has no information on the quantity of construction wastes generated by the renovation or dismantling works undertaken by new or existing tenants.

Rehousing of residents affected by operations to eradicate domestic sub-divisions of flat units

3. **MR ANDREW WAN** (in Chinese): *President, since April 2012, the Buildings Department ("BD") has been taking law enforcement actions against domestic sub-divisions of flat units (commonly known as "sub-divided units") ("SDUs") in industrial buildings and the associated unauthorized building works. Affected households who need short-term temporary housing may be admitted to*

the Po Tin Transit Centre ("Transit Centre") in Tuen Mun through referrals by BD. If these households have stayed in the Transit Centre for three months, passed the relevant test and fulfilled the eligibility criteria for application for public rental housing ("PRH"), the Housing Department will arrange them to be admitted to interim housing ("IH") while they are waiting to be allocated PRH. Regarding the rehousing of residents affected by operations to eradicate SDUs, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of SDUs eradicated by the Government and the number of affected SDU residents who were admitted to the Transit Centre, in the past three years;*
- (2) of the current number and vacancy rate of IH units in the territory, with a tabulated breakdown by household size (i.e. one person, two to three persons, four to six persons and seven persons or more);*
- (3) whether it has drawn up any large-scale plan to eradicate SDUs; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; whether it has assessed if the current number of IH units is sufficient to meet the temporary housing need arising from such plan; if it has assessed, of the outcome; and*
- (4) as there are comments that while the Government has reserved a site of about 60 hectares in Penny's Bay on Lantau Island for the Phase 2 development of the Hong Kong Disneyland ("HKDL"), the development is unlikely to commence before 2023, whether the authorities will discuss with the other shareholder of HKDL, The Walt Disney Company, allowing the Government to provide on that site, before the commencement of the development, IH for rehousing people affected by operations to eradicate SDUs as well as other people in need; if so, when the discussion will commence; if not, of the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT (in Chinese): President, the fire risk in industrial buildings ("IB") is much higher than that of residential buildings and composite buildings. IBs are definitely not suitable for domestic use. To ensure the safety of inhabitants and the public, the Government takes stringent enforcement actions to eradicate such use in IBs. All people affected by

Government enforcement actions against domestic use (including sub-divided units ("SDUs") for domestic use) in IBs would need to find their own alternative accommodation.

Nevertheless, to ensure that no person will be rendered homeless as a result of Government enforcement actions, households who are affected by the Government enforcement actions against domestic use in IBs and have temporary accommodation need may, through the referral of relevant bureaux/departments, be accommodated in the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA")'s Po Tin Transit Centre ("TC") in Tuen Mun. If these households have stayed in TC for three months, pass the "homeless test" and fulfil the eligibility criteria for public rental housing ("PRH") including income limit, asset limit and "no domestic property" test, they will be admitted to Interim Housing ("IH") while awaiting PRH.

In consultation with the Transport and Housing Bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and the Buildings Department ("BD"), the Development Bureau provides a consolidated reply as follows:

- (1) From 2014 to 2016, BD has eradicated 84 illegal domestic premises in IBs. In these three years, 12 persons were admitted into TC of HA as a result of BD's relevant enforcement actions.
- (2) IH and TC under HA are transitional in nature. The occupancy situation varies depending on actual circumstances at different times. HA reviews the demand and supply situation of IH and TC from time to time to ensure that they can cater for the needs arising from emergencies and government clearance actions.

At present, there are two IHs under HA located in Shek Lei, Kwai Chung and Po Tin, Tuen Mun. As at 31 March 2017, the number of IH units and the vacancy rate are as follows:

<i>Flat Type</i>	<i>Number of IH Unit</i>	<i>Vacancy Rate</i>
1 person	3 180	15.7%
2 to 3 persons	2 047	61.5%
4 to 5 persons	243	70.0%
Total	5 470	35.2%

- (3) The Government is aware of the recent public concern over building and fire safety, environmental hygiene, and law and order problems associated with SDUs. For SDUs that are not located in IBs, the Government's policy is not to eradicate all SDUs but to ensure their safety.

As stated in the Long Term Housing Strategy promulgated by the Transport and Housing Bureau in December 2014, even though the Long Term Housing Strategy ("LTHS") Steering Committee's public consultation document had put forward a suggestion to introduce a licensing or landlord registration system to regulate SDUs, the Government noted that the community had expressed considerable reservations over the suggestion during the LTHS public consultation exercise. There were concerns that a licensing or landlord registration system would reduce the supply of SDUs and drive up the rents of SDUs, thus causing further hardship to SDU tenants. There were also concerns that a loose licensing or landlord registration system would compromise the safety of SDU tenants and residents living in the same buildings. Some property owners who were not SDU landlords were also concerned about the structural safety, environmental hygiene and building management of buildings with a large number of SDUs.

In view of the concerns expressed by the community, the Government has no plan to introduce a licensing or landlord registration system for SDUs. However, BD will continue to take enforcement actions against irregularities relating to building and fire safety. If BD's enforcement actions involve relocation of tenants, it will closely liaise with the Social Welfare Department, the Home Affairs Department and Housing Department to provide suitable assistance for those who are affected.

As mentioned above, HA reviews the demand and supply situation of IH from time to time to ensure that they can cater for the needs arising from government clearance and enforcement actions.

- (4) The Hong Kong Disneyland Resort ("HKDL") is a major component of the tourism infrastructure in Hong Kong. Pursuing the Phase 2 development of HKDL is one of the possible proposals of the resort's overall development in future that the Government and The Walt

Disney Company will continue to explore. While the Hongkong International Theme Parks Limited has an option to buy the site planned for the Phase 2 development, the site currently can, in accordance with the permitted land uses under the Deed of Restrictive Covenant, be used for different short-term uses, such as recreational facilities and sports facilities, but not including residential use (e.g. IH). When considering such short-term uses, we need to take into account if such uses are compatible with the use and atmosphere of HKDL.

Use of light emitting diode lights in the road lighting systems

4. **MR CHAN KIN-POR** (in Chinese): *President, at present, the majority of the around 146 000 street lamps in the road lighting systems across the territory are high pressure sodium lamps. After conducting a trial scheme in 2009, the Highways Department advised that although low- and medium-wattage light emitting diode ("LED") lights were energy-saving due to better colour rendering, the wider use of LED lights in the road lighting systems was not cost effective as the prices of LED road lights meeting the necessary certification were very high. Regarding the use of LED lights in the road lighting systems, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the respective electricity expenditure incurred in each of the past two years by the Government on street lamps;*
- (2) *given that the prices of LED lights have dropped further in recent years, whether the authorities have reassessed the cost effectiveness of using LED lights in the road lighting systems; if so, of the results; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (3) *given that LED lights are used by quite a number of overseas countries and the Mainland in some of their road lighting systems, whether the authorities have made reference to their relevant experience; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and*
- (4) *whether the authorities have plans to use low- and medium-wattage LED lights in those road lighting systems with lower lighting requirements; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Chinese): President, the public lighting system is an auxiliary facility for road network. Public lighting system includes carriageway lighting, footpath lighting, cycle track lighting, underpass lighting, high-mast lighting, high-bay lighting at public transport interchanges, footbridge and subway lighting, gantry sign and roadside directional sign lighting as well as traffic bollards, etc.

At present, high pressure sodium ("HPS") lamps of high efficacy are widely adopted in road lighting system of Hong Kong, of which the low wattage⁽¹⁾ ones have an efficacy of about 90 lumen⁽²⁾ per watt while the high wattage ones have an efficacy of 150 lumen per watt, all exceeding the efficacy of the household compact fluorescent lamps at about 60 lumen per watt.

Since light emitting diode ("LED") road light products became available in the market, the Highways Department ("HyD") has been monitoring the technical and market development of these products. The LED road lighting technology earlier was still at the initial stage of development. LED road light products available in the market had diverse qualities and the prices of the certified LED road lights that satisfy the required design standards were much higher than the HPS lamps. As such, the launching of the LED road light replacement scheme at that time was not cost-effective. Nevertheless, HyD has continued to monitor the technical and market development of LED road lights, and carry out various trial schemes for LED road lights to provide technical basis for the extensive use of LED road lights in the future.

My reply to the four part question raised by Mr CHAN Kin-por is as follows:

- (1) The respective expenditures on the electricity of road lights by HyD in the territory in 2015 and 2016 were about \$100.56 million (with the one-off special fuel rebate of about \$3 million provided by the CLP Holdings in 2015 deducted) and \$104.13 million.
- (1) High pressure sodium lamps used for public lighting are of power ranging from 50 to 600 watts, depending on the illumination needs.
- (2) "Lumen" is an international unit for measuring luminous flux, and is a luminous power related to the sensitivity of the human eye. One lumen of light per square metre equals to one lux of illumination. A candle emits about 12.6 lumen while a 100-watt incandescent lamp (i.e. the tungsten filament lamp commonly used in households) emits about 1 300 lumen.

(2) and (3)

Since 2009, HyD has been installing LED road lights in different places over the territory as field trials and so far 171 LED road lights have been installed. The findings of the trial so far have confirmed that low- and medium-wattage LED road lights are better than low- and medium-wattage HPS lamps in terms of energy saving, colour rendering and reliability. As regards road sign lighting, HyD installed LED lights for three gantry signs and roadside directional signs lighting in 2015 as a trial. The results indicated that LED lights allow more uniform illumination and are about 70% more energy saving than the existing Ceramic Discharge Metal Halide floodlights. For subways, HyD carried out trial installation of LED tubes in 20 subways in 2015 and 2016. The results indicated a saving of about 20% of electricity as compared with traditional T8 fluorescent tubes and a satisfactory illumination.

Apart from the experience gained from the above trial schemes, HyD has all along kept in touch with the authorities in overseas countries and the Mainland to gather information in adopting LED road lights from other places and to make reference to their experiences. In order to keep in pace with the technical and market development of LED road lights, HyD has received more than 20 groups of representatives of road lights manufacturers from the Mainland and overseas countries in the past two years. In addition, representatives of HyD visited London and Mainland cities like Zhuhai, Shanghai and Ningbo in end 2016 and early 2017 to exchange ideas with the institutions of lighting professionals and road lights manufacturers there.

Upon review, HyD is of the opinion that LED road light technology has matured considerably over time. In light of the higher efficacy of the medium- and low-wattage LED lights, which has already transcended that of HPS lamps, coupled with the significant drop in LED lights prices, HyD agrees that it is now an opportune time to use LED lights in the public lighting system and HyD will commence the LED road lights replacement programme.

- (4) Taking into account the life expectancy of existing road lights, HyD will replace the medium- and low-wattage HPS lamps for local distributors, footpaths and cycle tracks with LED lights progressively. The concerned replacement works have already commenced in the 2017-2018 financial year. HyD will continue to use high-wattage HPS lamps as they still maintain a competitive edge in terms of their technology, quality, efficacy and price. HyD will continue to monitor the development of high-wattage LED road lights and explore their application in due course. Apart from replacing the medium- and low-wattage HPS lamps, HyD will also replace 4 500 gantry sign and roadside directional sign floodlights in the coming five years and 10 000 sets of T8 fluorescent tubes with LED lights in the coming seven years.

Supply of kindergarten premises

5. **DR PIERRE CHAN** (in Chinese): *President, in its report submitted to the Government on May 2015, the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education ("the Committee") made a number of recommendations on stable supply of kindergarten premises, including increasing government-owned kindergarten premises in public and private housing estates, as well as providing incentives for school sponsoring bodies or operators to acquire their school premises. Some parents of young children have pointed out that while a number of kindergartens have relocated or closed down one after another in recent years necessitated by tenancy problems, they have no means to find out whether the premises of various kindergartens are self-owned or rented properties when they choose kindergartens for their children. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the respective current numbers of kindergartens the premises of which are (i) government properties, (ii) self-owned properties and (iii) rented private properties (with a breakdown by District Council district);*
- (2) *whether it will establish an information platform or compile an information booklet, for parents' reference when they choose kindergartens for their children, which sets out leasing information about school premises (including (i) the expiry dates and (ii) the*

terms for renewal and early termination of existing leases) provided by kindergartens on a voluntary basis;

- (3) whether it will consider formulating guidelines to stipulate that kindergartens should regularly inform parents of the leasing information about their school premises; and*
- (4) whether it will adopt the Committee's recommendations for ensuring a stable supply of kindergarten premises; if so, of the measures for increasing the number of kindergartens operating in government properties or self-owned properties, as well as the implementation timetable and expected efficacy of such measures; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Chinese): President, my reply to the question of Dr Pierre CHAN is as follows:

- (1) Kindergartens ("KGs") in Hong Kong have all along been privately run, with diverse operation modes and different development targets of individual school sponsoring bodies ("SSBs"). KGs are located in a variety of premises, such as self-owned premises, privately-leased premises or premises in public housing estates. Every year, there are KGs ceasing operation and KGs newly operated in different districts. If no public resources are involved in their operation, KGs are not required to submit to the Education Bureau information on their school premises, such as whether they are leased, the lease terms, etc.

Currently, items on KG premises that involve public resources include Education Bureau-administered school allocation or nomination mechanisms, rent reimbursement/rental subsidy schemes and the premises maintenance grant under the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme ("the Scheme") to be implemented from the 2017-2018 school year.

At present, KGs not receiving rent reimbursement are not required to submit information on their school premises. Upon joining the Scheme, these KGs will receive rental subsidy or premises maintenance grant in future. Information of their school premises

will then become available. Since the applications for rental subsidy are being processed, we consider it not appropriate to release unverified information at this stage. Therefore, we can only provide the number of KGs operating in Government-owned/allocated premises and KGs with their applications for premises maintenance grant under the Scheme (generally operating in self-owned premises) initially verified as at early April 2017 by District Council district as tabulated below:

<i>District</i>	<i>KGs operating in Government-owned/allocated premises⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>KGs with their applications for premises maintenance grant under the Scheme (generally operating in self-owned premises) initially verified⁽²⁾</i>
Central and Western	6	6
Eastern	24	8
Islands	11	5
Southern	13	2
Wan Chai	1	8
Kowloon City	12	10
Sham Shui Po	21	10
Kwun Tong	45	7
Sai Kung	33	1
Yau Tsim Mong	11	8
Wong Tai Sin	37	3
Tai Po	19	0
Sha Tin	41	3
North	27	5
Kwai Tsing	39	6
Tuen Mun	40	5
Tsuen Wan	8	5
Yuen Long	41	6

Notes:

- (1) Including premises in public housing estates and other premises owned or managed by the Government.
- (2) Including premises owned by SSBs, operators, related parties or organizations for which no rent or just a nominal rent of no more than \$1,000 a year is paid by the KGs concerned.

(2) and (3)

For lease of privately-owned premises for use as schools, the particulars including the expiry dates of current tenancy agreement, the terms for renewal and early termination of the tenancy are terms of the contract between the landlord and the tenant. Whether the landlord would renew the tenancy with the tenant and the terms concerned are commercial decisions in which the Government is not in a position to intervene. To enhance the transparency of KG operation, we will consider encouraging KGs operating in leased premises to inform parents of their school development plans, including information on the tenancy agreement of the school premises (such as the expiry date of the tenancy agreement). Besides, we will also remind KGs to keep close contact with parents. In case they decide to cease operation, they should inform parents as soon as possible and make proper arrangement for the affected students. Education Bureau has all along been concerned about students' learning. In case a KG ceases to operate, apart from support to the KG as appropriate, we would offer assistance to affected parents and students, including uploading the vacancy situation of KGs in the district concerned onto Education Bureau homepage and setting up hotlines for parents' enquiries.

- (4) According to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, the need for setting up KGs is taken into account in housing estates and large-scale private development projects where space is allocated for such uses. When there is space for KG uses in public housing estates, Education Bureau will review the supply and demand for KG places there and launch school allocation exercises ("SAEs") as appropriate at the request of the Housing Department. When SAEs are launched, all eligible SSBs including existing and new SSBs may apply for using the premises concerned to operate new KGs or relocate existing KGs.

Having considered the recommendations of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education, the Government is of the view that a stable supply of Government-owned quality KG premises is crucial. For achieving this and as a long-term strategy under the free quality KG education policy, adequate space would be earmarked for KG use in new public housing estates with new demand, and available KG

space identified for re-location of existing KGs that require substantial improvement to their physical accommodation. The Government will also explore the feasibility of increasing Government-owned KG premises in accordance with the established mechanisms for site search and/or premise allocation as appropriate. The feasibility of co-location of KGs and primary schools will also be explored. As the recommendation involves a number of complicated issues touching on design, management, operational matters, etc., we will further examine the feasibility on a case-by-case basis in consultation with relevant bureaux or departments.

Combating street obstruction by shops

6. **MS STARRY LEE** (in Chinese): *President, since the relevant amendments to the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness Offences) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 (Ordinance No. 4 of 2016) came into operation on 24 September last year, law enforcement officers may issue fixed penalty notices ("FPNs") to persons who cause obstruction of public places ("street obstruction"). It has been reported that some shop operators have adopted new tactics to avoid being fined for obstructing the streets with their goods. For example, goods are placed for a long period of time (i) on trucks parked on roadside which are used as mobile storage or (ii) in styrofoam boxes or on pallets on roadside disguised as mobile goods. However, the personnel of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") have not intervened in such behaviours when they carry out inspections. Some members of the public have relayed to me that such new tactics of street obstruction have not only caused inconvenience to pedestrians and vehicles, but have also posed hazards to road safety. The styrofoam boxes discarded on roadside have also affected environmental hygiene. Some members of the legal profession have pointed out that to combat such new tactics of street obstruction, law enforcement officers may institute prosecutions, by way of summons under section 4A of the Summary Offences Ordinance (Cap. 228), against persons who cause street obstruction, and those convicted are liable to a fine of \$5,000 or imprisonment for three months. Nevertheless, according to my observations, the Police have not stepped up their law enforcement actions against such new tactics of street obstruction. Regarding the combat of street obstruction by shops, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the numbers of (i) FPNs issued by the authorities against street obstruction by shops (with a breakdown by District Council district), (ii) shops whose operators have received street-obstruction FPNs for more than once, (iii) street-obstruction FPNs which have been disputed by the shop operators concerned, and (iv) street-obstruction FPNs the disputes involved in which have been allowed, since the aforesaid amendments have come into operation;*
- (2) *of the number of complaints about shop operators storing goods on roadside trucks received by the authorities since the aforesaid amendments came into operation (with a breakdown by District Council district); and*
- (3) *whether the authorities have explored ways to combat the aforesaid new tactics of street obstruction by shops; if not, of the reasons for that; if so, the outcome; whether the authorities will step up law enforcement actions by invoking other relevant legislation, and clarify the responsibilities assumed respectively by FEHD and the Police in respect of street obstruction by shops?*

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Chinese): President, the Steering Committee on District Administration ("the Committee") chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs and comprising representatives from relevant departments, including law enforcement departments, has provided a platform for inter-departmental discussion and consultation to enable the departments to make concerted efforts to address district issues such as street management. To address the problem of shop front extensions ("SFEs"), the Home Affairs Department ("HAD"), in collaboration with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD"), Hong Kong Police Force ("HKPF"), Lands Department and Buildings Department, prepared a consultation document on "Enhanced Measures against Shop Front Extensions" and launched a consultation exercise from March to July 2014 to consult the public on the ways to tackle problems associated with SFEs more effectively. The results of the consultation were reported to the Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on 9 January 2015.

The Government has been tackling the problem of SFEs through a four-pronged approach, namely:

- (a) law enforcement by individual departments using powers vested by the relevant Ordinances;
- (b) inter-departmental joint operations (including small-scale joint operations conducted by individual enforcement departments with enhanced inter-departmental cooperation among themselves; and large-scale joint operations coordinated by District Officers ("Dos") for more complicated cases involving several departments);
- (c) collaboration with the District Councils ("DCs"); and
- (d) public education and publicity.

Having regard to the submissions received during the public consultation, the Committee agreed that a fixed penalty system should be introduced to tackle the problem of SFEs in a more efficient and effective manner. To this end, HAD, through the Committee and its inter-departmental working group (comprising representatives from the above departments and the Department of Justice), coordinated the relevant legislative amendment exercise, while the Home Affairs Bureau introduced, on behalf of the Committee, the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2015 into the Legislative Council for the implementation of a fixed penalty system as an additional enforcement tool against SFEs. Upon the gazettal of the Amendment Ordinance on 24 March 2015, the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance (Cap. 570) ("the Ordinance") came into operation on 24 September 2016.

The fixed penalty system is an additional enforcement tool, which will not replace the existing ones. Upon implementation of the Ordinance, FEHD and HKPF are empowered to take enforcement actions by issuing fixed penalty notices ("FPNs") of \$1,500 to offenders, on top of instituting prosecutions by employing the existing enforcement tools (e.g. the summons system). The fixed penalty system is mainly targeted at cases which are straightforward, clear-cut and capable of being easily established, so that problems associated with SFEs are tackled in a quicker and more effective manner. Where a case is less straightforward and/or more serious or complicated (e.g. involving repeated offenders), the law enforcement officers concerned may consider continuing to employ the existing legal tools under section 4A of Summary Offences Ordinance (Cap. 228), such as issuing summonses and/or taking arrest actions. Law

enforcement officers will take appropriate actions depending on the situation at the scene. Specifically, FEHD will issue FPNs as part of their routine enforcement duties, while HKPF will take part in joint operations to offer assistance as required to other departments, and issue FPNs, if necessary, in pre-planned inter-departmental operations.

My reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

- (1) The number of FPNs issued by FEHD against SFEs upon the implementation of the fixed penalty system as at 31 March 2017, with a breakdown by DC district, is set out at Annex 1. Records show that operators of 557 shops have received street-obstruction FPNs more than once. Furthermore, no shop operator has disputed the issuance of any FPN by FEHD.
- (2) The number of complaints received by FEHD concerning shop operators storing goods on roadside trucks as at 31 March 2017, with a breakdown by DC district, is set out at Annex 2. According to their nature, FEHD referred the complaints to relevant departments for follow-up actions.
- (3) As pointed out by the Government in the document submitted to the Panel in 2015, SFEs broadly refer to the occupation of public places by shops or food premises in front of or adjacent to their premises for the purpose of conducting or facilitating business activities. Such extensions are very often at the expense of road access, pedestrian safety, environmental hygiene, townscape and quality of city life. These SFE cases usually involve "illegal hawking", which can be tackled by the enforcement actions taken under the existing summons system and fixed penalty system.

As for SFEs not relating to "illegal hawking", such as shop operators storing goods on roadside trucks, recycling shops placing recyclable waste or metal at shop front, and engineering workshops occupying the shop front area, the enforcement departments will, in the light of individual circumstances, take appropriate actions against irregularities according to their jurisdiction and the powers vested by the relevant Ordinances. Regarding cases involving more than one enforcement department, the departments concerned will enhance

collaboration and mount small-scale joint actions more frequently. For more complicated obstruction cases which cannot be dealt with by any single department using their respective statutory powers, or where SFEs causing serious nuisance to the community and arousing public concern cannot be tackled by a single department, DO concerned will coordinate inter-departmental joint enforcement operations of larger-scale under the District Management Committee mechanism where necessary.

Annex 1

Number of FPNs issued by FEHD against SFEs
since the implementation of the fixed penalty system

<i>DC District</i>	<i>Number of FPNs issued against SFEs since the implementation of the fixed penalty system</i>
Central and Western	112
Wan Chai	194
Eastern	126
Southern	20
Islands	1
Yau Tsim Mong	565
Sham Shui Po	380
Kowloon City	219
Wong Tai Sin	83
Kwun Tong	286
Kwai Tsing	155
Tsuen Wan	343
Tuen Mun	53
Yuen Long	1 089
North	95
Tai Po	77
Sha Tin	31
Sai Kung	8
Total	3 837

Number of complaints received by FEHD about shop operators
storing goods on roadside trucks

<i>DC District</i>	<i>Number of complaints about shops using nearby lay-bys or roads for mobile storage</i>
Central and Western	0
Wan Chai	10
Eastern	6
Southern	0
Islands	0
Yau Tsim Mong	0
Sham Shui Po	109
Kowloon City	19
Wong Tai Sin	0
Kwun Tong	0
Kwai Tsing	0
Tsuen Wan	2
Tuen Mun	2
Yuen Long	0
North	4
Tai Po	14
Sha Tin	0
Sai Kung	0
Total	166

Donations and sponsorships received by welfare funds and staff associations relating to disciplined services

7. **MR LAM CHEUK-TING** (in Chinese): *President, will the Government inform this Council whether, under the existing regulations, various welfare funds and staff associations relating to disciplined services:*

- (1) *may accept donations other than those coming from staff members of the disciplined services concerned ("from outside"); if so, set out the following details in a table by name of disciplined service:*

- (i) *the names of the welfare funds/staff associations,*
 - (ii) *the ranks of the officers responsible for vetting and approving the acceptance of donations and monitoring their usage as well as the names of the divisions/committees to which the officers belong,*
 - (iii) *the criteria for determining whether or not donations are accepted, and whether such criteria include checking the background of donors, and*
 - (iv) *the number of times for which donations were accepted, the total amount received and the largest amount received in a single donation, in each of the past three years; and*
- (2) *may accept sponsorships from outside for the internal activities held by them; if so, set out the following details in a table by name of disciplined service:*
- (i) *the names of the welfare funds/staff associations,*
 - (ii) *the details of the vetting and approval mechanism,*
 - (iii) *the criteria for determining whether or not sponsorships are accepted, and whether such criteria include checking the background of sponsors, and*
 - (iv) *the number of activities in each of the past three years for which sponsorships from outside were accepted; in respect of each activity, the nature of it, the name(s) of sponsors, the total amount of sponsorships and the largest amount of money involved in a single sponsorship?*

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY (in Chinese): President, with regard to Mr LAM Cheuk-ting's question, after consulting the Civil Service Bureau, we provide a consolidated reply below:

Welfare-related funds and staff associations relating to the disciplined services may accept donations and sponsorships from sources other than staff members of the disciplined services concerned, including sponsorships relating to activities organized by them, provided that relevant requirements are complied with and considerations are given to whether the identity and background of the donors are appropriate.

Welfare-related funds relating to the disciplined services have to be administered in the manner stipulated in the relevant legislations. Regarding the welfare funds of the disciplined services (including the Correctional Services Department Welfare Fund, the Customs and Excise Service Welfare Fund, the Fire Services Department Welfare Fund, the Government Flying Service Welfare Fund, the Police Welfare Fund and the Immigration Service Welfare Fund), apart from being administered in accordance with the relevant legislations, they also have to comply with the criteria and requirements for accepting donation to staff welfare funds stipulated by the Civil Service Bureau, which require, inter alia, that the donation must not cause a conflict of interest or open to misconception, the department accepting the donation must not have any official dealings with the donor, and the donation must not be associated with a specific public officer. For acceptance of a donation which does not exceed \$150,000, approval by the head of department concerned must be sought. For acceptance of a donation exceeding \$150,000 or donations from the same donor exceeding \$150,000 within 12 months, approval by the Secretary for Civil Service with prior consultation with relevant Policy Bureau must be sought.

As for the funds established in the form of trust under the Customs and Excise Service Children's Education Trust Fund Ordinance (Cap. 551), the Police Children's Education Trust Ordinance (Cap. 1119), the Police Education and Welfare Trust Ordinance (Cap. 1120) and the Correctional Services Children's Education Trust Ordinance (Cap. 1131), they have to be administered in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislations, including that for a committee to handle issues in relation to the administration and management of the fund and the discharge of the committee's duties, etc.

The amount and number of cases of donations and sponsorships accepted by the above mentioned funds over the past three financial years are listed in

Annex 1, while the largest single donations or sponsorships accepted by the funds in the same period are listed in Annex 2.

As regards staff associations, according to relevant requirements of the Civil Service Bureau, officers soliciting or accepting advantages on behalf of their staff associations or clubs⁽¹⁾ in their capacity as members or officer-bearers of the staff associations or clubs are required to ensure that they have the necessary permission to do so in accordance with the Acceptance of Advantages (Chief Executive's Permission) Notice in a similar way as if they are soliciting or accepting the advantages for their own benefit. The same requirement applies if the office-bearers hire an outsider to solicit or accept advantages for their staff associations or clubs. For the staff associations relating to the disciplined services, they shall apply for permission from their Heads of Departments if prior permission is required for accepting donations and sponsorships. The amounts of donations and sponsorships accepted by staff associations are financial information of such associations which would be inappropriate for the Government to disclose.

Annex 1

Donations and sponsorships accepted by the various welfare-related funds relating to the disciplined services in the past three financial years

<i>Disciplined Services</i>	<i>Funds</i>		<i>2014-2015</i>	<i>2015-2016</i>	<i>2016-2017</i>
Correctional Services Department	Correctional Services Department Welfare Fund	Total amount (\$)	0	1,310,000	1,505,000
		Number of cases	0	4	2
	Correctional Services Children's Education Trust [#]	Total amount (\$)	1,680,000	4,010,000	570,000
		Number of cases	7	9	3

(1) "Staff association" or "club" means all staff associations, clubs, societies, trade unions or other staff bodies whose majority membership comprises serving civil servants, and quasi-official bodies such as sports and recreation clubs.

<i>Disciplined Services</i>	<i>Funds</i>		<i>2014-2015</i>	<i>2015-2016</i>	<i>2016-2017</i>
Customs and Excise Department	Customs and Excise Service Welfare Fund	Total amount (\$)	1,100,000	250,000	600,000
		Number of cases	3	2	2
	Customs and Excise Service Children's Education Trust Fund	Total amount (\$)	300,000	300,000	300,000
		Number of cases	1	1	1
Fire Services Department	Fire Services Department Welfare Fund	Total amount (\$)	5,051,992	2,760,843	3,095,483
		Number of cases	82	33	34
Government Flying Service	Government Flying Service Welfare Fund	Total amount (\$)	240	5,000	5,000
		Number of cases	2	1	1
Hong Kong Police Force	Police Welfare Fund	Total amount (\$)	53,527,835	18,441,540	39,137,615
		Number of cases	1 115	74	66
	Police Children's Education Trust	Total amount (\$)	5,033,196	22,966,882	3,761,086
		Number of cases	489	31	1 244
	Police Education and Welfare Trust	Total amount (\$)	7,902,775	2,912,606	3,554,485
		Number of cases	62	11	11
Immigration Department	Immigration Service Welfare Fund	Total amount (\$)	100,000	1,555,000	150,000
		Number of cases	1	17	2

Note:

The financial year of the Fund ends on 31 August every year. The figure for 2016-2017 is as at 20 April 2017.

Annex 2

The largest single donations or sponsorships accepted by various welfare-related funds relating to disciplined services in the past three financial years

<i>Disciplined Services</i>	<i>Funds</i>	<i>Amount (\$)</i>
Correctional Services Department	Correctional Services Department Welfare Fund	1,500,000
	Correctional Services Children's Education Trust [#]	2,500,000
Customs and Excise Department	Customs and Excise Service Welfare Fund	500,000
	Customs and Excise Service Children's Education Trust Fund	300,000
Fire Services Department	Fire Services Department Welfare Fund	2,000,000
Government Flying Service	Government Flying Service Welfare Fund	5,000
Hong Kong Police Force	Police Welfare Fund	15,000,000
	Police Children's Education Trust	5,000,000
	Police Education and Welfare Trust	5,000,000
Immigration Department	Immigration Service Welfare Fund	150,000

Note:

The financial year of the Fund ends on 31 August every year. The figure represents the position as at 20 April 2017.

Signing of comprehensive avoidance of double taxation agreements between Hong Kong and its trading partners

8. **MR CHAN CHUN-YING** (in Chinese): *President, according to the Government, a comprehensive avoidance of double taxation agreement ("CDTA") signed between Hong Kong and its trading partner helps investors of both places better assess their potential tax liabilities on business activities and provides incentives for cross-border investments. As at February this year, Hong Kong has signed CDTAs with 37 tax jurisdictions but this figure is far below the*

relevant figures in other major economies (e.g. the relevant figures in the United Kingdom, Japan and Singapore are above 90). Moreover, there are views that among the 60-odd countries along the "Belt and Road", quite a number of them are emerging economies with huge business opportunities and development potential, Hong Kong should therefore sign CDTAs with these countries as soon as possible. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has assessed the reasons why the number of CDTAs signed by Hong Kong is far below than that of other major economies; if so, of the details;*
- (2) of the tax jurisdictions with which the authorities are having discussions over the signing of CDTAs; the relevant progress and specific timetable; and*
- (3) whether it has plans to expedite the signing of CDTAs with countries along the Belt and Road so as to promote cross-border investments; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Chinese): President, Hong Kong has all along been actively conducting negotiations with other tax jurisdictions, with a view to concluding more comprehensive avoidance of double taxation agreements ("CDTAs") to help Hong Kong residents assess their tax liabilities from cross-border economic activities and to resolve double taxation issues.

My reply to the question raised by Mr CHAN Chun-ying is as follows:

- (1) and (2)

The Government started to explore the feasibility of establishing a CDTA network with our major trading partners in 1998, and concluded an avoidance of double taxation arrangement with the Mainland China in the same year. In December 2003, Hong Kong signed a CDTA with Belgium, which was our first CDTA. After more than a decade of efforts, Hong Kong has signed CDTAs with 37 tax jurisdictions, and 12 of them are among Hong Kong's top 20 major trading partners. In 2016, the total value of trade between

Hong Kong and these 12 partners exceeded \$5,334 billion, amounting to about 70% of Hong Kong's world trade. This depicts that the CDTAs signed suit Hong Kong's needs and mere reference to the number of CDTAs signed may not be comprehensive.

Moreover, we are now pursuing CDTA negotiations with 13 tax jurisdictions, including Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, India, Israel, Macao Special Administrative Region, Macedonia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. It is worth noting that the commencement and the progress of CDTA negotiations depend heavily on the motivation and CDTA policies of both parties.

- (3) There are many partners along the Belt and Road, amongst others, with which Hong Kong has signed or is in negotiation for CDTAs.

Those with which Hong Kong has signed CDTAs include Thailand, Mainland China, Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Hungary, Kuwait, Czech Republic, Malaysia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Romania, Russia, Latvia, Belarus and Pakistan.

Those with which we are now pursuing negotiations include Bahrain, Bangladesh, India, Israel, Macedonia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

The Government will continue to actively persuade other trading partners (including those along the Belt and Road) for commencement of negotiations so as to establish a wide CDTA network, thereby enhancing bilateral trade ties and avoiding double taxation.

Assisting various industries in operating in industrial buildings

9. **MR MA FUNG-KWOK** (in Chinese): *President, under the existing requirements, an owner of an industrial building unit intending to use his unit for uses other than those permitted under the relevant lease must first apply to the Lands Department for temporary waiver ("waiver") for permission of the proposed uses. If the application is approved, the owner concerned is generally*

required to pay a waiver fee and an administrative fee. On the other hand, the Government announced in June 2012 and February last year respectively the exemption of the payment of waiver fees involving the conversion of industrial building units for use as data centres as well as testing and calibration laboratories ("testing laboratories"), in order to promote the development of such industries. On assisting various industries in operating in industrial buildings, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) since the payment of waiver fees involving the uses of data centres and testing laboratories has been exempted by the authorities, of the respective numbers of waiver applications received and approved by the authorities involving the conversion of industrial building units for those two types of uses, and the total amount of waiver fees exempted;*
- (2) of the factors taken into account by the authorities in determining the exemption or otherwise of the payment of waiver fees involving a particular proposed use; apart from the uses mentioned in (1), whether the authorities, at present, have plans to exempt the payment of waiver fees involving other uses;*
- (3) of the respective numbers of waiver applications received, approved and rejected by the authorities in the past five years for the proposed uses for cultural, arts or sports purposes, and the reasons for rejecting some of such applications; whether the authorities will consider exempting the payment of waiver fees involving such uses so as to promote the development of the relevant industries; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and*
- (4) given that the authorities have adopted in recent years a streamlined procedure for handling waiver applications, including the introduction of a standard rate to expedite the vetting and approval process, of the average time currently needed for handling each application; whether the authorities have plans to further streamline that procedure to facilitate and encourage the making of such applications by owners of industrial building units?*

SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT (in Chinese): President, the reply to the four-part question is as follows:

- (1) As at end-March 2017, the Lands Department ("LandsD") received a total of 30 waiver applications for proposed use as data centres under the policy initiative for facilitating the development of data centres. Among these applications, three of them had been withdrawn from LandsD by the owners, 18 were approved and the remaining nine were under processing. Under the policy initiative for assisting the operation of testing and calibration laboratories ("testing laboratories") in industrial buildings, LandsD received a total of seven waiver applications for proposed use as testing laboratories, six of which were approved and the remaining one was under processing.

In general, the amount of waiver fee payable for the approved applications will depend on the floor area, location, and the proposed use of the premises in question. However, as the waiver fees for the above uses were already exempted by the Government in accordance with the said initiatives, the Government had not assessed the waiver fees for the above applications.

- (2) On the basis of relevant policy objectives, the Government may consider introducing a fee exemption/fee concessionary scheme for individual industries or specified uses to facilitate the conversion of an industrial lot or an existing industrial building to specified uses. In respect of the setting up of data centres and testing laboratories in industrial buildings at present and wholesale conversion to accommodate non-industrial purposes under the Scheme on Revitalisation of Industrial Buildings implemented earlier, for cases meeting the policy requirements, the Government may grant a waiver and exempt the payment of a waiver fee. Other than these, there are no other circumstances in industrial buildings which can be given exemption of waiver fees.
- (3) LandsD does not compile statistics on a regular basis for cases of application for temporary waiver in industrial buildings. Apart from the special measures as mentioned in part (1) above, in general, the waiver applications received by LandsD mostly involve a basket

of uses, among which uses related to arts, culture, etc. may be involved. Upon approval of the relevant temporary waiver applications, the ultimate use would depend on the decision of the applicant.

Due to the limited time available, the Department could only conduct a simple survey for the question. The findings show that it has not received any waiver applications to use premises in industrial buildings solely for cultural, arts or sports uses in the past three years (i.e. from April 2014 up till now).

The Home Affairs Bureau indicates that it understands the demand for arts space by local artists and has examined with the relevant departments on how to further assist the sector in the use of industrial buildings and other space for arts creation work and related activities, including the feasibility of allowing artists to carry out arts creation work in industrial buildings. After discussions, the relevant departments have agreed to include "Art Studio" (excluding those involving direct provision of services or goods) as an always permitted use in industrial-office buildings in "Industrial", "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Business" and "Residential (Group E)" zones. As at mid-April 2017, the Town Planning Board has amended a total of 14 Outline Zoning Plans ("OZPs") according to the above recommendation. Similar amendments to other OZPs will be made in future when suitable opportunities arise in future.

Regarding land leases, land leases of industrial buildings generally contain user restrictions. The main purpose of waiver fees exemption is to relax these land lease restrictions originally allowing only certain prescribed uses, thereby allowing non-industrial uses originally not allowed in industrial buildings to make the best use of these buildings under the exemption arrangement. As regards the measures of waiver fees exemption for data centres and testing laboratories, the prerequisite is that the premises concerned must fulfil the government requirements in planning, fire safety and building safety, which are not relaxed as a result of the exemption measures. Unlike the uses as data centres and testing laboratories, conducting cultural, arts or sports activities in industrial buildings

generally involves the general public and a higher visitor flow. The Government must exercise caution when evaluating the safety hazard involved.

On the premises of a due regard to public safety, the Government will continue to examine how to further optimize the use of existing industrial buildings for various activities and to provide more spaces for arts, cultural and sports activity purposes.

- (4) Notwithstanding the introduction of fees at standard rates to expedite the vetting and approval process of waiver applications, it is still necessary for LandsD to consult the relevant departments on these applications. The time needed for handling each application varies depending on the nature and complexity of each case and cannot be generalized. We have no plan to further streamline the procedures for the time being.

Promoting positive and healthy sex attitudes among youngsters

10. **MR CHEUNG KWOK-KWAN** (in Chinese): *President, it has been reported that two incidents of group bullying of an indecent nature occurred recently in a student hall of residence in the University of Hong Kong, and it was uncovered last month that a number of male students of a Direct Subsidy Scheme secondary school had allegedly installed hidden cameras in female changing rooms and classrooms in the school for surreptitious recordings for a long period of time. Some members of the education sector have pointed out that such incidents reflect the low moral standards of some youngsters and their lack of respect for others, as well as the ineffectiveness of the sex education implemented in schools. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *whether it knows the total number of complaints received by secondary schools and post-secondary institutions across the territory in the past five years about assaults, bullying or other misconduct of an indecent nature occurring on campuses or in dormitories, and how the authorities and schools followed up such complaints;*

- (2) *whether the Education Bureau ("EDB") has provided post-secondary institutions with guidelines on preventing students from performing acts of an indecent nature or other objectionable acts in the institutions;*
- (3) *whether, in the light of the aforesaid incident of surreptitious recordings, EDB has immediately issued guidelines to or conducted talks for the secondary school concerned to provide it support in handling the incident; if not, whether EDB will follow up the incident expeditiously;*
- (4) *given that EDB compiled the Guidelines on Sex Education in Schools in 1997 for the reference of schools and introduced a curriculum reform in 2001 under which cross-curriculum programmes, including sex education, were integrated into moral and civic education to provide holistic education, whether EDB knows the current situation concerning the development of sex education programmes by schools in accordance with the relevant guidelines; of the number of schools which have not developed sex education programmes, and how EDB follows up the issue; and*
- (5) *whether, in the light of the several recent incidents of assaults and bullying of an indecent nature that occurred on campus, the authorities will expeditiously conduct a review on ways to improve the sex education implemented in schools, with a view to building positive and healthy sex attitudes among youngsters?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Chinese): President, helping students to develop positive values and attitudes has all along been one of the major learning goals of school education in Hong Kong. Currently, the Education Bureau, through measures such as the provision of appropriate curriculum guides, diversified teacher professional development programmes and relevant learning and teaching resources, supports schools in adopting a holistic, systematic and sustainable approach which suits the developmental needs of students for the implementation of moral and civic education, covering sex education and other values education. Education Bureau has also prepared the School Administration Guide and the relevant school circulars to render support to schools in handling students' misbehaviour and related complaints. Besides, at present, the General Education programmes offered by the eight University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded universities generally include modules and

elements of sex education. The universities also regularly arrange for their staff and students to attend training courses, seminars and talks on how to prevent and handle sexual harassment.

My reply to the question raised by Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan is as follows:

- (1) In the past five years, Education Bureau has not received complaints involving secondary school students' indecent behaviour or group bullying. Yet, apart from complaining to the Bureau, the person concerned or his/her guardian may lodge complaints directly to the school but such information is not available to the Bureau. In general, if the case may involve criminal offences, the Bureau or the school will advise the complainant to report to the Police.

As regards UGC-funded universities, the number of complaints relating to sexual harassment, bullying and other inappropriate behaviour received by UGC-funded universities in the past five years is set out at Annex. In case of sexual harassment and bullying, the complainant may lodge a complaint to the university. Each university has put in place a complaints-handling mechanism and disciplinary procedures to ensure that every case will be dealt with in a serious and impartial manner. In addition, depending on the nature of the cases, an alleged victim may also lodge a complaint to the Equal Opportunities Commission or bring civil proceedings in court. The internal complaints-handling mechanism of a university will in no way affect an alleged victim's rights to complain or litigate outside the university. For cases involving criminal elements, they will also be referred to the Police by the universities concerned for further investigation.

Regarding the recent incidents which took place in student halls of residence of the University of Hong Kong ("HKU") as quoted in Mr CHEUNG's question, we understand that HKU is highly concerned. The wardens of the student halls of residence concerned have conducted investigation immediately and students involved have received appropriate advice and penalty. The senior management of the University has also set up a committee led by a Vice President to follow up on the cases. If there is sufficient evidence, HKU will further initiate disciplinary proceedings to punish the students concerned.

- (2) The eight UGC-funded universities are all independent and autonomous statutory bodies. According to the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 480), these universities, same as other organizations in Hong Kong, have a statutory obligation to take reasonable and practical steps to prevent sexual harassment on campus, including developing a policy in writing in this respect, setting up a mechanism to handle complaints about sexual harassment, etc.

All eight universities have informed the UGC Secretariat that they have put in place policies and regulations for the prevention of sexual harassment cases. According to universities' policies, a member, employee or student of the university shall not discriminate or harass any other member, employee or student of the university or any other person who has dealings with the university. On the other hand, the universities have also drawn up relevant guidelines and regulations which prescribe that bullying or any other behaviour that is detrimental to the dignity and rights of others is strictly prohibited on campus or in a student hostel.

- (3) To ensure the safety of students at school, Education Bureau has compiled the School Administration Guide and regularly issues circulars to provide schools with clear guidelines on student affairs, including discipline, student behaviour and handling of school bullying incidents, etc. The School Administration Guide specifies that schools should formulate policies and measures to prevent students' behavioural problems, such as bullying and sexual harassment, etc. If students are suspected to have been involved in illegal behaviour, such as indecent assault, peeping Tom, etc., schools should consult the respective Police School Liaison Officer. For serious cases, schools should report to the Police immediately to seek assistance. Education Bureau organizes talks or seminars every year to raise the awareness of teachers and social workers about protecting students from sexual assaults or sexual harassment, and advise them on early identification, intervention and support to student victims. After the incident of surreptitious recordings, the Bureau has immediately contacted the school concerned to obtain relevant details about the incident and provided appropriate support to the school.

- (4) Education Bureau is committed to promoting sex education at various key stages of learning in schools through a holistic curriculum comprising knowledge, skills and values/attitudes. Learning elements related to sex education such as personal development, hygiene, puberty, making friends, dating, marriage, protecting the body and gender equality are included in the Key Learning Areas, subjects and Moral and Civic Education curriculum of primary and secondary schools. In addition, schools also provide students with related learning experiences through class teachers' periods, school assemblies and life-wide learning activities such as talks, visits and exhibitions, etc. The Bureau expects sex education in schools will help students uphold positive values and attitudes when facing issues related to sex, build a healthy interpersonal relationships as well as analyse rationally and objectively so as to make reasonable judgments and responsible decisions. Schools will make reference to the Bureau's related curriculum guides and documents and take into consideration their school-based situation when planning the school-based sex education curriculum and organizing related learning activities. Schools will also formulate their school-based assessment policy and persistently review and improve their school-based curriculum and related contents.
- (5) To address the developmental needs of the students and society, Education Bureau has been reviewing and renewing different curriculum contents. The Moral and Civic Education curriculum framework has been revised and enriched in April 2008 to include expected learning outcomes and contents related to sex education for various stages of learning so as to help schools implement sex education more systematically. In the new senior secondary curriculum implemented in September 2009, sex education for the youth has been included in the core curriculum. Learning elements related to sex education have been incorporated into the Life and Society curriculum at the junior secondary level implemented in 2010. Schools are encouraged to update their school-based curriculum and learning and teaching materials in a timely manner, and to organize school activities to cater for students' needs. In response to the rapid societal changes and needs of students, Education Bureau will continue to strengthen support to schools, such as ongoing development of learning and teaching resources,

renewal of relevant curricula and inviting tertiary institutions, related government departments and institutions/organizations, etc. to co-organize professional development programmes and activities for teachers so as to help them keep abreast of the recent development of related issues and acquire the pedagogical skills for implementing sex education. The Bureau will continue to meet and exchange views with stakeholders and listen to their views and suggestions on the curriculum provided through different channels such as school curriculum visits so as to enhance curriculum development and learning and teaching effectiveness. As regards the UGC-funded universities, they also widely promote their policies and measures for the prevention of sexual harassment through different channels by regularly launching publicity and education activities on campus. Universities also strive to strengthen the promotion of the guidelines and regulations on the prohibition of bullying and sexual harassment, especially within student hostels and during orientation activities.

Annex

Numbers of complaints relating to sexual harassment, bullying and other inappropriate behaviour received by UGC-funded universities
(January 2013 to April 2017)

<i>University</i>	<i>(a)</i> <i>Numbers of complaints relating to sexual harassment</i>		<i>(b)</i> <i>Numbers of complaints relating to bullying and other inappropriate behaviours (excluding complaints relating to sexual harassment)</i>	
	<i>Including complaints from students only</i>	<i>All complaints</i>	<i>Including complaints from students only</i>	<i>All complaints</i>
City University of Hong Kong	4	4	0	Not Available
Hong Kong Baptist University	2	3	0	0
Lingnan University	0	0	0	0

<i>University</i>	<i>(a)</i> <i>Numbers of complaints relating to sexual harassment</i>		<i>(b)</i> <i>Numbers of complaints relating to bullying and other inappropriate behaviours (excluding complaints relating to sexual harassment)</i>	
	<i>Including complaints from students only</i>	<i>All complaints</i>	<i>Including complaints from students only</i>	<i>All complaints</i>
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	6	9	Not Available	Not Available
The Education University of Hong Kong	3	3	1	1
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	8 ⁽⁵⁾	8	2	4
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	5	Not Available	1	Not Available
HKU	1	2	2 ⁽⁶⁾	2
Total	29	29	6	7

Notes:

- (1) Only substantiated complaints and complaints under investigation are included.
- (2) A single complaint involving both sexual harassment and bullying or other inappropriate behaviour may be counted more than once in the table.
- (3) More than one complaint may be filed for a single incident by multiple complainants.
- (4) More than one complaint may be filed by a complainant against the same person for separate incidents.
- (5) Among the eight complaints reported here, seven of them are filed against one single person by seven complainants for a single incident.
- (6) These two complaints are sex-related bullying.

Health conditions of public transport drivers

11. **MRS REGINA IP** (in Chinese): *President, it was reported that earlier this year, a taxi ran out of control leading to the death of its 78-year-old driver, and the traffic accident was believed to have been caused by the sudden indisposition of the driver. Regarding the health conditions of public transport drivers, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the number of traffic accidents in the past three years allegedly caused by public transport drivers suffering from bouts of illness while driving, and the resultant casualties; of the highest and the average ages of the drivers concerned;*
- (2) *whether it knows (i) the age threshold for newly recruited drivers and (ii) the requirements on declaration of physical fitness by newly recruited and serving drivers as well as the arrangements for their undergoing medical examinations, currently set by various public transport operators;*
- (3) *of the respective numbers of cases in the past three years of issuance and renewal of driving licences for various classes of commercial vehicles, and the number of applications rejected as well as the reasons for the rejection; and*
- (4) *apart from the stipulation in the Road Traffic (Driving Licences) Regulations (Cap. 374 sub. leg. B) that an application from a person aged 70 or above for issuance or renewal of a driving licence shall be accompanied by a certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner certifying that the person is medically fit to drive the relevant class of motor vehicle, whether the authorities have measures in place to ensure that public transport drivers drive only when they are physically fit, in order to safeguard the safety of passengers and other road users?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Chinese): *President, my reply to the various parts of Mrs Regina IP's question is as follows:*

- (1) The number of traffic accidents resulting in casualties caused by public transport drivers suffering from bouts of illness whilst driving and the number of the resulting casualties from 2014 to 2016 are as follows:

	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>
Number of Traffic Accidents	3	4	3
Number of Casualties	5	6	6

The aforesaid traffic accidents did not result in any deaths. The highest age and average age of the drivers concerned was 75 and 63.8 respectively. In addition, during the same period, 11 public transport drivers died from bouts of illness whilst driving but those incidents did not result in casualties of other road users.

- (2) and (4)

Under the Road Traffic (Driving Licences) Regulations (Cap. 374B) ("the Regulations"), an applicant for a new, reissued (e.g. application for a reissued probationary driving licence after the full driving licence has been cancelled) or renewed driving licence shall make a declaration in the application form on whether he/she is suffering from any disease or physical disability specified in Schedule 1 to the Regulations (such as epilepsy, mental disorder and hypertension), or any disease or physical disability that would cause his/her driving to be a source of danger to the public. If, from the declaration so made, it appears to the Commissioner for Transport ("the Commissioner") that the applicant is suffering from the specified disease or physical disability, the Commissioner shall refuse the application. If the applicant makes a declaration that he/she is suffering from a disease or physical disability other than those listed in Schedule 1, he/she may request to attend a test specified by the Commissioner as to his/her ability to drive. If the applicant passes the test, the Commissioner cannot refuse his/her application by reason only of the declared disease or physical disability. Applicants will commit an offence if they knowingly provide inaccurate information. According to section 111(3) of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374), offenders are liable to a fine of \$5,000 and imprisonment for six months. Moreover, for applicants aged

60 or above but less than 70, unlike ordinary driving licence which is valid for 10 years, their driving licences shall be valid for 3 years or up to the day before he/she attains the age of 70, whichever is the longer. The Regulations also stipulate that an applicant aged 70 or above shall, on application for a new, reissued or renewed driving licence, submit a medical examination report form completed and signed by a registered medical practitioner not earlier than four months before the application to certify that the applicant is medically fit to drive. It is also laid down in the Regulations that an applicant aged 70 or above may only choose the driving licence with a validity period of one year or three years. The Regulations also require a holder of valid driving licence to inform the Commissioner in writing if he/she finds that he has the above disease or physical disability. Anyone who contravenes the said requirements commits an offence and is liable to a fine of \$2,000.

Franchised buses serve as road-based mass carriers. The operators have devised clear requirements on the age and physical health of bus captains. On the age requirement, the retirement age for bus captains is 60 or 65 (depending on the arrangement of individual operators). Depending on their manpower needs, some operators will flexibly extend the employment period of their bus captains on a contract basis up to the age limit of 66 or 67 (depending on the arrangement of individual operators).

Franchised bus operators have also put in place a requirement for bus captains to undergo health checks before joining the service, and formulated detailed arrangements for serving bus captains of different ages to undergo annual health checks having regard to their health conditions. Specifically, all full-time and part-time bus captains are required to declare their health conditions and pass a health check (which includes chest examination as well as eyesight, hearing, diabetes, blood pressure blood and urine tests) such that he/she is certified by a doctor to be physically fit to drive buses. As regards the health checks for serving bus captains, all franchised bus operators currently require bus captains aged 50 or above to undergo annual health checks which cover chest examination as well as eyesight, hearing, diabetes, blood pressure, blood and urine tests. After a joint review by the Transport Department ("TD") and franchised bus operators, the latter have enhanced the arrangements

concerned since August 2013. For bus captains at the age of 50, 54, 57 or 60 or above, they are also required to undergo an electrocardiogram as part of the health check. Moreover, for bus captains who have suffered a stroke or cardiovascular diseases, or are on medication due to diabetes mellitus or hypertension, they are also required to declare such illness(es) to their operators and undergo an electrocardiogram in their annual health checks. Franchised bus operators have also issued guidelines to remind their bus captains not to continue driving if feeling unwell while on duty and to consult doctors promptly. Franchised bus operators will also observe the mental condition of bus captains during daily operations. They will suspend the driving duties of any bus captain observed to have an abnormal mental condition immediately.

Among other road-based public transport modes, trams also have a high carrying capacity. The Hong Kong Tramways Limited has stipulated that tram drivers shall retire at the age of 65. All tram drivers have to undergo an eyesight test annually, while those aged between 55 and 59 are also required to undergo blood pressure tests annually. Those aged 60 or above are required to undergo a general check-up before annual contract renewal, which covers items including physical check, health questionnaire, blood test, routine urine test, chest examination and eyesight test.

As regards non-franchised buses, public light buses and taxis, they do not have standardized arrangement as these sectors recruit drivers and operate distinctively. While these sectors have not specified a mandatory retirement age, the number of drivers aged over 70 is small in general. In case any duty driver is unwell or suffers from abnormal health conditions, the operator concerned will, for safety's sake, take appropriate measures which include suspending the driving duties of the driver concerned immediately and reminding him/her to consult a doctor promptly. If TD is aware, through passenger complaints or other channels, of any driver of road-based transport vehicles who may have suffered from abnormal health condition, the department will proactively liaise with the operator concerned to understand the situation and take appropriate follow-up action. It should be emphasized that the afore-mentioned additional requirements under the Regulations for the issue, reissue or renewal

of driving licences for drivers who suffer from the specified diseases or physical disabilities, or who are 70 years of age or more, are applicable to drivers of all road-based modes of public transport.

Meanwhile, TD will continue to enhance commercial vehicle drivers' awareness of safe driving and health by means of training and education, including the publicity campaign "Safe Driving and Health Campaign" and seminars on safe driving co-organized by the department and the Police. During the annual "Safe Driving and Health Campaign", TD will distribute coupons to commercial vehicle drivers (including public transport drivers) to encourage them to conduct free health checks at medical institutions. Through meetings with the trade and regular newsletters, TD also reminds operators and the trade to pay attention to drivers' physical condition and encourage them to have regular check-ups.

- (3) There is no definition of "commercial vehicles" in the existing legislation. For the purpose of classifying driving licences, taxis, medium goods vehicles, heavy goods vehicles, private and public light buses, private and public buses, franchised buses, articulated vehicles and special purpose vehicles are generally regarded as "commercial vehicles". At present, there are about 380 000 persons holding driving licences of commercial vehicles. The number of driving licences for commercial vehicles issued by TD in the three-year period from 2014 to 2016 is as follows:

<i>Year (Calendar Year)</i>	<i>Number of Driving Licences</i>	
	<i>New Issue</i>	<i>Renewal</i>
2014	21 708	30 877
2015	20 919	30 686
2016	18 703	34 946

During the above three-year period, TD refused two applications for new or renewal of driving licences for commercial vehicles in 2014, and one in 2015 and one in 2016. The above applications were rejected because the Commissioner, having assessed the information declared by the applicants, considered that the applicants were not medically fit for driving.

Support for self-help organizations of persons with disabilities

12. **MR SHIU KA-CHUN** (in Chinese): *President, the Government completed a review of the Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan in 2007 and endorsed the future directions of development of self-help organizations of persons with disabilities ("self-help organizations"), which included providing project-based financial support for self-help organizations or recommending them to charitable funds, as well as facilitating their building up of a cross-sectoral network and tapping of more resources. Some self-help organizations' persons-in-charge have relayed to me that there is a lack of transparency in the vetting and approval procedure of the Financial Support Scheme for Self-help Organizations of Persons with Disabilities/Chronic Illnesses ("financial support scheme"). Moreover, the funding amounts received by some self-help organizations were inadequate to cover their daily operating expenses. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *in each of the past five years, of (i) the respective numbers of self-help organizations recommended to charitable funds by the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") and the respective numbers of recommendations made, and (ii) the respective numbers of activities organized by SWD to facilitate self-help organizations' building up of a cross-sectoral network and tapping of more resources; the respective numbers of self-help organizations participated in such activities and the specific results achieved by various activities;*
- (2) *of the respective numbers of applications received and those approved by SWD as well as the (i) smallest, (ii) largest, (iii) median and (iv) average amounts of funding involved in the applications approved, in each of the past five rounds of applications under the financial support scheme;*
- (3) *whether SWD has set ceilings on the total funding amount approved and the number of self-help organizations receiving financial support for each round of applications under the financial support scheme; how SWD has dealt with the shortage of funds under the scheme, and the criteria for deciding the funding amounts approved for individual applications under such circumstance; and*

- (4) *given that SWD stated in its paper for the meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services of this Council on 26 March 2013 that it would continue to review the operation of self-help organizations and secure additional resources to meet the demand when necessary, of the date of the last review conducted by SWD and its outcome; what specific measures SWD has put in place to tackle the difficulties faced by self-help organizations at present?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Chinese): President, the policy objectives of the Government in the development of self-help organizations of persons with disabilities are to foster the spirit of self-help and mutual help among persons with disabilities and their families/carers, and encourage the active participation of persons with disabilities and self-help organizations in the formulation of rehabilitation policies and services.

To support the development and operation of self-help organizations of persons with disabilities, the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") launched the Financial Support Scheme for Self-help Organizations of Persons with Disabilities/Chronic Illnesses ("Financial Support Scheme") in 2001 to provide funding support for these organizations. Unlike those subvented services provided by non-governmental organizations with regular subvention granted by SWD, the Financial Support Scheme does not specify or prescribe the details or quantity of services to be provided by self-help organizations, with the aim of providing persons with disabilities and their families/carers with time-defined and project-based support in addition to regular rehabilitation services. Under the Financial Support Scheme, applications are invited every two years, and each batch of applications is processed independently. The actual amount of funding allocated to each applicant organization is subject to the resources available under the Financial Support Scheme for the year, the number of eligible applicant organizations and the content of proposals submitted by individual organizations. The funding amounts received by applicant organizations may therefore vary from batch to batch.

Apart from SWD's Financial Support Scheme, self-help organizations may seek resources from other charitable or government funds, such as The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, S.K. Yee Fund for the Disabled, Queen Elizabeth Foundation for the Mentally Handicapped and Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged, etc. Furthermore, through the Community Rehabilitation Network ("CRN") of The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation subsidized by

SWD, persons with disabilities/chronic illnesses and their families are provided with education, training and support services and assistance in setting up mutual help networks. CRN also strengthens the publicity and promotion of the nature and functions of self-help organizations for persons with disabilities in the wider community and facilitates the building up of a cross-sectoral network and tapping of more resources.

My reply to the question raised by Mr SHIU Ka-chun is as follows:

- (1) When a self-help organization seeks funding from other charitable funds, the funding bodies concerned may consult SWD on that application if necessary. SWD will assess the application before making recommendations. SWD does not maintain the number of recommendations made to various charitable funds in respect of the funding applications submitted by self-help organizations and the number of self-help organizations recommended. In the past five years, CRN organized about 1 100 cross-sectoral network activities for self-help organizations of persons with disabilities/chronic illnesses with satisfactory results as assessed by CRN. SWD does not maintain the number of self-help organizations that participated in cross-sectoral network activities.
- (2) The number of applications from self-help organizations, the number of successful applicant organizations as well as the smallest, largest, median and average amounts of funding involved for the past five batches of Financial Support Scheme are tabulated as follows:

<i>Date of implementation</i>	<i>Number of applications from self-help organizations</i>	<i>Number of successful applicant organizations</i>	<i>The smallest amount of funding granted (\$)</i>	<i>The largest amount of funding granted (\$)</i>	<i>The median amount of funding granted (\$)</i>	<i>The average amount of funding granted (\$)</i>
1 April 2008 to 31 March 2010	59	57	34,000	485,200	313,200	294,989

<i>Date of implementation</i>	<i>Number of applications from self-help organizations</i>	<i>Number of successful applicant organizations</i>	<i>The smallest amount of funding granted (\$)</i>	<i>The largest amount of funding granted (\$)</i>	<i>The median amount of funding granted (\$)</i>	<i>The average amount of funding granted (\$)</i>
1 April 2010 to 31 March 2012	58	56	77,500 ⁽³⁾	330,000	330,000	305,068
1 April 2012 to 30 September 2014 ⁽¹⁾	72	68	65,000 ⁽²⁾	375,000 ⁽²⁾	375,000 ⁽²⁾	357,375 ⁽²⁾
1 October 2014 to 30 September 2016	82	79	70,000 ⁽³⁾	450,000	390,000	372,591
1 October 2016 to 30 September 2018	83	83	200,000 ⁽³⁾	450,000	330,000	357,110

Notes:

- (1) The 2012-2014 Financial Support Scheme was extended for six months to 30 September 2014 owing to SWD's review on the Scheme in 2014-2015.
 - (2) The amount cannot be directly compared with that for other batches as the 2012-2014 Financial Support Scheme lasted for 30 months.
 - (3) The amount is equivalent to the actual amount of funding sought by the successful applicant organizations.
- (3) Since 2014-2015, the Government has increased the total amount of annual funding allocated to the Financial Support Scheme from about \$10 million to about \$15 million to support the operation and development of the self-help organizations of persons with disabilities/chronic illnesses. As mentioned above, each batch of applications for the Financial Support Scheme is processed independently. Since there is no ceiling on the number of applicant

organizations, if the number of applicant organizations increases, the amount of funding for some applicant organizations may be reduced correspondingly.

On assessment of applications, SWD will set up an assessment panel to vet and approve all applications based on the project plans submitted by applicant organizations and a set of objective assessment criteria, and determine the amounts of funding for individual applications. The assessment criteria for the Financial Support Scheme include: whether the activities under the project plan are in line with the objectives of the Financial Support Scheme; whether the budget for the project plan is reasonable and cost-effective; expected outcome indicators for the activities under the project plan; feasibility of the project plan; self-reliance and sustainability of the organization; financial position of the organization; and record of previous application(s) for the Financial Support Scheme made by the organization and its performance on project implementation. Before inviting self-help organizations to submit applications for the latest batch of Financial Support Scheme, SWD will hold a briefing session on the above assessment criteria so that these organizations can make full preparation for their project plans.

- (4) SWD conducted a questionnaire survey for service evaluation among self-help organizations in March 2014 with a view to enhancing the Financial Support Scheme. Most of the organizations agreed that funding under the Financial Support Scheme should be allocated to successful applicant organizations based on the scores they obtained against some objective assessment criteria, instead of being granted on a flat-rate basis. In April 2014, SWD held a consultation session to share the survey results with self-help organizations and adopted their recommendations for the implementation of the 2014-2016 Financial Support Scheme. To further support the operation and development of self-help organizations of persons with disabilities/chronic illnesses, the Government has also increased the annual recurrent expenditure for the Financial Support Scheme from about \$10 million to about \$15 million since 2014-2015. SWD will continue to review the service needs of persons with disabilities/chronic illnesses so as to provide them with appropriate support.

Provision of treatment and support for patients with mental illness and the relevant public education efforts

13. **MR JAMES TO** (in Chinese): *President, regarding the provision of treatment and support for various types of patients with mental illness and the relevant public education efforts, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *whether it knows, in each of the past five years, (i) the respective numbers of attendances for the psychiatric treatment services provided by public and private medical institutions (broken down by type of mental illness), and (ii) the respective numbers of patients with mental illness, who were being treated by public and private medical institutions, committed violent acts allegedly due to bouts of illness, as well as the numbers of such cases and the resultant casualties;*
- (2) *whether it knows the number and age distribution of new patients diagnosed with mental illness in each of the past five years and, among them, the number of those identified as having a propensity to violence;*
- (3) *whether it knows, in each of the past five years, (i) the quantity of psychiatric drugs prescribed by the psychiatric specialist services under the Hospital Authority ("HA") and the expenditure so incurred, as well as the changes in the number of outpatient clinics and the number of healthcare staff for psychiatric specialist services, and (ii) the respective numbers of service units and staff members under HA and the Government providing psychological counselling services for patients with mental illness;*
- (4) *whether it knows the following information concerning the psychiatric specialist services provided respectively by non-profit making organizations and private medical institutions in each of the past five years: (i) the quantity of psychiatric drugs prescribed and the expenditure so incurred, (ii) the number of outpatient clinics, (iii) the number of beds, (iv) the number of institutions and staff members providing psychological counselling services, and (v) the number of psychiatric specialist healthcare staff members;*

- (5) *whether it knows the number of ex-mentally ill persons for whom public medical institutions and non-profit making organizations provided home visit services in each of the past five years;*
- (6) *of the authorities' existing policy on identifying and giving support to "hidden" patients with mental illness, and the unit costs of such kind of services;*
- (7) *whether it has studied how (i) the ratios of psychiatrists and other staff members in the public healthcare system providing psychological counselling services to patients with mental illness, as well as (ii) the data relating to the provision of psychiatric drugs and psychological counselling services for such patients compare with those in other places (e.g. Australia and Japan); if so, of the outcome; and*
- (8) *of the measures taken by the authorities in the past five years to promote public awareness and prevention of mental illness and to mitigate the discrimination of mentally ill and ex-mentally ill persons by members of the public, as well as the manpower and expenditure involved; the specific effectiveness evaluation indicators and the future improvement plans?*

SECRETARY FOR FOOD AND HEALTH (in Chinese): President, currently, the treatment and support services for various types of patients with mental illness, as well as the related public education work, are mainly the responsibilities of the Food and Health Bureau and the Labour and Welfare Bureau. My reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

- (1) The table below sets out the number of psychiatric patients receiving treatment in the Hospital Authority ("HA") (including inpatient, patients at specialist outpatient clinics ("SOPCs") and day hospitals), and among them, the number of patients diagnosed as suffering from severe mental illness in each of the past five years:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of psychiatric patients receiving treatment in HA⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>Number of patients diagnosed as suffering from severe mental illness⁽¹⁾</i>
2012-2013	197 600	45 500
2013-2014	208 100	46 500

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of psychiatric patients receiving treatment in HA⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>Number of patients diagnosed as suffering from severe mental illness⁽¹⁾</i>
2014-2015	217 400	47 500
2015-2016	228 700	48 200
2016-2017 (provisional figure)	240 900	49 000

Note:

(1) Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

The Government does not keep statistics on the number of patients receiving psychiatric treatment in private medical institutions, or the number of patients with mental illness committed violent acts allegedly due to bouts of illness, who were being treated by HA and private medical institutions.

(2) The table below sets out the number of new cases for psychiatric specialist outpatient service of HA in each of the past five years:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of new cases⁽¹⁾</i>
2012-2013	47 200
2013-2014	47 500
2014-2015	48 000
2015-2016	48 500
2016-2017 (provisional figure)	48 800

Note:

(1) Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

The Government does not maintain the number of patients identified as having a propensity to violence among the above new cases of the psychiatric service of HA. Nor does the Government keep the statistics on the number of new psychiatric patients in Hong Kong each year.

(3) and (4)

The psychiatric specialist service of HA adopts a multi-disciplinary approach. Medical teams comprising psychiatric doctors,

psychiatric nurses, clinical psychologists and occupational therapists provide patients with the appropriate treatment and follow-up care, including inpatient, specialist outpatient consultation, daytime rehabilitative training and community support service, depending on patients' medical conditions and clinical needs.

The table below sets out the number of psychiatric SOPCs under HA and the number of psychiatric doctors, psychiatric nurses, clinical psychologists and occupational therapists working in the psychiatric stream in HA in each of the past five years:

Year	Number of outpatient clinics	Psychiatric doctors ⁽⁴⁾	Psychiatric nurses ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁶⁾	Allied health professionals	
				Clinical psychologists	Occupational therapists
2012-2013 ⁽¹⁾	17	332	2 296	65	218
2013-2014 ⁽¹⁾	18 ⁽³⁾	335	2 375	71	227
2014-2015 ⁽¹⁾	18	333	2 442	77	236
2015-2016 ⁽¹⁾	18	344	2 472	82	245
2016-2017 ⁽²⁾	18	356	2 473	89	256

Notes:

- (1) As at 31 March of the reporting year.
- (2) As at 31 December 2016.
- (3) The psychiatric SOPC located in the North Lantau Hospital came into service on 30 September 2013.
- (4) Psychiatric doctors refer to all doctors working for the specialty of psychiatry except interns.
- (5) Psychiatric nurses include all nurses working in psychiatric hospitals (i.e. Kwai Chung Hospital, Castle Peak Hospital and Siu Lam Hospital), nurses working in psychiatric departments of other non-psychiatric hospitals, as well as all other nurses in psychiatric stream.
- (6) Including community psychiatric nurses.

Apart from the above health care professionals, medical social workers of the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") are also stationed in the psychiatric hospitals and SOPCs of HA to provide timely psychological and social counselling services as well as financial and housing assistance for patients with mental illness and ex-mentally ill persons, with a view to helping them cope with or solve their emotional, daily living and family problems arising from mental illnesses and facilitating their rehabilitation and re-integration

into society. There were 243 SWD psychiatric medical social workers in the past five years.

The table below sets out the expenditure on psychiatric drugs prescribed by HA in each of the past five years:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Expenditure on psychiatric drugs (\$ million)</i>
2012-2013	428
2013-2014	423
2014-2015	410
2015-2016	464
2016-2017 (provisional figure)	506

Besides, SWD has subvented 11 non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") to set up 24 Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness ("ICCMWs") across the territory. ICCMWs provide one-stop and district-based community mental health support services and social rehabilitation services for ex-mentally ill persons, persons with suspected mental health problems and their families and carers through professionals such as social workers and psychiatric nurses. Services provided include casework counselling services, outreaching services, and referral of needy cases to HA for clinical assessment and psychiatric treatment.

Under the Lump Sum Grant subvention system, service operators have the flexibility to deploy resources and arrange suitable manpower. The table below sets out the numbers of social workers and psychiatric nurses working in ICCMWs in each of the past five years according to the notional staffing establishment provided by SWD:

<i>Year</i>	<i>24 ICCMWs</i> <i>(According to the notional staffing establishment)</i>	
	<i>Number of Social Workers</i>	<i>Number of Psychiatric Nurses</i>
2012-2013	288	43
2013-2014	317	43
2014-2015	339	43
2015-2016	363	43
2016-2017	363	43

The Government does not maintain statistics on the quantity of psychiatric drugs prescribed and the expenditure so incurred, the number of outpatient clinics, the number of beds and the number of psychiatric specialist health care staff members in respect of non-profit making organizations and private medical institutions. Nor does the Government keep the statistics on the number of private medical institutions providing psychological counselling services and their staff numbers.

(5) and (6)

ICCMWs provide outreach support services for persons who have or are suspected to have mental health problems (including "hidden" patients with mental illness). In the past five years, ICCMWs made an average of about 62 000 outreach visits per year.

Currently, ICCMWs or social workers may refer their cases to the community psychiatric services in various clusters of HA for follow-up. The HA's multi-disciplinary community psychiatric teams will provide patients with the appropriate inpatient, outpatient consultation, daytime rehabilitative training and community support services, according to patients' conditions and needs. Professional groups also work closely with SWD to arrange joint visits on a need basis to offer coordinated and personalized community support to patients.

The table below sets out the number of psychiatric outreach attendances of HA in each of the past five years:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of psychiatric outreach attendances of HA⁽¹⁾</i>
2012-2013	238 800
2013-2014	260 100
2014-2015	280 100
2015-2016	282 700
2016-2017 (provisional figure)	290 000

Note:

(1) Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

As identifying and supporting "hidden" patients with mental illness is part of the ongoing duties of the organizations concerned, the manpower and expenditure involved for such duties cannot be identified separately.

- (7) The psychiatric specialist service of HA adopts a multi-disciplinary approach (involving psychiatric doctors, psychiatric nurses, clinical psychologists, medical social workers and occupational therapists), which provides patients with the appropriate treatment and follow-up care, including inpatient, specialist outpatient consultation, daytime rehabilitative training and community support service, depending on patients' conditions and clinical needs. As the psychiatric team also supports other relevant services (e.g. psychiatric consultation-liaison services in Accident and Emergency Department and the Mental Health Direct hotline, etc.), we do not have the statistics on the ratio of health care staff providing psychiatric services to patients with mental illness.
- (8) The Department of Health ("DH") has been promoting mental well-being by enhancing public awareness through education and publicity targeted at people in different age groups via a life-course and setting-based approach and through various channels, such as the Family Health Service, the Student Health Service, the Elderly Health Service, the Primary Care Office and the Central Health Education Unit.

To increase public engagement in promoting mental well-being and increase public knowledge and understanding of mental health, DH launched a three-year, territory-wide mental health promotion campaign titled "Joyful@HK" in January 2016. It seeks to promote mental health among people from different sectors and conduct health education on common mental health issues through a series of mass media advertisements, publicity activities and community programmes. The aim is to enable the members of the public to integrate the three key elements of the campaign, namely "Sharing", "Mind" and "Enjoyment", into their daily lives for enhancing their mental well-being and encouraging them to seek help from professionals when necessary. Enhancing public understanding on mental health issues is an effective way to help reduce stigmatization.

DH has earmarked a total of \$30 million for the "Joyful@HK" Campaign for the three financial years of 2015-2016, 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, and has deployed its existing manpower for the implementation of the campaign. DH has also commissioned a local university to conduct pre- and post-campaign surveys to monitor changes in the public's knowledge, attitude and behaviour related to mental well-being and common mental health problems, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign. Based on the evaluation outcome of the campaign, the Government will formulate the way forward for mental health promotion.

In addition, the NGOs operating ICCMWs are required to organize various types of public education programmes in the community to enhance public understanding on ex-mentally ill persons in a positive manner.

As some of the promotion efforts are the ongoing duties of the relevant Policy Bureaux/departments, the manpower and expenditure involved cannot be identified separately.

The Government will carry out timely review of the effectiveness of various mental health promotion programmes and formulate the way forward based on the review findings.

Improving the water quality of the Victoria Harbour

14. **DR HELENA WONG** (in Chinese): *President, regarding improvement to the water quality of the Victoria Harbour, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the number of complaints received by the authorities in the past three years concerning the stench emitted from the Victoria Harbour waters; the districts involved in such complaints; apart from the works to construct dry weather flow interceptors in Kowloon and Tsuen Wan and rehabilitate trunk sewers intended to be carried out, of the authorities' new measures to mitigate the impact of the stench on the residents; and*

- (2) *given that the authorities commenced a two-year consultancy study in early 2016 to ascertain the improvement measures required based on the specific causes of near shore pollution, of the details and progress of the study; when the authorities will publish the study report and whether they will conduct public consultation on the improvement measures?*

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (in Chinese): President,

- (1) In the past three years, the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") received 51 complaint cases from members of the public about the odour nuisance of the Victoria Harbour waters, involving the districts of Wan Chai (1 case), Yau Tsim Mong (29 cases), Kowloon City (7 cases) and Tsuen Wan (14 cases).

The Government has been taking actions and allocating resources to upgrade the sewage collection and treatment systems for improving the quality of coastal waters of the Victoria Harbour. With the phased implementation of the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme ("HATS"), the water quality of the Victoria Harbour has been significantly improved. With all the sewage in the Victoria Harbour catchment transported to the Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works after the commissioning of HATS Stage 2A in December 2015, the water quality of Victoria Harbour has shown further improvement.

In the densely-populated coastal areas that have been developed for many years, the odour nuisance was caused by discharged wastewater that was not collected by the public sewers network, and wastewater and pollutants entered the Victoria Harbour through the storm drainage system. These residual discharges originated from various pollution sources, including misconnections of foul water pipes from buildings and public sewers to the storm drainage systems as well as road side pollutants entering into the storm drainage system. Apart from the proposed projects to construct dry weather flow interceptors and rehabilitate trunk sewers in West Kowloon and Tsuen Wan, EPD has collaborated with other departments to implement the following measures to reduce near shore pollution:

- (a) EPD, the Buildings Department ("BD") and the Drainage Services Department ("DSD") jointly follow up and rectify the foul water pipe misconnection cases;
- (b) DSD carries out inspections, repair and clearing of sediments for the public sewers and storm drainage systems on a regular basis;
- (c) The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") and Highways Department provide routine rubbish clean-up services in public places and streets, as well as regular clearing of sediment in gully traps to reduce the amount of pollutants discharged into the storm drainage system and the subsequent near shore water quality and odour problems; and
- (d) The Marine Department cleans up floating refuse and provides free refuse collection service for vessels on a daily basis to prevent potential odour generated by the marine refuse.

Regarding the control of wastewater discharge, EPD prohibits the illegal discharge of sewage or pollutants under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (Cap. 358). BD regulates the misconnections of foul water pipes in buildings under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123). FEHD regulates the illegal discharge of wastewater to reduce pollutants from entering into the storm drainage system.

- (2) To further enhancing the quality of coastal waters of Victoria Harbour, EPD has commissioned a consultancy study in January 2016 to identify the specific causes of near shore pollution through evidence-based reviews and various analyses. The study will then identify targeted solutions through prevention at source and pollution control measures. The research team is now conducting a survey on near shore odour, water quality and source of pollution in relevant coastal districts. The survey is anticipated to complete by the end of 2017 with a view to finalize the preliminary research report by 2018. EPD will report the study findings to the Legislative Council and consult the relevant District Councils and stakeholders on the improvement measures at an appropriate juncture. During the course of the study, relevant department will, subject to the

availability of practical solution resource, seek to address those identified pollution problems as quickly as possible without having to wait until the completion of the study.

International school places

15. **MR IP KIN-YUEN** (in Chinese): *President, the Education Bureau ("EDB") indicated in 2014 that under its policy, international schools with no boarding facilities which had received government assistance in the form of allocation of sites or vacant school premises ("government-assisted international schools") were required to allocate at least 70% ("the minimum proportion") of their total school places to students holding (i) foreign passports (except the British National (Overseas) Passport) or (ii) visas for entry into Hong Kong for studies ("non-local students"). In the allocation of sites/vacant school premises, favourable consideration will be given to those proposals which plan to accept a higher proportion of non-local students (e.g. 80% or above). Nonetheless, in the 2016-2017 school year, the proportion of non-local students in 15 international schools is lower than 70% and the proportion is even lower than 50% in four of them. On the other hand, it has been reported that a number of organizations are planning to operate international schools in Hong Kong and some of these schools will charge high tuition fees. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the respective year in which each of the government-assisted international schools commenced operation, as well as the minimum proportion it is required to meet (and if the proportion is below 50%, of the reasons for that);*
- (2) *whether, under the relevant requirements, government-assisted international schools which fail to meet the minimum proportion will be penalized; if so, of the details, including the types of actions that EDB may take against them; whether such schools can continue to be named international schools;*
- (3) *how EDB ensures that the information on the number of their non-local students submitted by government-assisted international schools is accurate; and*

- (4) *of the criteria to be met by applications for operating international schools under the existing requirements; what mechanism and measures are put in place by EDB to ensure that newly operated international schools are financially sound and their quality reaches a reasonable level?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Chinese): President, the Government is committed to developing a vibrant international school sector through various measures, including allocation of vacant school premises ("VSP") and greenfield sites for developing international schools as appropriate, mainly to meet the demand for international school places from non-local families living in Hong Kong or coming to Hong Kong for work or investment. My response to the four parts of the question raised by Mr IP Kin-yuen is as follows:

- (1) to (3)

In the 2016-2017 school year, the ratio of non-local students of 12 international schools is subject to a related requirement, ranging from 50% to 85%, under the respective service agreements ("SAs") entered between the schools and the Government following the allocation of VSP or greenfield site in question for international school development under the School Allocation Exercise ("SAE"). Under the prevailing policy, school sponsoring bodies ("SSBs") allocated with school premises or sites by the Education Bureau for such purpose are required to allocate at least 70% of the school places to non-local students. In SAE conducted in 2014, favourable consideration was given to proposals accepting a higher proportion of non-local students. When SSBs submitted their proposals for SAE, they have acknowledged and agreed that the information provided (including the proposed minimum percentage of non-local students to be enrolled) would only be used for the relevant SAE. We are therefore unable to disclose the requirement regarding the minimum percentage of non-local students to be enrolled by individual international schools. In addition, when discussing with the English Schools Foundation ("ESF") the phasing-out arrangements of the recurrent government subvention for ESF schools in 2013, the Education Bureau has also taken the opportunity to remind ESF to continue to maintain their student mix of having no

less than 70% of their overall student population being non-local students. Information of the premises and years of establishment of the aforementioned 12 international schools and ESF schools are listed at the Annex.

In the 2016-2017 school year, non-local students accounted for 79.6% of the overall student population in the international school sector while local students accounted for 20.4%. Among the aforementioned international schools which are subject to the requirement on the enrolment of local students, all of them have complied with the relevant requirement except one school which has just commenced operation last year. We have reminded that school which has just commenced operation last year to observe and comply with the requirement in the admission exercise next year, and will continue to closely monitor the situation.

Regarding the collection of information on the number of non-local students in international schools, we understand that international schools normally require parents to provide a copy of the student's proof of identity (e.g. passport) to verify his/her nationality and eligibility to study in Hong Kong during admission. Apart from conducting annual student enrolment survey, the Education Bureau monitors the enrolment situation of international schools by requiring the relevant SSBs to provide data and supplementary information for vetting in accordance with the requirements in SA. In case of doubt, the Education Bureau will request for further clarification or relevant information. In case of breach of requirements in SA by SSBs and schools (including failure to comply with the minimum percentage of non-local students to be enrolled as stipulated in SA), the Education Bureau will take follow-up actions, and has the right to terminate or refuse to renew SA, or even re-enter VSP or greenfield sites concerned.

- (4) Under the Education Bureau's prevailing policy, SSBs allocated with VSP and/or greenfield sites for international school development through SAEs are required to enter an SA with the Government and agree to comply with a set of requirements in relation to the establishment of international schools. Apart from complying with the minimum percentage of non-local students to be enrolled,

relevant SSBs are required to submit annual audited accounts to the Government, as well as proof of the school's recognition from a renowned accreditation body, etc., to facilitate the Education Bureau's monitoring the financial situation and teaching quality of such schools.

SSBs who would like to establish an international school in Hong Kong without receiving allocation of VSP or greenfield sites through SAE should apply for registration as a private school first. After ensuring the school's compliance with the Education Bureau's requirements in relation to the establishment of international schools (including allocating at least 70% of school places to non-local students, possessing proven track record of school operation and full accreditation from an established accreditation body, formulating a sustainable financial plan, etc.), an application could be made to the Education Bureau for registering the school as an international school. A school must be registered as an international school before it may be named as an international school. The Education Bureau will carefully assess the application materials submitted by SSB, and will only consider approving the application after the Education Bureau is satisfied that the school's operation and performance have fulfilled the requirements in relation to international schools. Detailed requirements regarding applications for establishment of an international school in Hong Kong are uploaded to the Education Bureau's Thematic Website of International Schools for public access <https://edb.hkedcity.net/internationalschools/submit_an_application.php?lang=en>.

At the same time, to ensure education quality, international schools need to comply with the requirements under the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) and the Education Regulations (Cap. 279A). For example, the school premises must comply with the relevant buildings and fire safety requirements, teachers must obtain the prescribed qualifications and register with the Education Bureau, tuition fees must be approved by the Education Bureau, etc.

Annex

I. International schools with vacant school premises or greenfield sites allocated under SAE with percentage of non-local students to be enrolled subject to a requirement under SA

<i>Name of International School</i>	<i>Location of Premises</i>	<i>Nature</i>	<i>Year of establishment</i>
German Swiss International School (English)	162 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong	Vacant school premises	2010
German Swiss International School (German)			
French International School (English)	1 Cheung Man Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong	Vacant school premises	2011
French International School (French)			
Harrow International School Hong Kong	38 Tsing Ying Road, Tuen Mun, New Territories	Greenfield site	2012
Kellett School	7 Lam Hing Street, Kowloon Bay, Kowloon	Greenfield site	2013
Hong Kong Academy	33 Wai Man Road, Sai Kung, New Territories	Greenfield site	2013
The International Montessori School—an IMEF School	Phase III, Ma Hang Estate, Stanley, Hong Kong	Vacant school premises	2014
Carmel School	460 Shau Kei Wan Road, Hong Kong	Vacant school premises	2014
Nord Anglia International School, Hong Kong	11 On Tin Street, Lam Tin, Kowloon	Vacant school premises	2014
The Harbour School	Ap Lei Chau Estate Phase I, Ap Lei Chau, Hong Kong	Vacant school premises	2016
American School Hong Kong	6 Ma Chung Road, Tai Po, New Territories	Vacant school premises	2016

II. ESF Schools

<i>Name of International School</i>	<i>Location of Premises</i>	<i>Year of establishment</i>
Kowloon Junior School	20 Perth Street, Homantin, Kowloon	1902
King George V School	2 Tin Kwong Road, Homantin, Kowloon	1902
Peak School	20 Plunkett's Road, The Peak, Hong Kong	1911
Quarry Bay School	6 Hau Yuen Path, Braemar Hill, North Point, Hong Kong	1926
Glenealy School	7 Hornsey Road, Mid-Levels, Hong Kong	1959
Kennedy School	19 Sha Wan Drive, Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong	1961
Beacon Hill School	23 Ede Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon	1967
Island School	20 Borrett Road, Mid-Levels, Hong Kong	1967
South Island School	50 Nam Fung Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong	1977
Bradbury School	43C Stubbs Road, Happy Valley, Hong Kong	1980
Shatin College	3 Lai Wo Lane, Shatin, New Territories	1982
Shatin Junior School	3A Lai Wo Lane, Shatin, New Territories	1988
West Island School	250 Victoria Road, Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong	1991
Clearwater Bay School	Lot 235, DD229, Clearwater Bay Road, Sai Kung, New Territories	1992

Relaying programmes of the China Central Television

16. **MR LUK CHUNG-HUNG** (in Chinese): *President, the digital terrestrial television channel RTHK TV 33 ("TV 33") and the analogue television channel RTHK 33A ("TV 33A") of Radio Television Hong Kong ("RTHK") currently relay the English-language programmes of the China Global Television Network*

Documentary Channel ("Documentary Channel") of the China Central Television ("CCTV") free of charge throughout the broadcasting hours. Some members of the public have suggested that RTHK relay the more diversified programmes of CCTV Comprehensive Channel, so as to provide them with more choices of television programmes. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the factors considered by RTHK in deciding that TV 33 and TV 33A should relay, throughout the broadcasting hours, the programmes of the Documentary Channel but not those of other CCTV channels; and*
- (2) whether RTHK would consider the aforesaid suggestion so as to allow members of the public to watch the programmes of CCTV Comprehensive Channel free of charge through its digital terrestrial television channels and analogue television channels; if so, of the details, including the preparatory work which needs to be undertaken; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (in Chinese): President, my reply to the two-part question is as follows:

- (1) Radio Television Hong Kong ("RTHK") launched its digital television ("digital TV") service in January 2014 and relays China Global Television Network Documentary Channel ("CGTN Documentary") of the China Central Television ("CCTV") on its digital TV channel RTHK TV 33. Such a programming arrangement was made after discussion with CCTV. Starting from 2 April 2016, RTHK also simulcasts the programmes on its analogue television channel RTHK TV 33A. CGTN Documentary is a television channel featuring mainly documentaries, providing its audience with diversified art and culture programme choices by screening round-the-clock documentaries of different genres (including humanities and geography, life in China, travel and exploration, history, etc.). Providing for the relay of national broadcasting is in line with the purposes of RTHK as the public service broadcaster as stipulated in the Charter of RTHK, as well as the objectives in relation to the programming of television services.

- (2) As mentioned above, RTHK has to discuss the specific arrangements with the relevant television station before relaying any Mainland television channel on RTHK TV 33 and RTHK TV 33A. The channel selected should also be in line with the functions and positioning of RTHK as the public service broadcaster as stipulated in the Charter of RTHK.

Visa requirements for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region passport holders entering "Belt and Road" countries

17. **MR JIMMY NG** (in Chinese): *President, at present, among the 66 countries along the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (commonly known as "Belt and Road") ("Belt and Road countries"), 42 have granted visa-free access to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("SAR") passport holders, or allowed them to apply for entry visas upon arrival (commonly known as "visa-on-arrival"). Some members from the industrial and commercial sectors planning to visit the Belt and Road countries for investment have relayed to me that they cannot obtain accurate information on the entry visa arrangements in respect of these countries. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *given that the national official website for the Belt and Road initiatives shows the relevant information of all of the 66 Belt and Road countries, but the webpage of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council ("HKTDC") on the Belt and Road countries does not provide information on four of such countries, namely The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand and The Republic of South Africa, whether the authorities will ask HKTDC to make rectification, update the relevant information from time to time and indicate the sources of such information; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (2) *of the types of entry visa arrangements, namely (i) visa-free access, (ii) visa-on-arrival, (iii) online application for electronic visas required and (iv) application for paper visas required, granted by the Belt and Road countries to SAR passport holders and the relevant details, including permitted duration of stay, eligibility*

criteria for application (if applicable) and points to note (set out such information in the table below according to the continents where these countries are situated); and

<i>Continent</i>	<i>Name of country</i>	<i>Type of entry visa arrangement</i>	<i>Permitted duration of stay</i>	<i>Eligibility criteria for application/ Points to note</i>
<i>Asia</i>	<i>The Republic of Tajikistan</i>			
	<i>...</i>			
<i>Africa</i>	<i>The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia</i>			
	<i>...</i>			
<i>Europe</i>	<i>The Republic of Belarus</i>			
	<i>...</i>			
<i>Oceania</i>	<i>New Zealand</i>			
	<i>...</i>			

- (3) *among the Belt and Road countries which have not yet granted visa-free access to SAR passport holders, of those with which the Government has plans to conduct negotiation on this matter in the coming two years, and the expected outcome of such negotiations (set out in a table); if it has no such plans, of the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY (in Chinese): President, in consultation with the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, my consolidated reply to Mr NG's question is as follows:

According to the Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road jointly issued by the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce of the Central People's Government, the Belt and Road covers, but is not limited to, the area of the ancient Silk Road. It is open to engagement with all countries, as well as international and regional organizations.

As more countries have shown interests in taking part in the Belt and Road Initiative, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council ("TDC") will update its Belt and Road Portal from time to time with enriched relevant information. TDC has added the information about Korea, New Zealand and South Africa in

the country profile on the website, and will include information about Ethiopia when available. TDC will continue to provide information of relevant countries with greatest potential on the website as needed.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("HKSAR") has all along been lobbying for visa-free access for HKSAR passport holders with a view to enhancing travel convenience for Hong Kong residents. Apart from raising the issue with relevant Embassies in our country and local Consulates from time to time, Economic and Trade Offices of the HKSAR Government have called on government officials and parliamentary members of the countries concerned to solicit their support for granting visa-free access to HKSAR passport holders. When calling on foreign officials and attending relevant international conferences and seminars, officials of the HKSAR Government also take the opportunity to lobby for visa-free access to more countries for HKSAR passport holders. Meanwhile, the HKSAR Government attaches great importance to promoting the HKSAR passport. Whenever an opportunity arises, we would invite senior foreign officials and diplomatic personnel visiting Hong Kong to observe the production of HKSAR passports on the ground, and demonstrate to them the integrity of the production system and the passport's state-of-the-art anti-forgery features.

With the ongoing efforts of the HKSAR Government over the years, the total number of countries and territories which have granted visa-free access or visa-on-arrival to HKSAR passport holders has increased from around 40 in the early days following the handover to 158 at present, including countries along the Belt and Road.

Currently, among the 68 Belt and Road countries shown on the Belt and Road Portal <www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn> of the State Information Center, 46 have granted visa-free access or visa-on-arrival to HKSAR passport holders. For the 22 that have not, the HKSAR Government will, in the light of the actual circumstances, continue to consider negotiating with them on mutual visa exemption arrangements and strive to persuade more countries to grant visa-free access to HKSAR passport holders, including those that have yet to grant reciprocal facilitation.

The HKSAR Government reviews its visa policy from time to time. Factors to be considered include immigration control and security, bilateral economic, social and cultural ties between Hong Kong and the countries

concerned, track records of its nationals visiting Hong Kong and the circumstances of the individual country. In negotiating mutual visa exemption arrangements with the Belt and Road countries, the HKSAR Government will make holistic consideration with a view to providing more travel convenience to HKSAR passport holders and genuine visitors to Hong Kong on the one hand, and maintaining effective immigration control on the other.

Details of visa-free or visa arrangements of the 68 Belt and Road countries are at Annex.

Annex

Visa requirements for HKSAR
passport holders visiting the 68 Belt and Road countries

	<i>Continent</i>	<i>Name of country</i>	<i>Type of visa arrangement⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>Permitted duration of stay</i>	<i>Eligibility criteria for application/ Points to note</i>
1	Asia	Brunei Darussalam (文萊)	(i)	14 days	-
2		Indonesia (印度尼西亞)	(i)	30 days	-
3		Israel (以色列)	(i)	3 months	-
4		Jordan (約旦)	(i)	14 days	-
5		Kazakhstan (哈薩克斯坦)	(i)	14 days	-
6		Korea (Republic of) (大韓民國)	(i)	90 days	-
7		Malaysia (馬來西亞)	(i)	1 month	-
8		Maldives (馬爾代夫)	(i)	Period of visa-free stay to be determined by the competent authority upon arrival	-
9		Mongolia (蒙古)	(i)	14 days	-
10		Philippines (菲律賓)	(i)	14 days	-
11		Singapore (新加坡)	(i)	30 days	-
12		Thailand (泰國)	(i)	30 days	-
13		Turkey (土耳其)	(i)	3 months	-
14		Yemen (Republic of) (也門(共和國))	(i)	30 days	-

	<i>Continent</i>	<i>Name of country</i>	<i>Type of visa arrangement⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>Permitted duration of stay</i>	<i>Eligibility criteria for application/ Points to note</i>
15		Bahrain (巴林)	(ii)	14 days	(2)
16		East Timor (東帝汶)	(ii)	14 days	(2)
17		Kuwait (科威特)	(ii)	3 months	(2)
18		Laos (老撾)	(ii)	30 days	(2)
19		Lebanon (黎巴嫩)	(ii)	3 months	(2)
20		Nepal (尼泊爾)	(ii)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(2)
21		Oman (阿曼)	(ii)	14 days	(2)
22		Qatar (卡塔爾)	(ii)	1 month	(2)
23		United Arab Emirates (阿拉伯聯合酋長國)	(ii)	30 days	(2)
24		Armenia (亞美尼亞)	(iii)	120 days at most	(3)
25		Cambodia (柬埔寨)	(iii)	30 days at least	(3)
26		India (印度)	(iii)	90 days at most	(3)
27		Iran (伊朗)	(iii)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(3)
28		Myanmar (緬甸)	(iii)	28 days	(3)
29		Sri Lanka (斯里蘭卡)	(iii)	30 days	(3)
30		Tajikistan (塔吉克斯坦)	(iii)	45 days	(3)
31		Afghanistan (阿富汗)	(iv)	30 days	(4)
32		Azerbaijan (阿塞拜疆)	(iv)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(4)
33		Bangladesh (孟加拉)	(iv)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(4)
34		Bhutan (不丹)	(iv)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(4)
35		Georgia (格魯吉亞)	(iv)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(4)
36		Iraq (伊拉克)	(iv)	10 days	(4)
37		Kyrgyzstan (吉爾吉斯斯坦)	(iv)	1 month	(4)
38		Pakistan (巴基斯坦)	(iv)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(4)
39		Palestine (巴勒斯坦)	(iv)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(4)
40		Saudi Arabia (沙特阿拉伯)	(iv)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(4)
41		Syria (敘利亞)	(iv)	15 days	(4)
42		Turkmenistan (土庫曼斯坦)	(iv)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(4)

	<i>Continent</i>	<i>Name of country</i>	<i>Type of visa arrangement⁽¹⁾</i>	<i>Permitted duration of stay</i>	<i>Eligibility criteria for application/ Points to note</i>
43		Uzbekistan (烏茲別克斯坦)	(iv)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(4)
44		Vietnam (越南)	(iv)	To be determined by the issuing authority	(4)
45	Africa	Egypt (埃及)	(i)	90 days	-
46		South Africa (南非)	(i)	30 days	-
47		Ethiopia (埃塞俄比亞)	(ii)	3 months	(2)
48	Europe	Albania (阿爾巴尼亞)	(i)	14 days	-
49		Bosnia and Herzegovina (波斯尼亞和黑塞哥維那)	(i)	90 days	-
50		Bulgaria (保加利亞)	(i)	90 days	-
51		Croatia (克羅地亞)	(i)	90 days	-
52		Czech Republic (捷克)	(i)	90 days	(5)
53		Estonia (愛沙尼亞)	(i)	90 days	(5)
54		Hungary (匈牙利)	(i)	90 days	(5)
55		Latvia (拉脫維亞)	(i)	90 days	(5)
56		Lithuania (立陶宛)	(i)	90 days	(5)
57		Macedonia (馬其頓)	(i)	90 days	-
58		Moldova (Republic of) (摩爾多瓦)	(i)	90 days	-
59		Montenegro (Republic of) (黑山(共和國))	(i)	90 days	-
60		Poland (波蘭)	(i)	90 days	(5)
61		Romania (羅馬尼亞)	(i)	90 days	-
62		Russian Federation (俄羅斯聯邦)	(i)	14 days	-
63		Serbia (Republic of) (塞爾維亞(共和國))	(i)	14 days	-
64		Slovak Republic (斯洛伐克共和國)	(i)	90 days	(5)
65		Slovenia (斯洛文尼亞)	(i)	90 days	(5)
66		Ukraine (烏克蘭)	(i)	14 days	-
67		Belarus (白俄羅斯)	(iv)	90 days	(4) and (6)
68	Oceania	New Zealand (新西蘭)	(i)	3 months	-

Notes:

(1) (i): Visa-free access

(ii): Visa-on-arrival (Visa to be granted upon arrival)

- (iii): Online application for electronic visas (Online application for visa is required to be made through official website)
 - (iv): Formal visa (Application for visa is required to be made to the relevant Embassy or Consulate General in writing)
- (2) Visa will be granted upon arrival at the local airport or sea ports and land border checkpoints. HKSAR passport holders are advised to consult the relevant Embassy or Consulate General for details before travelling.
 - (3) Please refer to the official website of the country concerned on the detailed requirements for making online applications.
 - (4) HKSAR passport holders may check with the relevant local Consulate General or officially recognized representative or the nearest Embassy or consular post of the country concerned for relevant application procedures and information.
 - (5) HKSAR passport holders may stay for up to 90 days in any 180-day period in the Schengen area. For information on the stay period in the Schengen area, please visit the website of the European Commission.
 - (6) The governments of the HKSAR and Belarus have reached consensus on mutual visa exemption, whereby holders of valid HKSAR passport and valid national passport of Belarus may enjoy mutual visa-free access for a stay of up to 14 days. The relevant measures will be implemented as soon as possible.

Management of temporary open spaces

18. **MR HUI CHI-FUNG** (in Chinese): *President, some members of the public have complained to me that the facilities of some temporary open spaces are poor and those open spaces are even overgrown with weeds, the conditions of which are in stark contrast to those of official open spaces. Regarding the management of temporary open spaces, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the respective locations and areas of temporary open spaces across the territory at present, as well as the respective numbers of years lapsed since they were put to such use, and set out such information by District Council district;*
- (2) *as I have learnt that some sites have been used as temporary open spaces for more than 10 years, or even as long as 40 years, whether the authorities have assessed if their failure for a long period of time to designate such sites as official open spaces has (i) violated the relevant planning principles, and (ii) prejudiced the right of nearby residents to enjoy better facilities;*
- (3) *how the policies on and the measures for managing temporary open spaces by the authorities compare with those regarding the management of official open spaces; whether they will consider*

improving the facilities of various temporary open spaces for use by the public; and

- (4) *whether it has considered selecting some temporary open spaces for designation as official open spaces; if so, of the details and selection criteria?*

SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT (in Chinese): President, upon consolidating the information provided by the Home Affairs Bureau, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD"), the Lands Department ("LandsD") and the Planning Department ("PlanD"), the reply to the four-part question is as follows:

- (1) According to information of LCSD, there are a total of 237 facilities provided by LCSD the land of which has been allocated to it by way of temporary land allocation. Relevant information of these venues is at Annex 1.

Apart from the above sites, there are other sites allocated to government departments by way of temporary land allocation for purposes related to temporary open space (e.g. parks, pavilion, playground, ball courts). According to the records of LandsD, the total number of temporary land allocations is 748 at present (including temporary land allocations allocated to LCSD as mentioned above) and the total area is about 76 hectares. LandsD does not have readily available information on the numbers of years for which these allocations have been put to such use. The information related to these temporary land allocations by District Council district is set out at Annex 2.

- (2) to (4)

Generally speaking, PlanD will take into account such factors as the planned population of a district, the circumstances of open space provision, the requirements of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, and the advice or requirements of relevant bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") (e.g. Home Affairs Bureau and LCSD), etc. to plan and reserve suitable land for open space in a

district to meet the demand of the public. Apart from planning and reserving land, LandsD will, where practicable and appropriate, allocate individual sites pending leasing or allocation for long-term planning use and other government land with long-term uses not yet ready for implementation or earmarked as reserve for long-term use, to individual B/Ds for temporary uses, including allocating to relevant departments for providing temporary open space and leisure facilities, in order to optimize the utilization of land resources and allow the public to have early enjoyment of more open space. As open space is a permitted use in most land use zonings falling within the boundaries of Outline Zoning Plans ("OZPs"), the provision of temporary open space and recreation facilities does not breach the planning principles of the relevant OZPs.

Relevant B/Ds will implement relevant open space projects at an appropriate time according to considerations such as its priority on works programmes and utilization of resources. As mentioned above, provided that the planned long-term use of a site (including other sites with land use zonings other than "Open Space") is not affected, relevant B/Ds may also consider providing temporary open space or leisure facilities on individual sites to optimize the use of land resources as well as to temporarily alleviate the local demand for open space provision. When providing these leisure facilities, the Government would consider a range of factors such as the area and duration of the land available for development, the surrounding environment, the needs of the residents in the concerned district as well as the facilities in nearby venues, etc., and consult the District Councils on the proposed design and facilities to be provided. As regards the temporary leisure facilities under LCSD, they are mainly small gardens, sitting out areas and playgrounds. In respect of the management arrangements, they are managed in a similar way as other open space managed by the department.

To meet the development needs of the community and ensure the optimal use of land resources, the Government carries out land use reviews from time to time, including rezoning suitable government land to other uses that meet the more pressing needs of the community, such as land for housing, economic uses, government, institution or community facilities and open space uses. In general,

the Government will consult relevant district councils and stakeholders on the rezoning proposals. The rezoning proposals have to go through the statutory processes for town planning, including display of the rezoning proposal for public inspection and receiving representations and comments from the public in accordance with relevant procedures.

Annex 1

Leisure Facilities on Land under Temporary Land Allocation
(As at March 2017)

<i>District</i>	<i>Name of Venue</i>
Central and Western	1 West End Park
	2 Bonham Road Rest Garden
	3 Clarence Terrace Children's Playground
	4 Smithfield Road Children's Playground
	5 Kennedy Town Bus Terminus Sitting-out Area
	6 Brewin Path Temporary Playground
	7 Conduit Road Service Reservoir Playground
	8 Chung Wo Lane Sitting-out Area
	9 Kennedy Town Playground
	10 Kennedy Town Temporary Recreation Ground
	11 Chater Road Sitting-out Area
	12 Sitting-out Area under Flyover in Hill Road
	13 Sitting-out Area under Flyover in Pok Fu Lam Road
	14 Magazine Gap Service Reservoir Playground
	15 Caine Road Sitting-out Area
	16 Mount Davis Temporary Sitting-out Area
	17 Forbes Street Temporary Playground
	18 Cadogan Street Temporary Garden
	19 Fung Mat Road Sitting-out Area
	20 Robinson Road/Seymour Road Sitting-out Area
	21 Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park Community Garden
	22 Central and Western District Promenade—Sheung Wan Section (Extended Part)
	23 Mount Davis Service Reservoir Temporary Garden

<i>District</i>	<i>Name of Venue</i>	
Eastern	24 King's Road Playground	
	25 Tai Tam Road/Chai Wan Road Amenity Plot	
	26 Braemar Hill Sitting-out Area	
	27 Lok Man Road Pet Garden	
	28 Hong Cheung Street Sitting-out Area	
	29 Hong Yue Street Sitting-out Area	
	30 Nam On Street/Sun Shing Street Sitting-out Area	
	31 Chai Wan Road Temporary Rest Garden	
	32 Tai Man Street Playground	
	33 Healthy Village Playground	
	34 Yee Shing Lane Temporary Sitting-out Area	
	35 Cape Collinson Road Sitting-out Area	
	36 Shaukeiwan Main Road East Government Land	
	37 Hoi Tai Street Amenity Plot	
	38 Wai Tsui Crescent Community Garden	
	39 Vacant Government Land at Wing Ping Road, Chai Wan	
	40 Siu Sai Wan Road Sitting-out Area	
	41 Shau Kei Wan Main Street East Sitting-out Area	
	42 Yiu Hing Road Sitting-out Area	
	43 Mount Parker Road Sitting-out Area	
	44 Ngoi Man Street Sitting-out Area	
	45 Braemar Hill Road Amenity Plot	
	46 Quarry Bay Wilson Trail Sitting-out Area	
	47 Tin Hau Temple Road Sitting-out Area	
	48 Quarry Bay Promenade (Sitting-out Area and Pet Garden)	
	Southern	49 South Bay Road Rest Garden
		50 Stanley Link Road Sitting-out Area
		51 Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road Playground
52 Stanley Village Road Garden		
53 Aberdeen Praya Road Sitting-out Area		
54 Ap Lei Chau Main Street Temporary Sitting-out Area		
55 Old Main Street Rest Garden		
56 Pok Fu Lam Village Sitting-out Area No. 1		
57 Shek O Village Children's Playground		
58 Sitting-out Area at Aberdeen Main Road/Ap Lei Chau Bridge Flyover		
59 Victoria Road/Sandy Bay Road Sitting-out Area		

<i>District</i>	<i>Name of Venue</i>
	60 Tai Hau Wan Village Sitting-out Area
	61 Yip Kan Street Sitting-out Area
	62 Aberdeen Reservoir Road Sitting-out Area
	63 Wong Ma Kok Road Temporary Sitting-out Area
	64 Upper Kai Lun Wan Temporary Sitting-out Area
	65 Nam Fung Road Rest Garden
	66 Ap Lei Chau Waterfront Promenade
	67 Victoria Road Sitting-out Area
	68 Kwun Hoi Path Sitting-out Area
	69 Pok Fu Lam Village Sitting-out Area No. 2
	70 Southern District San Wai Village Sitting-out Area
71 Bisney Road Children's Playground	
Wan Chai	72 Happy Valley Recreation Ground
	73 Ventris Road Garden
	74 Wan Chai Gap Road Playground
	75 Tunnel Approach Rest Garden
	76 Coombe Road Children's Playground
	77 Wong Nai Chung Road Sitting-out Area
	78 Queen's Road East/Swatow Street Sitting-out Area
	79 Bowen Road Temporary Playground
	80 Lau Sin Street Temporary Sitting-out Area
	81 Wong Nai Chung Road Rest Garden
	82 Eastern Hospital Road Temporary Rest Garden
	83 Bowen Road Temporary Sitting-out Area
	84 Moreton Terrace Temporary Playground
	85 Wan Chai Temporary Promenade
	86 Tai Wong Street East Sitting-out Area
	87 Lun Fat Street Rest Garden
	88 Dragon Road Sitting-out Area
Kowloon City	89 Concourse Amenity Plot at Kowloon City Ferry
	90 Wuhu Street Temporary Playground
	91 Pui Ching Road Rest Garden
	92 East Kowloon Way Flyover Rest Garden
	93 Prince Edward Road West Flyover Amenity Plot
	94 King Wan Street Playground
	95 Hung Ling Street Sitting Out Area
	96 Wa Shun Street Sitting Out Area

<i>District</i>	<i>Name of Venue</i>
Kwun Tong	97 Hong Ning Road Rest Garden
	98 Hong Ning Road Garden No. 1
	99 Hong Ning Road Garden No. 2
	100 Kwun Tong Road/Hip Wo Street Rest Garden
	101 Fan Wa Street Sitting-out Area
	102 Kwun Tong Road/Ting On Street Amenity Plot
	103 Fan Wa Street Temporary Sitting-out Area
	104 Clear Water Bay Road Temporary Sitting-out Area
	105 Wai Lok Street Temporary Soccer Pitch
Wong Tai Sin	106 San Po Kong Sitting-out Area
	107 Lok Sin Road/Choi Hung Road Sitting-out Area
	108 Fung Mo Interchange Amenity Plot
	109 Lung Cheung Road North/Po Kong Village Road Sitting-out Area
	110 Ngau Chi Wan Street Temporary Sitting-out Area
	111 Planting area in Chuk Yuen United Village along Lung Cheung Road
	112 Flower Bed at Chuk Yuen United Village
	113 Hammer Hill Park (Nursery)
	114 Lung Cheung Road Bauhinia Garden
	115 Junction Road/Fu Keung Street Sitting-out Area
	116 Po Kong Village Road/Shung Wah Street Sitting-out Area
	117 Po Leung Lane Sitting-out Area
	118 Heng Lam Street Sitting-out Area
Yau Tsim Mong	119 Arthur Street Temporary Playground
	120 Wylie Road Temporary Sitting-out Area
Islands	121 Cheung Sha Nursery
	122 Kwun Yam Wan Road Seaview Shelter, Cheung Chau
	123 Sok Kwu Wan Sitting-out Area
	124 Tai Ping San Chuen Rainshelter, North Lamma
	125 Wai Tsai Street Sitting-out Area, Peng Chau
	126 Yung Shue Wan/Sok Kwu Wan Rainshelter
	127 Tai Wan Sitting-out Area, Po Toi
	128 Yung Shue Wan Sitting-out Area
	129 Sha Lo Wan Soccer Pitch
	130 Shek Mun Kap Sitting-out Area, Tung Chung
	131 Yung Shue Wan Tin Hau Temple Sitting-out Area
	132 San Tau Garden, Tai O
	133 Kam Fa Temple Garden, Peng Chau

<i>District</i>	<i>Name of Venue</i>
	134 Tung Chung Community Garden
	135 Cheung Shek Road Multi-purpose Lawn, Cheung Chau
	136 Tung Chung Road Soccer Pitch
	137 Tai San Back Street Sitting-out Area
	138 Sai Tai Road Fitness Corner
	139 Chung Wai Street Children's Playground
Kwai Tsing	140 Chung Mei Road Temporary Playground
Tuen Mun	141 Kei Lun Wai Children's Playground
	142 Tai Lam Chung Tsuen Children's Playground
	143 Fuk Hang Playground
	144 Tsing Shan Pavilion
	145 Tsing Bik Sitting-out Area
	146 Nai Wai Children's Playground
	147 Nai Wai Garden
	148 San Hui Tsuen Rest Garden
	149 307LS District Open Space in Area 27, Sam Shing
Tsuen Wan	150 Sham Tseng Temporary Playground
Yuen Long	151 Kat Hing Wai Playground
	152 Wang Toi Shan Playground
	153 Lau Fau Shan Playground
	154 Kam Tin Shi Children's Playground
	155 Kam Sheung Road Sitting-out Area
	156 Hung Uk Tsuen Playground
	157 Wing Hing Wai Sitting-out Area
	158 Sheung Tsuen Sitting-out Area
	159 Chuk Hang Playground
	160 Yuen Kong Tsuen Playground
	161 Wah Shing Tsuen Children's Playground
	162 Tung Tau Wai Children's Playground
	163 Mong Tseng Wai Basketball Court
	164 Hang Mei Tsuen Sitting-out Area
	165 Tung Chan Wai Children's Playground
	166 Sheung Pai Nai Playground
	167 Ho Pui Tsuen Playground
	168 Hang Hau Tsuen Sitting-out Area
	169 Fui Sha Wai Playground
	170 Cheung Po Tsuen Playground
	171 Kat Hing Wai Garden
	172 Ma On Kong Garden

<i>District</i>	<i>Name of Venue</i>
	173 Shek Po Tsuen Playground
	174 Tin Sau Road Community Garden
	175 Yeung Uk San Tsuen Sitting-out Area
	176 Yeung Uk Tsuen Sitting-out Area
	177 Sha Chau Lei Sitting-out Area
	178 Ha Chuk Yuen Sitting-out Area
	179 Hung Tai Road Sitting-out Area
	180 Tin Tsz Garden
	181 Ko Po Playground
	182 Ha Mei Tsuen Sitting-out Area
	183 Tin Yip Road Artificial Sand Court
North	184 Fan Ling Wai Playground
	185 Kwan Tei Children's Playground
	186 Kwan Tei Sitting-out Area
	187 Luk Keng Village Playground
	188 San Uk Leng Playground
	189 Shek Wu Hui Sitting-out Area
	190 Ma Wat Wai Children's Playground
	191 San Uk Ling Basketball Court
	192 Man Uk Bin Children's Playground
	193 Tsung Pak Long Children's Playground
	194 Loi Tung Sitting-out Area
	195 Luk Keng Sitting-out Area
	196 San Pok Pavilion
	197 Wing Ling Basketball Court
	198 Lei Uk Tsuen Children's Playground
	199 Ma Tseuk Leng Children's Playground
	200 Ping Che Mini Soccer Pitch
	201 Sha Ling Playground
	202 Fung Wong Wu Playground
	203 Hung Leng Children's Playground
	204 Kan Tau Wai Playground
	205 Ping Che Children's Playground
	206 Chow Tin Tsuen Children's Playground
	207 Sheung Wo Hang Children's Playground
	208 Tai Tong Wu Sitting-out Area
	209 Tsung Yuen Ha Playground
	210 Fanling Temporary Tennis Court
	211 Nga Yiu Village Children's Playground

<i>District</i>	<i>Name of Venue</i>
	212 Kat O Fisherman Village Sitting-out Area
	213 Ping Che New Village Sitting-out Area
	214 Po Kak Tsai Road Sitting-out Area
	215 Sheung Shan Kai Wat Sitting-out Area
	216 Sheung Shui Wa Shan Sitting-out Area
	217 Sheung Wo Hang Sitting-out Area
	218 Pak Wo Road Basketball Court
Sai Kung	219 Silvercape Road Sitting-Out Area
	220 Tong Ming Street Sitting-Out Area
	221 Yuk Nga Lane Community Garden
Sha Tin	222 Sha Tin Wai Playground (7-a-side Soccer Pitches)
	223 Wu Kai Sha Children's Playground
	224 Tai Shui Hang Shelter No. 1, 2, 3 and 4
	225 Fa Sum Hang Pavilion
	226 Sheung Wo Che Garden
	227 Tai Po Road 10 M.S. Lookout No. 1
	228 Tai Po Road 10 M.S. Lookout No. 2
	229 Rock Garden
	230 On Muk Street Garden
	231 Mei Lam Sitting-Out-Area
	232 Mei Tin Road Sitting-Out-Area
Tai Po	233 Tai Po Kau San Wai Playground
	234 Chung Uk Tsuen Playground
	235 Fung Yuen Playground
	236 Tong Min Tsuen Playground
	237 Fong Ma Po Children's Playground

Annex 2

Information on temporary land allocations allocated by
Lands Department to government departments for purposes related to
temporary open space at present

<i>District Council</i>	<i>Number of temporary land allocation</i>	<i>Approximate area (hectare)</i>
Central and Western	63	8
Eastern	86	28
Southern	63	3

<i>District Council</i>	<i>Number of temporary land allocation</i>	<i>Approximate area (hectare)</i>
Wan Chai	41	2
Kowloon City	24	4
Kwun Tong	41	4
Sham Shui Po	10	4
Yau Tsim Mong	13	1
Wong Tai Sin	21	1
Islands	57	3
Kwai Tsing	14	1
North	111	3
Sai Kung	25	2
Sha Tin	14	1
Tai Po	41	2
Tsuen Wan	15	1
Tuen Mun	20	3
Yuen Long	89	5
Total	748	76

District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development

19. **MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG** (in Chinese): *President, since 2005, the Social Welfare Department has been provided with an annual recurrent provision for implementing the District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development ("the Scheme") through various District Social Welfare Offices to address the developmental needs of disadvantaged children and youths aged 24 or below in the districts. Some of the funding of the Scheme is used to implement district projects and cover related programme expenses, whilst the remaining is distributed to individual deprived children and youths in the form of direct cash assistance according to their developmental needs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the estimates of expenditure on district projects to be implemented by non-governmental organizations under the Scheme for the 2017-2018 financial year, as well as the names of the relevant organizations and the respective amounts of funding approved, broken down by district; and*

- (2) *whether it has plans to gradually cease implementing the Scheme; if so, of the timetable and the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Chinese): President, my consolidated reply to the question raised by Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung is as follows:

The Social Welfare Department ("SWD") has since 2005-2006 implemented the District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development ("the Scheme") through the District Social Welfare Offices to address the developmental needs of disadvantaged children and youth aged 24 or below in the districts. In view of the redeployment of resources, SWD has since 2016-2017 ceased to provide funding to non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") to implement district projects under the Scheme. The Scheme currently focuses on providing cash assistance to individual deprived children and youth to meet their developmental needs.

Meanwhile, SWD has since 2015 provided \$200 million matching funds ("the dedicated portion") through the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged to encourage the business sector to work with NGOs and schools to implement more after-school learning and support programmes to facilitate the whole-person development of primary and secondary school students mainly from grass-roots families. These programmes are similar in nature to the district projects under the Scheme as referred to above. SWD launched the first two rounds of application for the dedicated portion in January and December 2015 respectively. Altogether 149 projects have been approved so far, involving matching grants totalling \$117 million and benefiting over 60 000 primary and secondary school students. With the business donations and matching grants, the total funding for these projects amounts to more than \$230 million. The third round of application for the dedicated portion closed at the end of March 2017, and SWD is examining around 50 applications received.

SWD will continue to examine the effectiveness of the Scheme as well as the coordination between the Scheme and the other initiatives of the Government, so as to ensure the optimal use of resources for the provision of suitable support to disadvantaged children and youth.

Play equipment in children's playgrounds

20. **DR ELIZABETH QUAT** (in Chinese): *President, in May last year, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong released the findings of a survey on 18 children's playgrounds ("playgrounds") under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") and the Housing Department ("HD"), which showed that the hygiene conditions of such playgrounds were poor, the play equipment therein was insufficient, and some of the play equipment was boring and dilapidated, resulting in unsatisfied playing needs of children. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *whether LCSD and HD have, in response to the aforesaid survey findings, improved the hygiene conditions of their playgrounds by, for example, installing disinfectant dispensers in those playgrounds; if so, of the specific measures and the implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (2) *of the criteria currently adopted by LCSD and HD for deciding whether to provide additional play equipment in their playgrounds;*
- (3) *whether LCSD and HD will consider introducing in their playgrounds some play equipment which is more interesting, inspiring and challenging so as to foster the physical development of children; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (4) *whether LCSD and HD have plans to improve the procedure for inspecting as well as maintaining and repairing the play equipment in their playgrounds, with a view to expediting the repair of damaged equipment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (5) *as some parents have relayed that the existing play equipment in some playgrounds only caters for younger children, whether LCSD and HD will consider providing in their playgrounds play equipment which caters for senior primary and junior secondary students; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*

- (6) *as some parents have relayed that most children prefer play equipment that is more challenging (e.g. swings, free-standing climbing frames and three-metre-high free-standing slides), whether LCSD will consider providing such equipment in selected playgrounds in each District Council district; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (7) *of the public rental housing estates where no playground is provided at present; whether HD will consider providing playgrounds in those estates; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and*
- (8) *as the information provided by the authorities, in response to a question raised by a Member of this Council at the Council meeting of 7 December last year, showed that the provision of play equipment in the playgrounds located in Kwai Tsing, the North District, Tai Po and Tuen Mun was obviously insufficient (e.g. the playgrounds in Kwai Tsing and Tuen Mun had no free-standing slide, and the various playgrounds in the North District, Tai Po and Tuen Mun respectively had only one free-standing climbing frame in total), whether LCSD will provide, in the playgrounds of the aforesaid districts, the play equipment that is currently unavailable in such playgrounds; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS (in Chinese): President, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") and Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") are committed to providing diversified play equipment in playgrounds under their management for children of different ages. My reply to the eight parts of the question is as follows:

- (1) LCSD attaches great importance to the cleanliness and hygiene of the venues under its management. In addition to daily cleansing, thorough cleaning by service contractor is also arranged on a regular basis for playgrounds. The toilets in the playgrounds managed by LCSD are provided with wash basins and liquid soap for venue users.

As regards the playground areas in public rental housing ("PRH") estates, cleansing service contractors of HA are required under estate contracts to conduct regular cleaning. In general, contractors will clean the playground equipment once a week. Furthermore, estate staff will patrol estate common areas every day. If any playground equipment is found dirty, contractors will be required to conduct cleaning immediately. HA will continue to closely monitor the hygienic condition of playground areas in its estates. Depending on the actual circumstances of individual estates, cleaning and disinfection will be enhanced to ensure cleanliness and hygiene of the equipment.

- (2) In the planning of children's playgrounds and the selection of play equipment, LCSD and relevant works departments will consider a host of factors including topographic feature, site area and circumstances, relevant international safety standards, needs of different users and views of the District Councils concerned, etc. Together they will formulate an overall playground design concept, work out the preliminary design and provide diversified children's play equipment and play components.

When considering the installation of new outdoor children playground equipment in existing PRH estates, HA will consider various factors, such as changes in the demographic structure of individual estates, actual needs of residents, usage of facilities and site circumstances etc.; and will consult the Estate Management Advisory Committees concerned with a view to providing appropriate playground equipment to address residents' needs.

- (3) LCSD has been liaising with concern groups on children's play equipment and consulting them and the District Councils concerned on the design of play equipment in children's playgrounds for constant improvement. In 2016, LCSD, in collaboration with the works departments, adopted the winning design of the "Inclusive Play Space Design Ideas Competition" as a prototype to build an innovative inclusive playground in Tuen Mun Park as part of a pilot scheme. The playground is expected to open for public use within

2017. LCSD will examine and draw reference from findings of the pilot scheme, keep in contact with concern groups, consult relevant organizations and District Councils concerned with a view to further improving the facilities of its playgrounds.

When designing individual public housing development projects, HA will make reference to guidelines under the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and endeavour to provide a variety of facilities for use by people of different ages and abilities as far as practicable. Also, HA will from time to time review products available in the market with a view to providing playground equipment, which can meet international safety standards and at the same time fulfil residents' needs.

- (4) Children's play equipment under the management of LCSD has been well-received by the public with very heavy usage. Venue staff carry out daily inspection on the play equipment to ensure that they are safe and fit for use by children. In addition, LCSD staff carry out inspection for the facilities at least once every two weeks and conduct regular checking. The facility maintenance unit will be notified immediately of any damage and follow up on the repair works. LCSD has also kept stock of the spare parts commonly required for repairs to shorten the time required for repair works. For those facilities which are badly worn out and need partial or whole replacement of equipment, it may take longer to complete the procurement and installation. LCSD staff will inspect the facilities from time to time and accord priority to repairing them so as to minimize the inconvenience caused by the damaged facilities to the public.

The Housing Department management staff will conduct routine inspections on the playground equipment in PRH estates to ensure its proper maintenance and repair. If any such equipment is found damaged, the management staff will notify contractors concerned, who will then arrange a qualified safety inspector to conduct further detailed inspection and proper repair. Moreover, HA engages an

independent safety consultant to inspect playground equipment of all PRH estates over the territory biennially. The consultant will submit reports to facilitate HA's follow-up on the upgrading and replacement of appropriate components, in order to enhance safety standards of the equipment and the protection over the safety of residents.

- (5) LCSD is committed to providing diversified play equipment in playgrounds for children of different ages and abilities to help balanced development of their mind and body through playing and acquiring different skills. Most of the children's playgrounds managed by LCSD provide play equipment for groups of children aged between 2 and 5 as well as 5 and 12.

When designing individual public housing development projects, HA will make reference to guidelines under the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and endeavour to provide a variety of facilities for use by people of different ages and abilities as far as practicable. In addition to playground equipment for children in general, HA will provide, where appropriate and as far as practicable, a wide range of active and passive recreational facilities such as basketball court, mini soccer pitch, badminton court, table tennis table, green open space, fitness equipment for the elderly, etc., in its development projects to cater for different people.

- (6) As mentioned in part (2) above, LCSD and its works departments will take into account a host of factors in providing diversified children's play equipment and play components. Most of the children's playgrounds under the management of LCSD adopt multi-play equipment and play components, comprising slides, swings and climbing frames, etc., while some of the venues also provide free-standing slides, swings and climbing frames. LCSD is prepared to consider providing more play equipment with creative design in appropriate locations when there is a need to replace old play equipment or install new play equipment in the future.

- (7) Currently, children playground equipment is provided in all PRH estates of HA.
- (8) The distribution of play equipment provided by LCSD in Kwai Tsing, North District, Tai Po and Tuen Mun District are at Annex. LCSD currently provides multi-play equipment at most of the children's playgrounds in the districts mentioned above and will consider providing more play equipment of different types in future.

Annex

Distribution of play equipment provided by LCSD in
Kwai Tsing, North District, Tai Po and Tuen Mun

District	Number of venues	Number of children's play equipment in the district				
		Slide		Swing	Climbing frame	
		Free-standing	Multi-play	Free-standing	Free-standing	Multi-play
Kwai Tsing	38	0	35	13	0	7
North District	80	3	63	5	1	51
Tai Po	49	1	43	2	1	7
Tuen Mun	36	0	32	4	1	16

Revitalization project of the former Central Police Station Compound

21. **MS TANYA CHAN** (in Chinese): *President, the construction works are underway for the revitalization project of the former Central Police Station Compound ("the revitalization project"), taken forward by the Government in partnership with the Hong Kong Jockey Club ("HKJC"). On 29 May last year, an incident occurred in which an external wall of one of the buildings (i.e. the former Married Inspectors' Quarters Building) included in the revitalization project collapsed. After that, HKJC set up a review panel to inquire into the causes of the incident and made public the inquiry report in November last year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *given that the Buildings Department has also initiated an inquiry into the aforesaid wall collapse incident and is preparing a report, of the expected time for the report to be made public;*
- (2) *whether it has sought legal advice from the Department of Justice ("DoJ") on whether the Authorized Person ("AP") or contractor(s) responsible for the revitalization project should be held criminally liable; if so, of DoJ's advice and the follow-up actions taken by the authorities; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (3) *whether the Government and HKJC have studied the penalties which should be imposed on the AP or contractor(s) who should be held responsible for the wall collapse incident, including the cessation of engaging them to undertake the revitalization project or suspension of their qualifications for tendering for public works contracts;*
- (4) *whether the AP and contractor(s) responsible for the revitalization project are currently participating in other infrastructural projects or projects of conservation or revitalization of historic buildings undertaken by the Government; if so, of the details of such projects, including the projects' names, nature and contract values; and*
- (5) *of the latest progress of the revitalization project, including the expected time when the revitalized buildings can be open to the public; whether HKJC will carry out restoration works on the collapsed wall; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT (in Chinese): President, my reply to the various parts of Ms Tanya CHAN's question is as follows:

- (1) and (2)

After the partial collapse of the Married Inspectors' Quarters Building at the Central Police Station, the Buildings Department ("BD") has promptly initiated an investigation. The ambit of the

investigation covers the causes of the incident and the associated legal liabilities under the Buildings Ordinance. The investigation report is still being drafted. BD is seeking legal advice from the Department of Justice. It will consider the relevant advice before deciding on the corresponding follow-up actions, and will give an account on the matter to the public at an appropriate juncture.

- (3) The contractor concerned is on the lists of approved contractors for public works compiled by the Development Bureau. The Development Bureau will closely monitor the findings of investigation by BD and consider whether the contractor concerned has contravened any rules in connection with regulatory actions according to the Contractor Management Handbook.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club ("HKJC") will consider further actions with reference to the investigation result of BD.

- (4) The consulting firm where the Authorized Person ("AP") for the subject revitalization project is employed is currently undertaking the following government architectural consultancy:

<i>Project Nature</i>	<i>Project Title</i>	<i>Consultancy Fee (HK\$)</i>
Architectural Consultancy	Cross District Community Cultural Centre in Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate, Kwun Tong	75 million

The contractor concerned is currently undertaking the following government infrastructure project:

<i>Project Nature</i>	<i>Project Title</i>	<i>Contract Sum (HK\$)</i>
Infrastructure	Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link—Southern Connection Viaduct Section	8.66 billion

AP and the contractor concerned are not participating in any other project of conservation or revitalization of historic buildings undertaken by the Government.

- (5) As at March 2017, apart from the partially collapsed Block 4 (i.e. the Former Married Inspectors' Quarters), works have resumed on the other 15 historic buildings, the new gallery and auditorium buildings, the Prison Yard, the Parade Ground, and the footbridge. Works on the gallery and auditorium buildings were close to completion. For the historic buildings, in addition to works being carried out on the exterior walls, interior works have also resumed. The project's AP and Registered Structural Engineer ("RSE") have been working with BD to carry out extra tests on building materials to ascertain that the existing building materials remain sound. Safety is the number one priority and RSE has also looked into opportunities for implementing additional structural enhancement works.

The project team, consultants and contractors, with reference to the condition of the building and international practices, have considered a broad range of recovery options for Block 4. Eight options have been put forward as the starting point for further consideration. Representatives of the Commissioner for Heritage's Office of the Development Bureau, BD and the Antiquities and Monuments Office have been consulted in the process. HKJC consulted the Antiquities Advisory Board ("AAB") on the eight options on 8 September 2016 and subsequently briefed the Central and Western District Council at the meeting on 20 October 2016. HKJC's priority is public safety, and it has not formulated any position with regard to any of these options at this stage. HKJC is considering engineering input and making reference to the findings of its independent review panel with a view to further developing the recovery options into a detailed recovery plan, which is estimated to take some time to complete. HKJC will consult AAB on the recovery plan at an opportune time, and seek the approval of the Antiquities Authority (i.e. the Secretary for Development) before implementation.

Electorate of the Legislative Council Information Technology Functional Constituency

22. **MR CHARLES PETER MOK** (in Chinese): *President, the Independent Commission Against Corruption announced on the 3rd of this month that it had arrested 72 newly registered electors and middlemen for alleged engagement in corrupt conduct of "vote-rigging" in the 2016 Legislative Council ("LegCo") Information Technology Functional Constituency ("ITFC") Election. The Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs ("SCMA") said on the 8th of this month that it was time to review the system for registration of ITFC electors from three aspects, namely the standard of professional qualification of electors, the level of representation of the bodies whose members are eligible to become electors, and the need to have a unified registration standard. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the number of complaints relating to the eligibility of ITFC electors received by the authorities in each of the past four years and the related follow-up work; whether, in the past four years, the authorities took the initiative to inspect the way in which the bodies specified for ITFC in the Legislative Council Ordinance (Cap. 542) handled new membership applications and managed existing memberships so as to ensure that the specified members of such bodies met the eligibility requirements for ITFC electors; if so, of the relevant procedure and outcome; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (2) *regarding the aforesaid review, of the criteria to be adopted by the authorities in unifying the standards for registration as ITFC electors; whether they have drawn up a timetable for the review, and of the specific improvement measures under consideration at present; whether the authorities will extensively consult industry bodies and frontline practitioners on the relevant standards and measures; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and*
- (3) *as SCMA anticipates that the ITFC electorate will decrease upon the implementation of new measures, but quite a number of members of the industry hope that the ITFC electorate can be progressively*

broadened under a stringent mechanism for vetting electors' eligibility so that the representativeness of LegCo ITFC election can be enhanced, whether the authorities will consider further stepping up efforts in vetting the eligibility of ITFC electors to guard against corrupt conduct in elections; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS (in Chinese): President, with regard to the various parts of the question raised by Mr MOK, our consolidated reply is as follows.

Sections 20Z and 25 of the Legislative Council Ordinance (Cap. 542) ("the LCO") specify the composition of and the eligibility for registration as electors for the information technology functional constituency ("ITFC").

The Registration and Electoral Office ("REO") has started, from the 2012 voter registration ("VR") cycle, the practice of issuing letters to the specified bodies annually to appeal to them to strengthen their membership administration and comply with their constitutions, and to adopt proper procedures to ensure propriety in membership administration, enhancing transparency, and exercising due diligence in providing up-to-date membership information to the REO. The Independent Commission Against Corruption ("ICAC") has also, since mid-2013, started to visit specified bodies (including those of the ITFC) and provide corruption prevention advisory services to further drive home the message of good corporate governance and importance of a transparent membership administration. In late 2015, the ICAC also issued a best practice checklist on membership administration to all specified bodies through the REO to assist them in strengthening their membership administration system.

If the REO receives any complaint or information showing that a specified body or an elector is suspected of breaching the relevant electoral laws, the REO will take appropriate action to follow up the case, including approaching the specified body and/or elector for enquiry and information, and referring the case to the law enforcement agencies for follow-up action as appropriate. The REO

does not keep record of the number of complaints relating to the eligibility of ITFC electors.

The Government will conduct a review on the delineation of the ITFC electorate from the policy and legislation perspectives. The directions of the review will include the standard of professional qualifications of electors for the ITFC; the level of representation of the specified bodies; and a study on establishing a unified standard for determining the eligibility criteria for registration as ITFC electors. We will conduct a consultation at an appropriate time after an initial policy proposal is finalized.

As regards the procedures for verifying the registration of electors, the REO currently collects from all specified bodies in every VR cycle the latest information about their members who meet the eligibility requirements under the electoral law for registration as electors for the relevant FCs, so as to process new VR applications and verify and ascertain the registration eligibility of individuals in the FCs concerned, and to remove those who are no longer eligible for registration. In view of the recent public concern over the eligibility of electors for the ITFC, the REO issued letters to all specified bodies of the ITFC on 7 April 2017 requesting them to reconfirm whether the members on their submitted lists met the eligibility criteria for registration in the ITFC as set out in the LCO, and reminding them that they must administer membership in strict compliance with their constitutions. The REO will initiate the statutory inquiry process for electors who no longer meet the eligibility criteria for registration. If the electors concerned fail to submit documentary proofs before the deadline (i.e. 2 May 2017), they will be included in the omissions list to be released on or before 1 June this year.

In addition, before the completion of the review on the eligibility criteria for registration as ITFC electors, the REO will adopt provisional measures regarding new VR applications received for the ITFC, whereby the relevant specified bodies will be requested to provide proofs (such as documentary proofs of relevant academic qualifications or work experience) that the applicants are eligible for registration as ITFC electors. Where necessary, the REO will take the initiative to contact the applicants concerned for clarification or provision of information before including them in the register of electors.

GOVERNMENT BILLS**First Reading of Government Bills**

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Government Bills: First Reading.

ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 2017**WATERWORKS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2017**

CLERK (in Cantonese): Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2017
Waterworks (Amendment) Bill 2017.

Bills read the First time and ordered to be set down for Second Reading pursuant to Rule 53(3) of the Rules of Procedure.

Second Reading of Government Bills

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Government Bills: Second Reading.

ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 2017

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Cantonese):
President, I move that the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2017 ("the Bill") be read the Second time.

The main objective of the Bill is to amend the definitions of "bus" and "light bus" under the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374), increasing the maximum seating capacity of light buses from 16 to 19 seats, so as to increase the overall carrying capacity of public light buses ("PLBs").

The seating capacity of light buses was last increased from 14 to 16 seats nearly 30 years ago in 1988. In the public transport system, the role of PLBs is to provide supplementary feeder service and to serve areas with relatively lower passenger demand or where the use of high-capacity transport modes is not

suitable. While the supply and demand for PLB services have remained generally stable over the past few years, the passenger demand during peak periods has generally increased. Services of some green minibus ("GMB") routes are insufficient to cope with demand. After a comprehensive review, the Government now proposes to increase the seating capacity of light buses in response to the increased passenger demand. This would be relatively more effective in meeting the passenger demand during peak periods.

When studying and determining the appropriate maximum seating capacity, considerations were given to the supply and demand of PLB services, as well as the need to maintain the delicate balance amongst various public transport services, so as to provide diversified choices to passengers.

The findings of our study indicated that increasing the number of seats to 19 could already significantly improve the situation of inadequate GMB services, in particular during the peak hour, and improve the operating environment of GMB operators. With this arrangement of increasing the seats from 16 to 19, each seat increased could reduce the ratio of GMB routes with left-behind passengers during the peak hour by an average of 11 percentage points, while each seat increased beyond 19 would only reduce such ratio by two to three percentage points. However, from the overall planning point of view, the maximum seating capacity of light buses cannot be decided solely on basis of the demand during the peak hour, for the overall operating environment and a diversified public transport system should also be taken into consideration.

Public transport services in Hong Kong are well-developed with different degrees of healthy competition. Hence, we must also carefully review the impact of the PLB seat increase proposal on other public transport trades, so as to properly maintain the respective functions and roles amongst various public transport services. In this way, public transport services can continue to develop in a sustainable manner and benefit the community.

We consulted the Panel on Transport of the Legislative Council on increasing the seating capacity of light buses to 19 seats in December last year. Although the seat increase proposal was welcome by the members, most of them held the view that the Government should consider increasing the maximum seating capacity of PLBs to 20 seats on the grounds that PLB passengers would benefit from it and that there is already a PLB model in the market which can

hold 20 seats. In response, we have explained to the Panel that the policy considerations of the Government would not be based on a particular type, model or make of vehicle. The proposal for increasing the maximum seating capacity of PLBs to 19 seats has taken into consideration and balanced all aforementioned aspects.

We propose increasing the maximum seating capacity, rather than increasing the statutory cap on the number of PLBs (currently at 4 350), as this could better meet the passenger demand and reduce passengers' waiting time during peak periods, without having to generate additional traffic flow. Under the new maximum seating capacity, PLB operators may take into account the operational conditions and the passenger demand in deciding on their own whether or not to increase the seating capacity of their vehicles and, if so, the exact number of seats to be added and the time of implementation. This arrangement allows operators to maintain flexibility.

The findings of our study also indicated that the demand for private light buses, in particular for school private light buses, has increased over the past few years, and the upward trend is expected to continue in the short-to-medium term. For this reason, we also recommend that the maximum seating capacity of private light buses be increased to 19 seats so as to cater for passenger demands.

The Bill also proposes adding a transitional provision, such that existing vehicles registered as private buses or public buses with seating capacities of 17 to 19 seats can retain their current classifications after the implementation of the seat increase proposal in order to avoid disruption of services. Besides, the Bill also makes consequential amendments to the Motor Vehicles (First Registration Tax) Ordinance and Road Tunnels (Government) Regulations.

Detailed proposals of the Bill have been set out in the Legislative Council Brief issued on 28 March 2017. We earnestly hope that the Bill will be passed early with the support of the Legislative Council, so that operators can expeditiously increase the seating capacity of their light buses in response to passenger demands.

President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2017 be read the Second time.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the debate is now adjourned and the Bill is referred to the House Committee.

WATERWORKS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2017

SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT (in Cantonese): President, and Honourable Members, good morning.

I move the Second Reading of the Waterworks (Amendment) Bill 2017 ("the Bill").

The purpose of the Bill is to amend the relevant provisions of the Waterworks Ordinance ("WVO") (Cap. 102) in relation to persons designated for carrying out plumbing works and the duties of licensed plumbers so that WVO can better reflect the policy intent and the industry practice.

Since WVO came into force in 1975, there have been significant changes in the complexity, technical requirements and material standards of plumbing works, as well as the duties, obligations and practice of industry practitioners. Whilst various legislative amendments to WVO were made over the past decades, the Government has started a holistic review of WVO to revamp the legislation to cater for the latest development of the industry.

Moreover, the Commission of Inquiry into Excess Lead found in Drinking Water recommended in its report that the Government should define the duties of licensed plumbers under WVO, taking into account the relevant provisions of the Construction Workers Registration Ordinance (Cap. 583) ("CWRO"), which allows workers registered thereunder to perform plumbing installations. We consider it prudent to prioritize amendments to WVO through the Bill to implement the recommendations.

We have consulted professional bodies, plumbing trade associations, plumbers associations, workers associations, the construction sector, developers and the Consumer Council on the proposals made in the Bill and obtained general

support from them. We also conducted a public consultation exercise to gauge public views on the proposals between September and November 2016. Members of the public who responded are either generally supportive or have no adverse comment on the proposals. Moreover, to more accurately assess the business impact of the proposals on stakeholders, a Business Impact Assessment ("BIA") was conducted from September 2016 to March 2017. The results indicated that the majority of stakeholders consider the proposals beneficial to the industry. In finalizing the amendment proposals, we have duly considered the comments received in the consultation exercise and BIA.

The proposed provisions are set out in the Bill. I will now give a brief account on the relevant content.

Firstly, insofar as persons designated for carrying out plumbing works are concerned, under the current WWO, plumbing works must be carried out by a licensed plumber or a public officer authorized by the Water Authority ("WA"). Despite the language of the legislation, it has been the policy intent and the industry practice that licensed plumbers may be assisted by workers in carrying out the plumbing works. Furthermore, if plumbing works can only be carried out personally by licensed plumbers, the workforce demand of licensed plumbers will be considerably high and far exceeds the current manpower supply, not to mention the consequential increase in the cost of plumbing works. Skilled workers or semi-skilled workers for relevant designated trade divisions registered under CWRO are in possession of the relevant trade skills and qualified to carry out plumbing works competently. Therefore, we propose to amend WWO to, in addition to existing licensed plumbers and public officers authorized by WA, include such registered workers as persons designated for carrying out plumbing works. Moreover, the Bill also allows other persons working under the instruction and supervision of licensed plumbers and relevant registered workers to carry out plumbing works. Through aligning the requirements on persons designated for carrying out plumbing works under WWO with those under CWRO, the Bill can provide additional workforce to the plumbing industry which complies with both WWO and CWRO without compromising work quality.

Secondly, regarding the responsibilities of licensed plumbers, at present, it is an administrative requirement that all applications for permission of plumbing works under WWO are to be made by licensed plumbers, and the licensed plumber making the application is required to certify that the completed works

covered by that permission comply with WWO. The Bill will formalize the aforementioned administrative requirement by stipulating in WWO that all applications for permission of plumbing works have to be made by licensed plumbers. The Bills also provides that the licensed plumber is to be held responsible for completed plumbing works covered by the permission which does not comply with WWO in order to clearly define the duties of licensed plumbers under WWO. At the same time, we also propose to add an appropriate defence provision to WWO to afford reasonable protection to persons participating in plumbing works.

Lastly, we propose other measures to enhance the effectiveness of monitoring of plumbing works, including stipulating that prosecutions under WWO may be brought within a period of six months from the date on which the offence is discovered by, or comes to the notice of, WA. In addition, we propose to empower WA to enter premises, except premises or part of the premises that is used for human habitation, without consent or warrant, where plumbing works are being carried out for the purpose of ascertaining whether the works are being carried out by persons designated for carrying out the plumbing works.

We briefed the Legislative Council Panel on Development of the aforementioned proposals on 24 January this year and submitted the plan of introduction of the Bill. Members of the Panel did not raise any objection to the proposals.

President, it is certainly our wish to prioritize the implementation of the recommendations made by the Commission of Inquiry into Excess Lead found in Drinking Water on persons designated for carrying out plumbing works and the duties of licensed plumbers, so as to reflect the policy intent of the Government and cater to the industry practice. I implore Members to support the Bill and hope for speedy completion of scrutiny of the Bill and its passage.

Moreover, after completing the holistic review of WWO, we will introduce the proposed legislative amendments into the Legislative Council in due course.

I so submit. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the Waterworks (Amendment) Bill 2017 be read the Second time.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the debate is now adjourned and the Bill is referred to the House Committee.

Resumption of Second Reading Debate on Government Bill

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Council now resumes the debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill 2017. Regarding Members' views expressed during the debate on the Second Reading, the relevant public officers will speak before the Financial Secretary give a speech in reply.

APPROPRIATION BILL 2017

Resumption of debate on Second Reading which was moved on 22 February 2017

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): President, I am grateful to Members for their views expressed on such aspects as social welfare, labour and manpower development during the debate. I will now give a succinct reply to the salient points.

On commitment to social welfare, some Members consider that the Government should allocate more resources to welfare services. In fact, poverty alleviation, elderly care and support for the disadvantaged have all along been at the top of the current-term Government's agenda, complemented by appropriate allocation of resources. Compared to the \$42.8 billion for 2012-2013, the year of commencement of the current-term Government, the recurrent expenditure on social welfare this year (2017-2018) will be increased to \$73.3 billion, amounting to an increase by 71% in five years' time, which far exceeds the 41% increase in the total recurrent government expenditure over the same period. This has fully demonstrated our commitment to enhancing the services for disadvantaged groups and people in need.

On poverty alleviation, a number of Members are concerned about poverty alleviation and the support for low-income people. The Government has implemented since May last year the Low-income Working Family Allowance

("LIFA") Scheme precisely to provide low-income working families not on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") with financial support, so as to encourage self-reliance and ease inter-generational poverty. The Government will conduct a comprehensive policy review of the LIFA Scheme in the middle of this year, covering the operation and design of the Scheme, its effectiveness in alleviating poverty and promoting employment, and the interaction of the Scheme with other assistance schemes administered by the Government. Comments received from the public and social groups on the Scheme will be considered in the review in a holistic manner.

In the Budget this year, the Financial Secretary also proposes making an extra payment to social security recipients, equivalent to one month of the standard rate of CSSA payments or of allowance payments under the Social Security Allowance Scheme, namely the Old Age Allowance (comprising the Guangdong Scheme), Old Age Living Allowance ("OALA") or Disability Allowance, incurring an additional expenditure of about \$3.5 billion. About 1.24 million recipients are expected to be benefited. The Government will also make similar arrangements for recipients of LIFA or the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy ("WITS"). We estimate that about 35 000 households in receipt of LIFA and about 48 000 recipients of WITS will benefit from this.

On elderly care and support for the disadvantaged, in order to cope with the growth in elderly population, the resources committed by the Government to elderly services have been on the rise. The recurrent government expenditure on elderly services in 2017-2018 is about \$7.84 billion, representing an increase of 7.2% over the revised estimate of about \$7.31 billion last year. In 2017-2018, we will increase the annual recurrent expenditure by about \$253 million to strengthen elderly care.

The Government adheres to the policy of "Ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up" in terms of elderly care services. While continuously enhancing the conventional form of services, we have also been launching new services, particularly strengthening the support measures for ageing in the community, with an innovative mindset. The Government is currently taking forward the second phase of the "Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly", and will increase the number of vouchers from 2 000 to 5 000 in the third quarter this year. Separately, the Government launched the "Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly" in March this year to offer an additional choice to elderly persons in need of

residential care service. Under the pilot scheme, a total of 3 000 vouchers will be issued in phases from 2017 to 2019.

The implementation of the pilot scheme will definitely not reduce the availability of existing services. The Government continues to increase the supply of elderly service places by a multi-pronged approach. The Social Welfare Department has made planning in 25 development projects and the "Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses". In the next 5 to 10 years, it is estimated that about 9 100 residential care places (including subsidized and non-subsidized places) and about 2 800 day care places for the elderly will come on stream as additional places.

As regards the overall planning of elderly services, the Elderly Commission is pressing ahead with formulating an "Elderly Services Programme Plan" which caters for the needs of the elderly at different stages. The Commission is expected to submit the programme plan to the Government in the middle of this year.

Like all Members, we also attach great importance to the support for persons with disabilities. The total recurrent government expenditure on support services for persons with disabilities has increased from \$16.6 billion for the year 2007-2008 to \$31.5 billion this year, representing an increase of as much as 90%. In respect of the supply of service places, we have reserved suitable sites in 36 development projects. In addition to the "Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses", it is estimated that an additional 14 000 service places can be provided in the next 5 to 10 years.

To enhance long-term planning in the rehabilitation field, the Government will commence formulating a "Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan" soon after the completion of the "Elderly Services Programme Plan" with reference made to the relevant experience. Having regard to the appropriate recommendations made, we will enhance pre-school training, residential care, day care, community support, employment, barrier-free facilities and transportation for persons with disabilities where considered appropriate, so as to enable persons with disabilities to fully integrate into the community and enjoy equal opportunities.

As a forward-looking move, the Government has also earmarked \$30 billion in the Budget this year to strengthen elderly services and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. This highlights the Government's

commitment to the elderly and persons with disabilities, and provides additional resources for a series of recommendations made in the "Elderly Services Programme Plan" and the new "Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan" to be formulated in the future. In the process of formulating the programme plans, we will seize each and every opportunity of timely implementation of feasible measures on which a consensus has been forged, so as to achieve continuous service enhancement.

On retirement protection, some Members are concerned about issues relating to retirement protection. Elderly persons have diverse retirement needs. Some have to rely on social security; others may only require some living allowances; the rest are self-sufficient. Hence, for retirement protection, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. A flat-rate payment by the Government to all elderly persons irrespective of financial means will only dilute the support available to those in need. We consider that the existing multi-pillar retirement protection system should continue. At the same time, we should enhance the effectiveness of each pillar while maintaining the sustainability and financial viability of the system.

To strengthen the support of the social security pillar for elderly persons, the Government proposes, among others, enhancing OALA through two measures. First, relaxing the asset limits for the existing allowance in 2017-2018 to benefit more elderly persons with financial needs; and second, adding a higher tier of assistance in 2018-2019 for elderly persons with more financial needs who are eligible for the allowance. It is estimated that around 500 000 elderly persons (accounting for about 40% of the total elderly population) will benefit from the two measures in the first year upon full implementation, which involves an estimated additional recurrent expenditure of over \$75.5 billion in the first 10 years.

As to Members' proposal for further relaxing the asset and income limits for OALA, I wish to point out that currently, adding a higher tier of allowance and relaxing the asset limits for OALA alone already incurs in the first 10 years an estimated additional government recurrent expenditure of about \$7.6 billion per annum on average, which is 58% of the estimated expenditure of \$13.2 billion for OALA in 2016-2017. Further relaxation of the asset and income limits will necessitate a dramatic increase in expenditure in this regard, unavoidably limiting the room for service improvement in other policy areas. For this reason, the Government must carefully strike a balance.

In respect of enhancing the pillar of the Mandatory Provident Fund ("MPF"), the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority ("MPFA") launched the "Default Investment Strategy" this April in order to address the concern of "high fees and difficulty in making investment choices". Moreover, the Government will actively explore with MPFA and the industry the possibility of establishing an eMPF, a centralized electronic platform, to further reduce administration costs, thereby paving the way for "full portability". A number of Members are concerned about the MPF offsetting arrangement. The Chief Executive announced a concrete proposal to progressively abolish the offsetting arrangement of severance payment or long service payment with MPF contributions in the Policy Address this year. The Government's proposal strives to strike a balance between improving the employees' benefits and the employers' affordability while at the same time enhancing the retirement protection of the employees. We are examining the views put forward by major stakeholders, the business and the labour sectors inclusive, and aim at finalizing the proposal within the current-term Government.

Enabling different pillars to work with and complement one another in order to make the whole system more effective is the guiding rationale of the Government in dealing with retirement protection this time around. In order to improve the pillar of public services to better address the medical needs of the elderly, we will provide those OALA recipients with more financial need aged 75 or above, namely the elderly recipients of higher OALA, with free public health care or clinic services, benefiting about 140 000 elderly persons, and lower the eligibility age for the Elderly Health Care Vouchers to 65, so that about 400 000 more elderly persons will receive \$2,000 a year to purchase private primary care services.

As for supporting the elderly in investment management, the Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation Limited announced earlier its intention to introduce a life annuity scheme in the middle of next year to help elderly persons with certain assets turn their one-off savings into annuity, thereby giving them a stable monthly income for the rest of their lives. This scheme precisely serves to strengthen the third pillar, namely the pillar of private savings. The Government will also consider issuing larger volumes of Silver Bonds, which have been popular among the elderly, and setting a longer term. In addition, we will encourage the financial sector to develop more retirement-related investment products.

In respect of labour rights, I fully understand the aspirations of the labour sector. In fact, in considering the balance between employees' interest and employers' affordability, as well as the pace of development of the community and economy, the Government has made proactive efforts to inspect and enhance the rights and protection of workers from time to time.

There have been a number of industrial fatalities so far in 2017, and the Government is gravely concerned about them. The Labour Department is investigating the relevant accidents at full steam to identify the causes of the accidents, recommend improvement measures and ascertain the associated liabilities, so as to prevent recurrence of similar accidents. Pinpointing safety in the construction industry, particularly the risk of work at height, the Labour Department has rolled out a series of targeted initiatives, including launching a special enforcement operation, keeping the construction industry as the focus of inspection and enforcement in the next few months and stepping up television and radio publicity as well as other promotion and educational efforts.

In addition, the Labour Department has, in collaboration with the representatives from a number of government departments, trade associations, labour unions and other relevant organizations, announced the formal launch of the Occupational Safety Enhancement Campaign "Construction Industry: Safety First", with a view to enhancing the safety performance of the construction industry at different levels. We hope that these actions and measures will further enhance the protection for workers and in particular, minimize work hazards in the construction industry.

Some Members are concerned about the Government's policies and measures in respect of manpower development. The SAR Government has all along been committed to developing a well-trained and adaptable workforce to meet the demands of the economy and promote the overall competitiveness of Hong Kong. Apart from other routine work, the Government proposes injecting an additional \$1.5 billion into the Continuing Education Fund in 2017-2018 and will also consider various measures to enhance the operation of the fund. The review will cover the policy objectives of the fund, the scope of courses, etc. The results are expected to be available within this year.

In the debate, some Members have proposed increasing importation of labour in such industries as catering and construction. The Government's established policy is that employers must accord priority to recruiting local

workers. The relevant bureaux and departments will continue to closely monitor the manpower demand and supply for different sectors, and strengthen training initiatives to attract new entrants. On the premise of according employment priority to local workers, the Government allows importation of labour on an appropriate, limited and targeted basis to relieve the manpower shortage of the relevant sectors.

President, the Government attaches great importance to such labour and welfare measures, which are closely related to people's livelihood. In the remaining term of the current-term Government, we will actively follow up on various key labour and welfare initiatives in the Policy Address and Budget. Under the principle of financial prudence, we will optimize the use of resources to help the needy and establish a harmonious society which is caring and inclusive.

With these remarks, I implore Members to support the Appropriation Bill 2017.

SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT (in Cantonese): President, Honourable Members, I am very grateful to Members for their valuable views on land supply, the "Smart Tender" Building Rehabilitation Facilitating Services (Pilot Scheme) ("Smart Tender scheme"), public works expenditure, Dongjiang water, and so on. Here, I will give a consolidated reply.

The determination of the current-term Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to increase land supply is unquestionable. Over the past few years, we have, through a multi-pronged strategy, maintained a sustained and steady land supply in the short, medium and long terms, with a view to meeting the needs of sustainable development of Hong Kong in such aspects as housing, the economy and society and building up a land reserve for the future. Thanks to the continuous efforts made by various government departments, it is estimated that the various short-, medium- and long-term land supply initiatives can provide over 600 000 residential flats.

In the short-to-medium term, by way of changing existing land uses and increasing development intensity, which involves some 210 housing sites identified through land use reviews, the Kai Tak Development Area, urban renewal projects, and so on, a total of over 380 000 residential flats can be

provided. In the medium-to-long term, various new development areas ("NDAs") and new town extensions, as well as potential railway property development projects being planned, can provide over 220 000 residential flats.

In the long term, the two strategic growth areas proposed in "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" ("Hong Kong 2030+"), i.e. the East Lantau Metropolis and New Territories North, will allow us to meet the estimated long-term land requirements and also enhance the overall capacity of development of Hong Kong to provide us with the flexibility to enhance liveability and improve living space.

In respect of land sale, in 2016-2017, the Government has put up 21 residential sites for sale, which can provide about 14 500 flats in total. This is the highest flat production capacity of Government land sale sites since the Government-initiated sale mechanism was resumed in 2010-2011. Combining various sources, the overall private housing land supply in 2016-2017 is estimated to have a capacity to provide about 19 780 flats, exceeding the target of 18 000 flats set for the year by about 10%. The Government has exceeded the annual target for three consecutive years. Our private housing land supply target in 2017-2018 is to make available land capable of providing about 18 000 private residential flats.

We have noticed that a number of Members are very concerned about the property market and property prices, including Mr Wilson OR who put forward views on the land sale arrangements, and Mrs Regina IP who proposed to impose restrictions through conditions of land sale. We will continue to announce quarterly land sale programmes in advance, providing transparency and certainty in respect of land supply for the market. We will closely keep in view the market developments, so as to flexibly respond to changing market conditions.

Some Members said that the Government is lagging behind in its work on the development of brownfield sites. This I beg to differ. Making optimal use of brownfield sites is one of the main directions in the Government's multi-pronged land supply strategy. The developments in the Hung Shui Kiu, Yuen Long South, Kwu Tung North and Fanling North NDAs currently under way cover about 340 hectares of brownfield sites. The proposed strategic growth area of New Territories North under "Hong Kong 2030+" will cover a further 200 hectares of brownfield sites.

The development of brownfield sites naturally requires consideration of how the brownfield operations should be handled. Mr Frankie YICK is concerned about the future of brownfield operations and this is understandable. The Civil Engineering and Development Department will continue to take Hung Shui Kiu as a pilot case to actively study the possibility of consolidating brownfield operations in multi-storey buildings, with a view to providing space for the operation of these industrial activities while optimizing the use of the sites.

Meanwhile, the Planning Department will commence a comprehensive survey on the distribution, uses and operation of brownfield sites in the New Territories this year. This will be conducive to formulating a comprehensive policy framework on brownfield sites, so as to examine the brownfield issues and policy directions. We will consult the Legislative Council and the public on the proposed brownfield policy framework in due course.

While the supply of housing land is certainly important, I very much share the views of Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Ms Starry LEE, Mr Frankie YICK, Mr Holden CHOW, Mr WONG Ting-kwong and Mr SHIU Ka-fai that it is also necessary for the Government to continuously increase the supply of sites for economic uses. The Development Bureau will continue to support the policy of the Transport and Housing Bureau in identifying suitable sites for logistics use in different locations, including two sites totalling around 10 hectares in Tuen Mun West and 37 hectares of land in the Hung Shui Kiu NDA reserved for the purpose, as well as Tuen Mun Areas 40 and 46, New Territories North, and the topside development at the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities Island of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge.

We will continue to relocate some government offices away from the core business district ("CBD") to other districts and convert suitable "Government, Institution or Community" sites and government properties into commercial uses. We will continue to forge ahead with the development of Kowloon East into another CBD and the Kai Tak Development Area, etc., with a view to providing land and supporting hardware for economic uses in a sustainable manner. In the medium-to-long term, it is estimated that NDAs and new town extensions will provide over 8.6 million sq m of industrial and commercial floor area.

Next, I would like to talk about building repairs and maintenance. Quite a number of Members have expressed concern over the problems encountered by owners of private buildings in repairing and maintaining their properties. While the responsibility to repair and maintain private buildings rests with the owners,

the Government understands that not all the owners have the relevant technical expertise or they may be deterred from carrying out repair works at their buildings by the occasional news about bid-rigging.

In this year's Budget the Financial Secretary announced that \$300 million will be earmarked for private property owners to participate in the Smart Tender scheme managed by the Urban Renewal Authority ("URA") at a concessionary rate. Currently, the fee payable under the Smart Tender scheme ranges from \$25,000 to \$160,000. The \$300 million funding proposed by the Government will substantially reduce the fee under the Smart Tender scheme to between \$1,250 and \$80,000. We estimate that this provision can benefit about 4 500 buildings. The Government also hopes that the scheme can cultivate best practices in undertaking building repairs and maintenance projects and also help crowd out the opportunity for bid-rigging syndicates to interfere with the building repairs and maintenance markets. The Government is now discussing the details with URA, and our target is to implement the concessionary fee in the third quarter of this year. In response to the concerns of some Members, the Government and URA will step up promotional efforts, which include Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio, roadshows, and briefings to owners' corporations and District Councils. We hope that Members can also encourage owners' organizations in need in the districts to participate in the Smart Tender scheme.

Next, I will talk about investment on capital works. The Government has all along maintained its capital works investment in an appropriate and orderly manner to improve people's quality of living, promote the economic development of Hong Kong and upgrade the long-term competitiveness of Hong Kong.

Some Members hold that the Government has injected excessive resources into capital works projects. This is an incorrect and most dangerous view. In retrospect, the expenditure on capital works projects has maintained a long-term average of around 3.4% of the real Gross Domestic Product ("GDP") over the past three decades. In the several years during the Asian financial turmoil, the Dot-Com bubble burst and the subsequent SARS outbreak, the percentage stayed at a low level for a long period and was only slightly more than 2% in 2005. With the rolling out of the major infrastructure projects by the Government since 2007-2008, the capital works expenditure has gradually increased to about \$85 billion in 2016-2017, accounting for 3.4% of GDP. From this we can see that the current share of the capital works expenditure is only at the average level.

It is still necessary for us to put in efforts for the Capital Works Programme and take forward more development projects for society, in order to make up for the lag in the pace of development.

Besides, the total volume of construction works of both the public and private sectors as a share of GDP, which gradually increased from a low level only in 2007-2008, has remained at around 8% on average in the past two decades. Compared with the shares of other neighbouring advanced economies, such as around 10% in Singapore and around 11% in Japan, the share of investment on construction projects is still on a low side. Competition among various economies is keen in the international community, and you either keep progressing or keep falling behind. Only when we make continuously efforts to promote infrastructure development can the competitiveness of Hong Kong be maintained in the long term.

I also wish to clarify that the infrastructure projects are no "white elephant" projects. In response to the keen demand for public facilities among members of the community, the works projects submitted annually by the Government for scrutiny by the Legislative Council cover such areas as land and housing supply, health care, environmental protection, traffic and transport, schools, as well as cultural, recreational and community facilities, which are all closely related to the people's living. Each and every one of the projects has its urgency as well as social and economic benefits. Before seeking funding approval for them, we have fully consulted the public and obtained general support in the community.

We appreciate the concerns expressed by the public and Members, especially over the rising construction costs and cost overruns incurred by certain infrastructure projects during the past few years in Hong Kong. In view of this, last June, the Development Bureau established the Project Cost Management Office specially tasked to implement cost management, lead and coordinate various bureaux and works departments in managing the costs of public works projects, as well as enhance their ability of project management, thereby ensuring proper use of public coffers. In this respect, we have made initial achievements.

In the coming few years, we will continue to inject resources into works projects worthy of investment. The expenditure on capital works will be maintained at the level of over \$80 billion.

In recent years, the delivery of the Capital Works Programme has often been affected by filibustering in the Legislative Council, making our work extremely difficult. In March this year, we even saw an unprecedented situation where no new works project had its funding application approved for eight months, resulting in the boom-and-burst of construction output, which is unnecessary. It has also brought about the situation of workers "dying of overwork at one time and starvation at another". The adverse effects brought about by filibustering to the construction industry and the community have not only prevented the early implementation of projects which can otherwise benefit the people, but also stifled the social development of Hong Kong and undermined its competitiveness. Worse still, they have also dealt a great blow to hundreds of thousand workers engaged in the industry and the livelihood of their families. The drastic reduction in the amount of engineering projects has greatly upset the effectiveness of training workers and attracting new recruits. Filibustering will indeed only do harm rather than good. We hope that Members can make consideration from the well-being of the people and expedite the vetting and approval of funding applications in the remaining time of the current session of the Legislative Council to enable works projects to commence early.

Now I wish to turn to issues relating to the supply of Dongjiang water to Hong Kong. At present, the "package deal lump sum" approach is adopted in the Dongjiang water supply agreement. Under this approach, Hong Kong actually procures a water right from Guangdong Province, which assures us of an adequate fresh water supply even in times of drought with a return period of one in hundred years. In fact, in 2011, the rainfall in Hong Kong fell short of the normal level by 40% and in that year, we needed to import 818 million cu m of Dongjiang water, which is very close to the annual supply ceiling of 820 million cu m as set out in the agreement, being 99.8%. In signing the Dongjiang water supply agreements in the past, we had considered and negotiated with the Guangdong side the use of the "payment on actual supply quantity" approach for purchasing Dongjiang water. According to the Guangdong side, as the "payment on actual supply quantity" approach does not specify an exact annual supply quantity and given the keen demand for the limited Dongjiang water resources from a number of cities along the river, the Guangdong side will allocate the quota reserved for Hong Kong to other cities in the Province. In times of extreme drought conditions in Hong Kong, the Guangdong side or various cities in the Province will similarly face extreme drought conditions and as the supply of Dongjiang water would become extremely tight then, it would be

difficult for the Guangdong side to guarantee that the water supply quantity required by Hong Kong can be met.

On the adjustment of the water price, we have all along made reference to (1) the exchange rate between Renminbi ("RMB") and Hong Kong dollar ("HKD"); (2) the price indices of Guangdong and Hong Kong; and (3) changes in operation costs, which form the basis for adjusting the price of Dongjiang water. Under this mechanism, the price of Dongjiang water can be increased or decreased. As a matter of fact, in 2006, Guangdong and Hong Kong agreed to adjust downward the price of Dongjiang water on the aforesaid basis. Excluding the factor of change in the exchange rate between RMB and HKD, the price of Dongjiang water has increased by only 3.7% on average annually in the past decade, which is more or less the same as the average annual rate of change of the price indices of Guangdong and Hong Kong.

In February this year, we commenced negotiation on the water supply agreement for the next three years. We will reflect Members' views in the course of the negotiation and make the utmost effort to strive for the most favourable agreement.

Lastly, I urge Members to have regard for the overall interest of society and support the early passage of the Appropriation Bill 2017 to enable these measures to be implemented early. President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary for Innovation and Technology, please speak.

(Mr CHAN Chi-chuen stood up)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, what is your point?

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): President, point of order. I request a headcount under Rule 17(2) of the Rules of Procedure.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Will the Clerk please ring the bell to summon Members back to the Chamber.

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

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary for Innovation and Technology, please speak.

SECRETARY FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (in Cantonese): Before all else, President, I would like to thank Honourable Members for expressing a lot of valuable opinions on areas related to the development of innovation and technology ("I&T").

I noted from their speeches that the vast majority of Members recognize that the development of I&T is vital to Hong Kong. They also agree that I&T is a key driving force in promoting the diversification and sustainable development of Hong Kong economy. I am greatly heartened by Members' support for the Government's efforts on this front and their expectation for us to make more efforts.

Since the establishment of the Innovation and Technology Bureau in November 2015, additional funding of more than \$18 billion has been injected by the Government for taking forward the development of I&T on various fronts, including promoting research and development ("R&D") and "re-industrialization", nurturing start-ups, assisting small and medium enterprises ("SMEs") in upgrading and restructuring, encouraging the use of technology to address social problems, and so on. In the Budget this year, an additional \$10 billion has been earmarked to provide us with more resources for the development of I&T. Not only are our efforts already on the right track, but there are also increasing knowledge of and growing concern about I&T in society.

Next, I hope to focus on giving responses to a few key areas.

Quite a number of Members have pointed out that the total expenditure on R&D in Hong Kong represents a mere 0.76% of our Gross Domestic Product ("GDP"), which is unsatisfactory. I appreciate Members' hope for expenditure

on R&D to be increased. Nevertheless, we must understand that Hong Kong is just a city, and its economic structure cannot rival that of an advanced country. Due to the outward relocation of the operations of industries and "de-industrialization" since the 1980s, the percentage of our manufacturing industry as a share of GDP has fallen from approximately 30% to approximately 1%. A lack of industrial demand, coupled with the absence of expenditure on national defence and related technological research, has imposed certain constraints on R&D activities. Notwithstanding this, the total expenditure on R&D in Hong Kong has risen from \$11.9 billion in 2006 by 53% to \$18.3 billion in 2015.

The Advisory Committee on Innovation and Technology under my leadership completed the review of I&T development strategies late last month, and a series of goals were proposed, including raising the percentage of the total expenditure on local R&D as a share of GDP from 0.76% at present to 1%, or approximately \$30 billion per annum. Furthermore, we encourage the private sector to increase investment in technological research, with a view to adjusting the R&D expenditure ratio between the public and private sectors from 56:44 at present to 45:55, thereby enabling technological research investment in Hong Kong to be led mainly by the private sector instead of the public sector.

In order to achieve the aforesaid objectives, the Government is actively considering the provision of tax, financial and other policy concessions for the promotion of I&T development in Hong Kong. Among others, the Financial Secretary has announced the establishment of a tax policy unit to actively study related issues such as providing tax deductions for technological research expenditure, and so on, for the promotion of industrial development. With regard to the overall promotion of R&D locally, the Innovation and Technology Bureau will complement the efforts of the tax policy unit.

"Re-industrialization" is a new point of growth in Hong Kong's economic development. We hope to reverse the trend of "de-industrialization", fully exploit I&T to propel "re-industrialization", introduce and develop high-end manufacturing industries suitable for Hong Kong, undertake high value-added production in Hong Kong, revitalize our manufacturing industries, promote economic growth, and create quality job opportunities.

The Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation ("HKSTPC") will set up a Data Technology Hub and an Advanced Manufacturing Centre in Tseung Kwan O Industrial Estate to provide a base for smart production. The

relevant projects are expected to complete in 2020 and 2022 respectively. Furthermore, complementing the development of the new manufacturing base of Hong Kong and the industrial edge enjoyed by Shenzhen, the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park in the Lok Ma Chau Loop will help promote the commercialization and industrialization of technological research results. In the long run, we are exploring the utilization of a plot of land of approximately 56 hectares near the Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point for the long-term development of an industrial estate, in order to meet the land demand of new manufacturing industries.

In addition, the Committee on Innovation, Technology and Re-industrialisation has been set up to coordinate the development of I&T and re-industrialization in Hong Kong through a high-level and inter-bureau approach. It will be chaired by the Financial Secretary, and its first meeting will be convened in May. I believe its members can definitely put forth more insightful proposals and valuable views on the long-term development strategies of "re-industrialization" in Hong Kong.

While SMEs are the pillars of the local economy, start-ups are the impetus under the new economic order. Our major initiatives include encouraging existing SMEs to apply technology in a more effective manner, improving their flow of production and products, and assisting them in upgrading and restructuring. We will also strive to give assistance to the development of I&T start-ups by providing support in such aspects as capital, skills and networks. I am grateful to Honourable Members in voicing support in their speeches for efforts made on this front.

In order to enhance the long-term competitive edge of SMEs, the Technology Voucher Programme was launched last year to subsidize SMEs in using technological services and solutions for enhanced productivity, upgrading and restructuring by providing up to \$200,000 for each enterprise. As of mid-April, more than 1 400 SMEs have registered at the programme website, and more than 400 applications have been received.

In recent years, a "start-up tide" has begun to emerge in Hong Kong. Through the ties and collaboration of the Government, industry, academia and research sector, a thriving start-up environment has gradually come into being. At present, around 2 000 start-ups from around the world are operating start-up businesses in the co-work locations, incubation centres and accelerators operated

by 38 operators. Compared to 2015, the rate of increase has reached 24%. Furthermore, renowned multinational enterprises and venture funds have set up various start-up programmes and funds in Hong Kong. The confidence of international enterprises and investors in start-up enterprises in Hong Kong is thus evident.

Besides the incubation programmes and funding provided by HKSTPC and Cyberport, a \$2 billion Innovation and Technology Venture Fund will be launched shortly to co-invest in Hong Kong's technology start-ups with selected venture capital funds at an investment ratio of about one to two. Apart from introducing private capital, we also hope to introduce the expertise and networks of risk management funds, with a view to assisting in the growth of start-ups in Hong Kong.

An Inno Space will be set up by the Hong Kong Productivity Council this year to provide work space and technical support for start-up entrepreneurs and young people. Users may develop their innovative ideas into industrial designs for transformation into products through prototype production. An Inno Space will be able to assist in nurturing a start-up culture in Hong Kong and give support to "re-industrialization".

Technology is inextricably linked with our lives. Like the Government, quite many Members hope to see a smarter Hong Kong. A consultancy study for the formulation of a smart city blueprint for Hong Kong will be completed shortly. Its major areas of study include smart government services, environment, health care, transport, and so on. The study will also map out a set of digital infrastructure and technical standards to facilitate various government departments, public organizations and the business community in achieving wider and safer adoption of the most advanced technology products and know-how, including Internet of Things, big data, cyber security technology, and so on. We will work hand in hand with relevant departments and all sectors of the community in developing a smart city.

In addition, a \$500 million Innovation and Technology Fund for Better Living will be launched next month to subsidize projects that will make the daily life of Hong Kong people more convenient, more comfortable and safer, or address the needs of specific groups. The scope of the Fund is so extensive that health, transport, education, safety, and so on, are covered. The first batch of projects is expected to be launched in 2018 for the benefit of the public.

Better services can be provided for the public with the timely introduction of appropriate technology. To this end, the Government internally has earmarked \$500 million for assisting various departments in employing technology to enhance efficiency and improve services in the coming five years. The earmarked funding will support technology projects conceived and taken forward by departments, including pilot projects.

With these remarks, President, I hope Honourable Members will pass the Appropriation Bill 2017. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now call upon the Financial Secretary to reply.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY (in Cantonese): Good morning, President and Honourable Members. After delivering the 2017-2018 Budget at the end of February, I have attended a number of forums, exchange sessions and interviews and listened to the views of the public, Members and various sectors of society on the Budget. I have also explained the principles and various initiatives of the Budget to local and overseas stakeholders on different occasions.

I am extremely grateful to Members for their valuable suggestions made on various policy areas of the Budget at the Council meeting two weeks ago. The three Secretaries of Departments have just given a brief response to issues under their respective purviews.

I will first give a brief account of the latest global and local economic conditions, followed by a report on the latest position of several issues in the Budget which are the concerns of Members.

So far this year, there has been continuous improvement in the global economy. The economic growth of developed countries remains modest while the performance of the Mainland economy is steady with positive momentum. In the middle of this month, the International Monetary Fund slightly raised the forecast for this year's global economic growth to 3.5%, which is 0.4 percentage point higher than that of 2016. Yet, there are still some potential threats to the economic outlook this year and we must therefore remain vigilant.

With regard to the United States, the recent economic figures are generally positive and there has been continuous improvement in the labour market,

providing favourable conditions for the economy to gather pace this year. However, the market is concerned about the direction of the trading policies of the United States. The United States Secretary of the Treasury indicated at the meeting of G20 held in March that while the United States has no intention to start any trade wars with other major economies, the external trade of the United States will be re-examined to ensure that the United States enjoys fair trade relations. In the report published by the United States Department of the Treasury in the middle of April, no country is classified as a currency manipulator. Moreover, the heads of state of China and the United States met in early April and agreed to formulate the 100-day plan on trade to negotiate various trade issues.

Subsequent to the decision made by the Federal Reserve of the United States in March to further raise the interest rate, it seems that the market concern about an increase in interest rate has lessened and the United States dollar has also softened. Yet, officials of the Federal Reserve predicted that the United States economy will continue to improve and the unemployment rate hit a 10-year record low of 4.5% in March while the interest rate may be further raised by 0.5% this year. If the economic growth of the United States accelerates or if the inflation pressure becomes larger than expected, the pace of raising the interest rate will be even quicker. As shown in the minutes of the meeting in March, many officials of the Federal Reserve opined that it might be time to consider and begin shrinking the balance sheet later this year, which indicated a risk that the United States might tighten its monetary policies. Besides, the divergence of monetary policies among major central banks may lead to a sudden reversal in global capital flows. Together with the heightened geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and the Korean Peninsula, the fluctuations in global financial markets and exchange rates may become intensified and investors must be cautious about the risks in this regard.

In Europe, the United Kingdom has formally triggered the Brexit process and there are considerable uncertainties over the negotiations with the European Union. Besides, the results of the presidential election of France as well as the general elections of the United Kingdom and Germany to be held in the coming few months have induced great concern. The market is concerned whether significant changes will take place in the direction of the economic integration of Europe in the future and whether such new changes may affect the stability of the global economic and financial situation.

In Asia, increases were recorded in regional trade over the past few months, thanks to stabilization in the global economy. The Mainland economy, being the engine of the regional economic growth, remains robust and its performance in the first quarter of this year is better than expected, with the year-on-year growth rate slightly increased to 6.9%. I am confident that the Mainland has ample policy headroom to achieve the official target of an annual economic growth rate of around 6.5%. In Japan, the recent economic indicators have shown improvement but the economic outlook is still restricted by the large amount of public debts and rapid population ageing in the country.

So far this year, the performance of Hong Kong economy has been steady with positive momentum. The exports of goods of Hong Kong have further strengthened in the first quarter, indicating a significant year-on-year growth of 10.3% in value terms. The number of visitor arrivals to Hong Kong has also improved with a year-on-year increase of 3.7% in the first quarter, outperforming the increase of 0.4% in the fourth quarter of last year. Nonetheless, it seems that the spending of tourists still takes time to rebound. The volume of retail sales declined by 3.6% year on year in the first two months of this year, and the rate of decline is similar to the rate of 3.7% in the fourth quarter of last year.

Given the subdued global inflation, mild pressure of imported inflation and modest economic growth which limited the increase in local cost, together with some short-term factors which resulted in a relatively high base of comparison in the first quarter of last year, the underlying inflation rate dropped to 1.4% in the first quarter of this year. I forecast that the underlying inflation rate for 2017 as a whole will be 2%.

With regard to the property market, increasing the supply of residential units through increasing land supply has always been the prime policy of the Government in ensuring the long-term, healthy and stable development of the property market. As a result of the efforts made by various government departments, the potential supply of residential units in the coming three to four years reached a record high of 96 000 units in late March, which indicates an increase of 50% since the inauguration of the current-term Government. With various sources combined, such as Government land sale, railway property development projects, projects of the Urban Renewal Authority and private redevelopment and development projects, the land supply for housing in this financial year actually has a capacity to provide about 32 000 flats, far exceeding the target of providing 18 000 flats by land supply for private housing each year.

Meanwhile, the Government announced a new round of demand-side management measures in early November last year to prevent the risk of a housing bubble. Subsequent to the introduction of the 15% New Residential Stamp Duty ("NRSD"), there has been a significant decrease in the transaction volume of residential properties while the rise in property prices has also slowed down. According to the record of the Inland Revenue Department, the monthly average number of residential property transactions subject to doubled ad valorem stamp duty or NRSD from December 2016 to March 2017 was around 500 cases, representing a drop of around 80% as compared with the monthly average of about 2 400 cases before the introduction of the new measures (that is, from September to November 2016). Amongst residential property transactions where buyers are Hong Kong permanent residents, 94% of the buyers do not own any other residential property in Hong Kong. It shows that the new measure is effective in reducing investment demand. Yet, market information indicates that there was a rapid hike in the number of transactions in February and March where local investors acquired residential properties by buying multiple flats under one agreement. As a result, the property market became buoyant with active trading while the rise in property prices has accelerated as well. The transaction volume in March this year soared month on month by 44% to around 5 900 cases and the rise in property prices has also picked up to 2%. In order to eradicate evasion of the new tax rate by investors through buying multiple flats under one agreement, the Government has tightened up the exemption arrangement for Hong Kong permanent residents under the mechanism of NRSD. Starting from 12 April, if a buyer acquires more than one residential property under a single instrument, the transaction concerned will no longer be exempted.

Although the property market has further heated up recently, fundamental changes have already occurred in its key factors. With the continuous normalization of the United States interest rate, the interest rate will only rise in the future. Besides, the increase in land supply over the past few years will result in a significant increase in the supply and production of first-hand residential properties in the future when compared with that of the past few years. Therefore, the tight demand-supply situation in the residential property market over the past few years will not recur and the risk in the property market is increasing.

The Government will keep a close watch on the development of the property market and urge members of the public that before making a decision to acquire a property, they must assess various potential risks carefully, especially

how their repayment ability will be affected by a change in the interest rate, and make decisions according to their ability.

All in all, the external environment has continued to improve since the beginning of this year and the economic indicators of Hong Kong in recent months are generally positive. I made a forecast in the Budget that the economy of Hong Kong will grow by 2% to 3% in real terms this year and the situation so far this year is generally in line with our earlier expectation. Nonetheless, given the complicated and unstable global political and economic climate, uncertainty still clouds the economic prospects for this year. Having regard to these factors and the fiscal affordability of the Government, I have introduced tax concessions and short-term relief measures involving \$35.1 billion, including tax reduction, increases in allowances, rates exemptions and provision of extra social security payments, so that we can share the fruits of economic development with members of the public, stimulate local consumption and preserve jobs as well as helping enterprises, particularly small and medium enterprises ("SMEs"), rise to challenges. Together with other spending initiatives, these tax concession and short-term relief measures will have a stimulus effect of 1.1% on the growth of the Gross Domestic Product ("GDP") for this year and maintain the steady growth of Hong Kong economy.

President, the Budget not only reflects the priorities of administration by the Government but also our values and vision which, we hope, can be realized with the deployment of resources. I have proposed three major objectives and approach of public finance in this Budget. The first objective is "developing the economy and improving people's livelihood". We must consolidate and strengthen the competitiveness of the pillar industries and provide support to industries with competitive edge and emerging industries so that the economy can prosper in a sustained and diversified manner while young people will have better job opportunities. The Government should also uphold the people-oriented principle and, on the premise of identifying priorities and taking into account its affordability, continue to allocate resources to improving people's livelihood. The second objective is "investing for the future and enhancing liveability". We will continue to improve the quality of life of the public and enhance the business environment of Hong Kong by investing in infrastructure, nurturing talents and promoting the development of innovation and technology. The third objective is "upholding social justice and sharing fruits of success". It is necessary for the Government to have a vision of building a fair and just society where people from all walks of life can share the fruits of economic advancement. We will

continue to deploy resources to poverty alleviation, elderly care, support for the disadvantaged and youth development so as to promote a caring and inclusive society and enhance upward social mobility.

The Government, with its existing fiscal strength, can adopt a proactive and progressive approach such that the measures for social welfare can be introduced concurrently with the implementation of different policies to enhance the edges of pillar industries and promote the development of emerging industries, thereby planning for the future of our society. The Chief Executive has put forward in his Policy Address this year an array of measures on poverty alleviation, care for the elderly and support for the disadvantaged to improve the livelihood of the grass roots and ease the burden of the cost of living on the needy. I have already earmarked resources in the Budget for fully supporting the implementation of such measures.

Pursuant to the aforementioned three major objectives and approach of public finance, the estimated recurrent government expenditure in 2017-2018 is higher than the 2016-2017 revised estimate by 7.4% or \$25.6 billion. The recurrent expenditure on education, social welfare and health care, which benefits the grass roots, accounts for about 60% of the government recurrent expenditure, exceeding \$210 billion in total. In fact, the recurrent expenditure on these three areas recorded a cumulative increase reaching 43% over the past five years. To keep pace with the rapid ageing of the population in Hong Kong, the recurrent expenditure on quite many initiatives will increase at a rapid rate as well. Take the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities as well as the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme as examples. Between 2012-2013 and 2017-2018, the recurrent expenditure on the two schemes would see four-fold and ten-fold increases to nearly \$1.2 billion and \$2.1 billion respectively. I think the money allocated for these measures is well spent because they can actually enhance the quality of life of the elderly.

As regards assistance for the retired elderly, the Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation Limited under my chairmanship announced early this month the major contents of the public annuity scheme, which provides an additional option of financial planning to the retired elderly and allows them to convert part of their savings into regular income which is long-term, stable, reliable and appealing for the rest of their lives. In addition to the Reverse Mortgage Programme, the public annuity scheme is another measure which helps the elderly to make better financial arrangements for their twilight years so that they can enjoy a more

pleasant retirement life. The scheme is well received by society in general after the announcement. I will be glad to examine the possibility of expanding the scale of this scheme without compromising the principle of financial prudence. An independent consultant is conducting validation and confirmation of the details of the scheme. It is expected that the details will be announced by the end of June this year and the scheme will be implemented by the middle of next year.

In addition to the tax and short-term relief measures as well as an array of support measures for the development of SMEs, I have proposed in the Budget this year to take a forward-looking approach to put \$61 billion of the annual surplus to good use by strengthening elderly services as well as residential care homes and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, supporting innovation development, constructing community facilities and promoting sport and youth development. Some Members criticized the use of the earmarked funds as lacking specific details. I hope Members can understand that as the term of office of the incumbent Government will come to an end on 30 June this year, I should, on grounds of political ethics, leave room for the next-term Government to deploy this amount of resources. I believe the next-term Government will give full consideration to various feasible and appropriate plans of using the funds and consult various stakeholders and the Legislative Council so that the social benefits of the resources can be fully realized.

As announced in my Budget at the end of February, the Government's surplus for 2016-2017 is estimated to be \$92.8 billion. According to the latest figures, as the revenue from land sales surged in February and March, the Government revenue has further increased by \$13.6 billion while the expenditure is \$4.4 billion lower than the revised estimate. Therefore, the Government's surplus for 2016-2017 will further increase by \$18 billion to \$110.8 billion. With regard to the additional surplus of \$18 billion, I have decided to earmark this amount of money for educational purposes, including the allocation of extra resources to the development of academic and scientific research for the higher education sector. The Education Bureau will follow up on the specific arrangements and details of resource allocation according to the established procedures of the Government.

The revenue from land sales in 2016-2017 is \$128 billion, which has reached a record high in Hong Kong and exceeded the \$100 billion mark for the first time, accounting for 22.3% of government revenue and equivalent to 5.1% of GDP. While it may appear to be gratifying that the Government, given the

additional surplus in the Treasury, has extra resources to do some work for society, it is actually a worrying situation. On the one hand, the soaring property prices are beyond the affordability of the public that it is difficult to achieve the goal of home ownership regardless of how hard they strive for it. It is not difficult to understand the reasons of their anger and discontent. Despite the best endeavours by the incumbent Government, the construction of most of the new residential units has yet to be completed so the difficulty in achieving home ownership faced by the public remains unsolved. The colleagues responsible for planning, land supply and housing still have to bite the bullet and persevere with their hard work. On the other hand, the soaring property prices have indicated that the risk of the residential property market is increasing, which is actually a worrying situation, especially when there will be an increasing supply of land in the future and an upward trend in interest rate.

In terms of promoting the economic development of Hong Kong, we will continue to strive to enhance the competitiveness of pillar industries, explore new markets and foster the diversified development of industries. Given the growing importance of emerging markets in the global economy, the development of new markets along the routes of the Belt and Road Initiative as well as the cooperation and partnership among cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area, we must seize the opportunity and give full play to the advantages of Hong Kong to explore new economic growth points.

I have established the Committee on Innovation, Technology and Re-industrialization ("the Committee") to coordinate the innovation and technology development and re-industrialization in Hong Kong so as to facilitate the diversified development of our industries in the future and provide more quality job opportunities to the public—particularly young people. The Committee, under my chairmanship, will hold the first meeting next month.

Besides, I am delighted that many members of the professional and business sectors support the establishment of a tax policy unit. Tax revenue is the foundation of government finances and I believe we all understand the concept that money is essential for the operation of the Government. It is necessary for me, as the Financial Secretary, to ensure that the tax revenue is stable and sufficient to support the huge amount of government expenditure and provision of social services; I further wish to support the development of industries and create wealth for Hong Kong by utilizing tax policies, which is exactly my reason for establishing a tax policy unit. The tax measures

implemented by the Government in recent years or those which will soon be implemented, including the proposal for encouraging more funds to domicile in Hong Kong and the proposal for attracting aircraft leasing and financing companies to Hong Kong for business development, will not only generate economic benefits and provide better job opportunities for us but also further consolidate Hong Kong's position as an international financial centre.

My colleagues and I have respectively conducted brainstorming sessions with members from the accountancy and business sectors early this month to discuss the tasks of the tax policy unit and the strategy for re-industrialization. The experts present at those sessions relayed the expectations of their sectors to us with enthusiasm and made recommendations in the hope of improving the work of the Government in these two areas. When it comes to the prime task of the tax policy unit, the experts present at the sessions agreed unanimously that tax policies should be utilized properly to promote the development of industries and economy. Such a consensus coincided exactly with my views. The tax policy unit will continue to engage in more exchanges with members from different sectors in future, give full consideration to the advantages, potential and needs of Hong Kong and foster the economic development of Hong Kong. The work in this aspect cannot be undertaken behind closed doors. We must, by making reference to the international experience and trend and taking into account the actual situation of Hong Kong, formulate policies in the light of the prevailing circumstances and ensure that the new policies are in compliance with international standards without being considered as "harmful tax measures".

The Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau will shortly draw up the direction and study areas, including giving priority to the study on the proposal for doubling tax deductions for expenditure on innovation and technology, so as to further promote the vigorous growth of new industries on the foundation of the significant efforts made by the Government in promoting the development of innovation and technology in the past two years.

President, Members have proposed 742 amendments to the Appropriation Bill this year. Although the number of amendments has been reduced to 185 subsequent to the ruling made by the President, discussions on individual items still take time and the time to be spent on voting alone will require more than six hours. While the Government will certainly give full support to the scrutiny work of the Legislative Council for the early passage of the Budget, the efficiency of the Legislative Council in deliberation on public policies actually warrants

public concern. In the previous four financial years during the term of the incumbent Government, it took over 16 days of meeting on average for the Legislative Council to complete the procedure from First Reading to the passage of the Appropriation Bill of the respective years, which is six times the length of the average time spent on scrutinizing the Appropriation Bill by the previous terms of the Legislative Council since 1997.

The funds on account totalling \$95.2 billion previously authorized by the Legislative Council are sufficient to meet government expenditure up to the end of May. If the Budget were not passed by the end of May, government departments and public organizations would begin to see resources running out in early June, finding it difficult to maintain the delivery of public services. Also, various practical and pressing initiatives to benefit the public and relieve people's plight could not be implemented in a timely manner.

I implore Members to support the early passage of the Appropriation Bill 2017 in the interest of the community as a whole as well as the efficiency and competitiveness of Hong Kong so that these initiatives can be implemented early.

President, I so submit. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the Appropriation Bill 2017 be read the Second time. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

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

(Members raised their hands)

Mr CHAN Chi-chuen rose to claim a division.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr CHAN Chi-chuen has claimed a division. The division bell will ring for five 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.

Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Prof Joseph LEE, Mr Jeffrey LAM, Mr WONG Ting-kwong, Ms Starry LEE, Mr CHAN Hak-kan, Mr CHAN Kin-por, Mr WONG Kwok-kin, Mrs Regina IP, Mr Steven HO, Mr Frankie YICK, Mr YIU Si-wing, Mr MA Fung-kwok, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung, Ms Alice MAK, Mr KWOK Wai-keung, Mr Christopher CHEUNG, Dr Helena WONG, Mr IP Kin-yuen, Dr Elizabeth QUAT, Mr POON Siu-ping, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, Mr Andrew WAN, Mr Jimmy NG, Dr Junius HO, Mr HO Kai-ming, Mr LAM Cheuk-ting, Mr Holden CHOW, Mr SHIU Ka-fai, Mr Wilson OR, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan, Dr Pierre CHAN, Mr CHAN Chun-ying, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, Mr HUI Chi-fung, Mr LUK Chung-hung, Mr LAU Kwok-fan, Mr Kenneth LAU and Mr KWONG Chun-yu voted for the motion.

Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, Mr Dennis KWOK, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr Alvin YEUNG, Mr CHU Hoi-dick, Mr SHIU Ka-chun, Dr CHENG Chung-tai and Dr YIU Chung-yim voted against the motion.

THE PRESIDENT, Mr Andrew LEUNG, did not cast any vote.

THE PRESIDENT announced that there were 50 Members present, 40 were in favour of the motion and 9 against it. Since the question was agreed by a majority of the Members present, he therefore declared that the motion was passed.

CLERK (in Cantonese): Appropriation Bill 2017.

Council went into committee.

Committee Stage

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Committee stage. Council is now in committee.

Regarding the debate arrangements for committee's consideration of the Bill, Members have been informed that committee will conduct a total of eight debates. The first debate involves heads with no amendments. We shall proceed to vote on whether the sums for the relevant heads stand part of the Schedule immediately following the conclusion of the debate. Committee will then conduct the second to sixth debates on the amendments, the themes of which are based on the grouping of areas for the debate on the Motion of Thanks in respect of the Policy Address this year.

Following the conclusion of debates and voting on the amendments, committee will conduct the seventh debate on heads with amendments. Following the conclusion of the debate, we shall vote on whether the sums for the heads stand part of the Schedule together, and then on whether the Schedule stands part of the Bill. The last debate is on clauses 1 and 2. We shall vote on whether these clauses stand part of the Bill immediately following the conclusion of the debate. Finally, Council will vote on the Third Reading of the Bill.

I have consulted Members on the debate arrangements, and I expect all proceedings on the Bill to be completed in about 60 hours. Where necessary, I will adjust the allocation of time for the debates in response to the actual situation.

APPROPRIATION BILL 2017

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): In accordance with Rule 68 of the Rules of Procedure, committee will first consider the Schedule.

I now propose the question to you and that is: That the sums for the following heads stand part of the Schedule.

CLERK (in Cantonese): Heads 23, 24, 27, 31, 37, 45, 48, 59, 63, 78, 79, 96, 100, 116, 120, 121, 136, 155, 160, 162, 166, 168, 169, 173, 181 and 188.

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): The Clerk has just read out the heads with no amendments. Committee now proceeds to the first debate on the above heads. Members have been informed that there are about seven hours for committee to conduct this debate.

Does any Member wish to speak?

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): Chairman, some items in this Budget have made the people of Hong Kong extremely angry and puzzled. Most importantly, when we wonder what is worth celebrating in respect of the 20th anniversary of the reunification of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("SAR") Government is going to lavish \$640 million on organizing the so-called celebration activities for the reunification. Some people say that among these activities costing \$640 million, some can be brought up for discussion. That is right because, in the past the Government, the pro-establishment camp and many organizations would only organize activities offering seasonal delicacies, giving away petty favours. Now the Government will not provide members of the public with universal retirement protection. Neither will it properly provide health care or elderly services. The elderly are kept waiting for the relevant services until they pass away. Yet the Government will hand out some "fortune bags" to the public. Like the pro-establishment camp, it will also prepare some "fortune bags". What things are these bags? There are caps, coasters, badges, photos known as "Hong Kong Perspectives", etc. ...

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Dr KWOK Ka-ki, now the debate is about the heads with no amendments.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): Chairman, no amendment is proposed to this head. I wonder if you know that I have proposed an amendment to the estimated annual expenditure of \$640 million, but it is ruled as inadmissible in the Legislative Council ...

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Now on which head are you speaking?

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): Head 63.

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Please continue with your speech.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): It is about the Home Affairs Department. Chairman, is there any problem?

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Please continue.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): Chairman, would you please read the documents, too. What do we see here? It is a most outrageous thing. In the 20 years since the reunification in 1997, we have seen a serious loss of confidence of Hongkongers in "one country, two systems", "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong" and "a high degree of autonomy". We have seen the "one country, two systems" ruined. As regards "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong", a second team has appeared out of the blue and keeps publishing articles now. Recently, a seminar on the Basic Law was held in Beijing, during which WANG Zhenmin and other Mainland officials indicated that the second echelon governing Hong Kong turns out to be in the Western District.

Under such circumstances, what is the point of us talking about celebrating the reunification? This is not what Hongkongers want, not "fortune bags". Does the Government really wish to repay the public in the Budget? What promise did the current-term Government make to sweet-talk the elderly when it assumed office? I remember very well that LEUNG Chun-ying sweet-talked the elderly by saying that universal retirement protection was certainly necessary. Many of those elderly people, while waiting for it, have already passed away, but universal retirement protection is still nowhere to be seen. To put it bluntly, this is how he has cheated and deceived people. Having deceitfully gained the so-called popularity, he assumed office and kicked out the elderly after using them. This is a portrayal of how the Government works. What purpose can these "fortune bags" serve after members of the public have collected them? This is the first point.

The second point is, some celebration activities for the reunification are baffling. For example, the Government will co-organize exhibitions with the Musée du Louvre and the British Museum. We have visited the Musée du Louvre and the British Museum before. On the surface, there is not any problem, but if we take a closer look, we will find that the Musée du Louvre and the British Museum are full of loot stolen from Mainland China. In this regard, we are really not at all patriotic, colluding with foreign forces to display these exhibits of loot in celebration of the reunification. We should not hold such lowly events, should we?

Actually, speaking of the reunification, we need to conduct a review. On 1 July every year during the 20 years since the reunification, tens of thousands of Hongkongers would come forward to question the Government: why is there no democracy in Hong Kong? Why is dual universal suffrage which should be implemented in accordance with Articles 45 and 68 of the Basic Law still not implemented? Why has this Government become lousier and lousier? Why do functional constituencies continue to exist and last forever? Why are the authorities still making irresponsible remarks now? Beijing has now handed down the imperial edict that we should not talk about constitutional reform in the next five or even 10 years. What does that mean? In the past, they would act hesitantly and put up a show to discuss constitutional reform so as to demonstrate that they were democratic, adding that there would be universal suffrage, but now they do not bother to stage any show anymore. The Mainland officials have even gone so far as to resort to verbal coercion, telling us not to move rashly when "777", Carrie LAM, has not yet assumed office. They have already stated explicitly that they will not discuss constitutional reform with us.

We, Hongkongers, should still remember that a few years ago, the Umbrella Movement took place, lasting 79 days with the aim of getting rid of the intolerable 31 August proposals of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress ("NPCSC"). I thought that in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the reunification, there should be some good news from a State leader—I do not know whether President XI or Premier LI Keqiang will come to Hong Kong then. We all know what Hongkongers wish to have. We just humbly wish to have "a high degree of autonomy" and "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong", granted to us by the Basic Law, realized in this place, but all these have turned out to be untrue. They are only lies and empty talk. The Government has told the people of Hong Kong to celebrate the occasion. If we

now ask any man in the street whether he will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the reunification, he will ask whether something will be handed out and whether there will be "fortune bags"—people think the "fortune bags" will be like those in Japan—what wishful thinking. Of course not. "Fortune" here just stands for "fools". Seven million people will be treated as fools and then receive "fortune bags" as gifts. I wonder if such bags are meant to make a mockery or what.

A sum of \$640 million will be spent on organizing such meaningless activities. Never mind the distribution of "fortune bags". They are distributed to cheat and deceive the elderly, but we think they are still better than nothing. However, there are many high-sounding activities and ceremonies costing tens of million dollars. Some of them will even be held on the Mainland. Frankly, I have no idea about the Mainlanders' views on celebrating the reunification on the Mainland. To the Mainlanders, Hong Kong is definitely a shopping paradise. Nevertheless, I do not mind if the Mainlanders come to Hong Kong to see how Hong Kong, under suppression, still enjoys a little freedom of speech, freedom to express political views, and freedom of assembly and demonstration. This is something good.

However, if the Mainlanders are wooed to come to Hong Kong to participate in the celebrations, I would like to ask them to take a good look at the truth in Hong Kong now. Over the past five years, Hong Kong society has been severely torn apart. The reason is that LEUNG Chun-ying needs to follow the order of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong SAR to gradually take away the principles of "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong" and "a high degree of autonomy" expressly stipulated in the Basic Law, and even the rule of law, from Hong Kong. We all know the present situation of the rule of law in Hong Kong. When there is anything not to their liking, they will seek an interpretation of the Basic Law by NPC and move the goalposts. An election method on which we have agreed is deemed as wrong after the interpretation of the Basic Law by NPC. The "Three-step Process" can become the "Five-step Process", and it can become the "Seven-step Process" or "Nine-step Process" anytime in the future. It is up to them anyway. What kind of celebrations is that for the reunification? What is there to celebrate?

What Hongkongers want is justice. When have the promises expressly written in the Basic Law ever been honoured? What about the situation our in our courts? Some people have suddenly slammed the Judges without any

reason, saying that "the people arrested by the Police are released by the Judges", whereas some other people have remarked that there are too many foreign Judges, which is a great problem. These were decisions jointly made by them back then. As we all know, the majority of members of the Basic Law Drafting Committee were Mainlanders. The rules of the game were set by them. The goalposts were set by them. Everything was said by them, but now they have gone back on their words. Hence, do not blame the people of Hong Kong for being resentful to the 20th anniversary of the reunification. They really do not find anything worth celebrating.

Of course, never mind about such things as spending money to invite the English Premier League football teams to come to Hong Kong. The people of Hong Kong consider that the Government is merely making an excuse to lavish money, but some people will indeed participate in it. However, a most important question raised by members of the public 20 years after the reunification is: what have we got? What progress have we made?

I once talked with a Member of the pro-establishment camp who said with a conscience: "Now when you do anything, do not expect you can make any progress. You should find yourself lucky if you do not need to take three steps backward." That is to say, the Government keeps oppressing us every day, testing our bottom line. Day after day, it depletes the tiny bit of the so-called democracy, freedom and legal system left with us. It tries to take away some first. If no one says anything or feels hurt, it will take away some more until there is nothing left. This is a portrayal of what is happening in Hong Kong now. As such, what is worth spending \$640 million to celebrate? What is there we should feel happy about?

We learnt at the meeting of the Establishment Subcommittee yesterday that the Government had spent some \$5 million on the Chairman of NPCSC ZHANG Dejiang's visit to Hong Kong. I wonder how many tens of million dollars the Government will spend when the relevant officials visit Hong Kong on 1 July.

What is most heart-rending is that despite the Government's possession of hundreds or thousands of billion dollars today, it will only make irresponsible remarks when it faces the most isolated petty grass-roots masses who have no bargaining power, people living in subdivided units, as well as the elderly living in private residential care homes, etc. We often ask: why do the new generation

in Hong Kong lack passion for the Motherland? Buddy, what have the authorities done which can make them have passion for the Motherland? They have seen numerous corrupt officials on the Mainland, and according to the latest news, it turns out that even WANG Qishan is suspected of corruption, too. The one responsible for fighting corruption is a corrupt official. How can they feel any attachment to the Motherland? They have seen the Vice Chairmen of the Central Military Commission, such as XU Houcai and GUO Boxiong, found one after another to be seriously corrupt officials. At the provincial level, there are corrupt officers. So are there at the municipal level. There are corrupt cadres at all levels.

Then let us look at what happened last Friday. A human rights lawyer who actually was not at any fault himself had merely defended other unarmed human rights activists, including TAN Zuoren, who demanded an investigation into the jerry-built projects. For this reason, he was arrested with trumped-up charges and sentenced to an imprisonment of 12 years. Then a magnanimous grace was bestowed. His sentence was reduced by two years to 10 years. The new generation watch this kind of news every day. How can the Government still tell them to throw themselves into the embrace of the Motherland? What kind of embrace is that? It is really scary. Now all these things are still not enough, and here comes the Bay Area. What is the Bay Area about? The bare truth is, it is about telling members of the public to return the Mainland and live there more often and pay more visits to Enping to enjoy the hot springs. Are these human words? The elderly have worked hard in Hong Kong all their lives. In their twilight years, when all their children and grandchildren are in Hong Kong, the Government tells them to return to the Mainland to spend the rest of their lives because the goods are cheap there. Of course, it also needs to vacate more land so that the Mainland tycoons will come to Hong Kong. Otherwise, those properties on sale will be insufficient for them to buy. Right, they are in fact insufficient. The HNA Group wants to come here to make a bid. Every company wants to come here to make a bid. The land for luxury flats is not enough. Recently, some analysts have pointed out that it will succeed in bidding for more than 60% of the land in the future because a little bit of money dropped by it is already sufficient for buying all the land in Hong Kong.

Please do not deceive the people of Hong Kong. We have been losing our colour. We have been regressing. In what it said, the Government is actually telling the people of Hong Kong to step aside. In the past, the Government

would pay some lip service, but now it does not even bother to do so, leaving no leeway in its words. The only thing it has not done yet is sending the elderly up into the woods to wait for death, as depicted in the Japanese film *The Ballad of Narayama*. This is a portrayal of what happens in Hong Kong. The elderly have been told to return to the Mainland to live out their old age, while the poor have been told to go to enjoy hot springs. Now they do not even have money to support themselves in their twilight years, and they are not provided with health care or residential care services. Seeing the Hong Kong Government in such a state, maybe the best thing to do is to close one's eyes and return to the Mainland so that one will see nothing. But such words are cold and mean. Under such circumstances today, we are asked to allocate \$640 million for the celebration of the reunification. I do not know what we can celebrate, since the people of Hong Kong have even not finished grieving.

I so submit.

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): Chairman, as there are only a few Members in the Chamber now, according to Rule 17(3) of the Rules of Procedure, I request a headcount before making my speech.

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Will the Clerk please ring the bell to summon Members back to the Chamber.

(While the summoning bell was ringing, **THE CHAIRMAN'S DEPUTY, MS STARRY LEE**, took the Chair)

(After the summoning bell had been rung, a number of Members returned to the Chamber but did not return to their seats)

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Will Members please return to their seats. Does any other Member wish to speak?

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): Let me make it clear at the outset, I did not frantically make requests for headcounts. However, just now there were less than 10 Members in the Chamber and so I requested a headcount. Should there be 20 or 30 Members in the Chamber, I would not do so.

Returning to this group of heads with no amendments, please note that the number of heads in this group is the highest in years. Last year in 2016, there were only 10 heads with no amendments; there are 26 this year. Why? It is definitely because the President has made a bold and definitive ruling to axe many amendments. In this regard, I wish to make two points. First, though Members whose amendments have been ruled inadmissible cannot appeal and "avenge", the President has stated that Members whose amendments have been ruled inadmissible can present them in the debate on heads with no amendments, just as what Dr KWOK Ka-ki did. Therefore, I hope that Honourable colleagues who found their amendments unreasonably ruled inadmissible by the President can present their amendments in this debate session.

Separately, why are there so many heads with no amendments? First, it is of course a result of the President's more "ruthless" ruling. Second, we encountered many difficulties in drafting the amendments, including late replies from the Government to our questions. Let me give an example, but I will not go into the details. I wanted to reduce the expenditure on the Territory-wide System Assessment ("TSA")—Primary Three TSA. The authorities had not provided me with the relevant figures. Initially they said they did not have any breakdowns but only combined figures for Primary Three, Primary Six and Secondary Three. Later in the special meetings of the Finance Committee, I made enquiries and kept pursuing the case. Only on the last day that I obtained the relevant figures. Eventually I managed to propose an amendment before the deadline. However, I know the amendments proposed by some Honourable colleagues have been ruled inadmissible as they involved tricky figures across several heads.

Deputy Chairman, thank you for your tolerance. I now present the first head which I would like to discuss in this debate session, that is "Head 45—Fire Services Department". I wonder if Honourable colleagues still remember that last year, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan who was a Member at the time and I proposed amendments to this head, but this year this head carries no

amendment. I remember clearly in the debate on the Budget last year that as soon as I finished my speech, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan rose to speak and called me a malevolent person for seeking to reduce the expenditure for the Fire Services Department ("FSD") and that instead I should be sent to a firefighting operation. In the event of my death in the line of duty she would make her share of funeral contribution. We should have memories of this episode and I am not harbouring any grudges.

However, I wish to tell Members and I will say it again this year that in the last four years, that was the last Legislative Council, I had proposed reductions in the amounts of heads in relation to some FSD expenses. However, every time I had made it very clear that we were not malicious in considering FSD had too much funding that warranted a reduction. On the contrary, I found that FSD had insufficient funding which was spent improperly. Hence, through amendments I proposed reducing FSD expenses and made it an agenda item for discussion, which could even be put to the vote, such that Members could make their position known during the debate on the Budget.

Certainly I have not proposed any amendment to head 45 this year. I still need to point out here that there have been many problems concerning the use of resources and establishment of FSD last year. This year, some Members have proposed reductions in the amounts of other heads, and it did not mean the heads should not exist and should be entirely removed. We should understand the reasons for the reductions based on the arguments presented by Members in their speeches.

I remember that last year, apart from Members—Members from the pro-establishment camp—some so-called fire services groups had issued some statements to oppose our proposals for reductions in the expenses of fire services. We instantly made clarifications.

Last year in the course of the No. 4 alarm fire at the Kowloon Bay mini-storage, we were having a debate in the Legislative Council. As a result, some people were mistaken that we requested a reduction of the expenses for fire services to cut the number of fire appliances and firemen. Fighting fire means saving lives. How can fires be put out with fewer fire appliances and firemen? I had given explanations to them repeatedly. But some people just would not

listen to any explanation and took one point out of context to kick up a fuss, claiming that I wanted to filibuster and randomly reduce any amount even if I did not intend to. According to them, firemen were risking their lives, but I wanted to reduce their salaries. Without pay who would fight the fires?

I hereby solemnly declare that the expenditure for FSD should be increased and the remuneration of firemen should be improved. Unfortunately, we, as Legislative Council Members, even in the course of scrutinizing the Budget, have no power to propose any increases in the expenditure for FSD.

After the incident last year, I believe the general public consider the majority of firemen very brave and noble and deserve fairer treatment. However, do people know that it was not us proposing reductions in expenses for fire services, and not Members who proposed amendments last year, but FSD itself?

Looking at Programme (1) Fire Services of FSD, the estimate was \$3,446 million. However, the actual expense as at this year is only \$3,425 million. People wonder why FSD had acquired the funding but did not use it up and recorded a balance. People would think if there is a balance, does it mean it needs to be reduced? People find it strange that, as the pay of firemen should be adjusted upwards according to the Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism, the actual expense for fire services should be higher than the estimate, but the actual figure is not higher but lower? One of the reasons I have found after investigation is there is a possible reduction in the expense for other specialist supplies and equipment so that the actual estimate for Programme (3) in 2016-2017 is lower than the original figure. Nevertheless, as the Budget only sets out the combined expense for ambulance service and specialist supplies and equipment, I cannot ascertain if FSD's actual expense for specialist supplies and equipment is lower than the original estimate.

People may ask, that was the situation last year, what about this year? This year, the estimate for fire services is \$3,700 million, which is 8.3% higher than last year. Nonetheless, judging by the experience last year, the actual expense for fire services can be lower than the estimate. Will this 8.3% of increase from \$3,446 million to \$3,700 million actually occur? As a matter of fact, I believe an increase of 8.3% in the estimate is still not adequate, because

most of it will be used for the recruitment of more firemen, but not improvement in portable equipment for firemen. After the No. 4 alarm fire at the Kowloon Bay mini-storage, a lot of citizens have requested the Government to improve fireproof clothing and related communication devices for firemen. We need to note that the estimate of the expense for specialist supplies and equipment this year is \$88,260,000, \$1,000,000 less than the revised estimate in 2016-2017. Why did this expense drop instead of grow?

Therefore, if I have the power—we do not; none of the Legislative Council Members do—I would first significantly increase the expenses of Programme (1) Fire Service. I reckon that, though the job of firemen carries a higher risk than that of police officers and the former has a better public image than the latter, fireman has a lower pay. The salary points of firemen generally increase according to the General Disciplined Services Pay Scale, while police officers have their own pay scale. From rank and file to commanders, firemen receive worse remuneration than the police. It is absolutely unfair and unjust to the firemen. It is a view not of me alone, for some Members from the pro-establishment camp also think that a review should be conducted in this regard. Hence, if we have the power, we should not reduce the expenditure for FSD but significantly increase it. I consider an increase of \$40 million or \$50 million reasonable, especially after the entire pay mechanism has been reviewed, it should at least be brought on par with that of the police.

We think there is a need to increase the expenses for fire services, but I also hope FSD can put public funds and resources to proper use. In the past we had made such a point when proposing to set up an agenda item to reduce FSD expenses. Every year the Audit Commission issues reproaches or reminders to FSD on whether its resources have been properly used. According to the Director of Audit's report published in October 2016, FSD had procured 37 fire appliances, but the Government terminated the contracts after paying part of the costs, causing a four-year delay in the commissioning of the fire appliances. FSD procured a fireboat and some speedboats in 2012-2013. The delivery of the fireboat was delayed for four years until 2019, incurring an additional cost of \$13,300,000. FSD decided in 2015 to extend the serviceable life of the Third Generation Mobilizing System for five years. However, as the maintenance service could not be extended at the same time given the terms of contract signed at the time of procurement, separate arrangements had to be made with the

contractor, resulting in a surge in cost which is expected to be \$390 million over five years. The prerequisite for our approval of funding to FSD is it must be worthwhile. Whether it is well spent, any neglect arises or flaws in the system are detected, I must take this opportunity to point them out.

While it is agreed that improvement should be made to fire services, I wish to point out that the support and remuneration given to ambulancemen are also crucial. Every year I would speak for the ambulancemen when proposing amendments. Over the years, I have been pointing out that FSD has afforded unfair treatment to ambulancemen. It favours the fire service but discriminates against the ambulance service, leading to a manpower shortage of ambulancemen, unreasonable rostering and poor meal arrangements. I remember that after I had made such statements regarding the reductions in FSD expenses, some ambulancemen thanked me for expressing their dissatisfaction with poor arrangements over the years to FSD. However, sorry, it is my second term as a Member, and in the last four years, I have put my views across but have not been able to make FSD improve the resources and remuneration of ambulancemen.

Reviewing the figures, in 2012, the number of staff of Programme (3) ambulance service of FSD was 2 833. As at 31 March 2018, the estimate of staff number will be 3 074, an increase of 240 or 8.5% in six years. At the same time, the turnouts of ambulances in response to calls have increased from 778 000 in 2012 to the estimated 848 000 in 2017, representing an increase rate of 8.9% which is higher than that of manpower growth. As regards another serious problem with which ambulancemen are beset, probably today we can all experience it first-hand, that is, as you are enjoying your meals I request a headcount and you have to return to the Chamber when you hear the summoning bell ringing. In today's meeting, when the summoning bell rings later on, we can all experience first-hand the plight of the ambulancemen. Already bearing an excessive workload, it is commonly known that ambulancemen also suffer from interruptions during their meal breaks. Over the last few years, ambulancemen have been requesting fixed and continuous meal breaks. Due to the manpower shortage, many ambulancemen have to be deployed during their meal breaks. Therefore, when I raised this question in 2014, ambulancemen came to the Legislative Council in demonstration and showed their recognition of my views and their support of me speaking for them.

Has there been any improvement in the last three years? According to the reply given by the Government at the special meetings of the Finance Committee, the Government could only provide the percentage points of frontline ambulancemen who were able to take a continuous 30-minute meal break in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016; it is such magnanimous grace that a 30-minute meal break is granted. The figures of the two years stand at around 96% to 97%, meaning the target of 30-minute meal breaks has largely been achieved.

You may not have any particular feeling about the figures, but I wish to tell Members that the Government's definition of the so-called "a continuous meal break of at least 30 minutes" is slightly misleading. The Government did not explain the meaning of "a continuous meal break of at least 30 minutes". In its reply to the question on meal break of frontline ambulancemen given on 2 July 2014, the Government said "with the implementation of measures in recent years, there has been considerable improvement in the meal break arrangements for ambulancemen. The percentage of day-shift ambulancemen having a continuous meal break of at least 30 minutes in the designated period has increased from 76% in 2009 to 85% in 2013." The reply has a note attached to it, explaining the meaning of a continuous 30-minute meal break. "It includes those having a continuous 30-minute meal break for their first meal and those with their first meal interrupted"—just as I will interrupt your meal break later—"but subsequently having another continuous 30-minute meal break." It means that a meal which is interrupted once is considered a continuous 30-minute meal break, and in this way the figure is higher than 90%. It indicates that the so-called continuous meal break may mean after an ambulanceman has taken the first bite of his meal, he will be deployed and will be allowed to continue with his meal for 30 minutes upon return from deployment. May I ask the authorities how they can have the heart to do so? After an ambulanceman returns from deployment and takes out the half-eaten meal, of course the authorities have to guarantee he has time to finish his meal. However, nowadays such a definition (*The buzzer sounded*) ... I will continue in the next session.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr Jeremy TAM, please speak.

(Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung stood up)

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr Jeremy TAM, please hold on. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, what is your point?

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): I think a quorum is not present in the Chamber.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Will the Clerk please ring the bell to summon Members back to the Chamber.

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

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr Jeremy TAM, please speak.

MR JEREMY TAM (in Cantonese): Deputy Chairman, we do not have too many opportunities like this in a year that allows us to spend quite some time explaining to the public those policies or arrangements with the government structure which, in our view, are problematic or drawing the attention of the relevant authorities to them and calling for improvement.

Today, I will speak on "Head 100: Marine Department". I think it is necessary to make some changes to the structure of the Marine Department ("MD") and this, of course, may involve financial changes. Why am I talking about MD? Deputy Chairman, we saw in the past that actually, comparatively few colleagues would discuss MD in the debate on the Budget. It was the accident at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge which claimed the lives of workers that first drew my attention to this respect. Subsequently, I looked up a lot of different information, trying to find out what should be done to protect workers when they work on water and what codes of practice should be drawn up. Finally I came across this Safety Guide for Construction Work over/near Water.

Deputy Chairman, this type of safety guide is normally drawn up by the Labour Department but as this guide has to do with work over water, MD was therefore involved in drawing it up and I believe MD had a part to play in vetting and approving it. At a special meeting held previously, that very accident was discussed but I found that the officials (including representatives from MD) who attended the meeting failed to answer many questions and worse still, they did not know how to answer them, including the area within which a rescue boat should be moored away from the place of work, or the time within which the rescue boat must arrive at the place of work. It is only when we have these answers can we know in case workers are caught in troubles, the fastest time for them to be rescued and whether the people on board must have certain qualifications or experience. At first I thought that these questions were simple and there was no reason that at a special meeting convened purely to discuss this incident, the officials from the Highways Department responsible for this item and even none of the officials from MD could answer these questions. They only replied that rescuers would arrive there, and an official from the Highways Department even said that it would take half an hour. I asked him how this half an hour was worked out and where this rule was stipulated. Again, they failed to give an answer.

Then I tried to look up information from all sources and finally came across this guide. I found that indeed there is no such stipulation. It only says that with regard to rescue and emergency arrangement, rescue or evacuation teams of suitable capacity should be organized to deal with emergency situations. As for the speed of the boat, the distance from the place of work, the personnel on board and the equipment required, nothing is mentioned at all. Since MD has taken part in drawing up this guide, which staff members of MD are responsible for this? This is why I wish to bring up this issue at this meeting for discussion on the Budget. I think these guidelines made by MD are unclear, and MD has failed really to consider a very practical question and that is, in case a worker fell into the water, how long would it take for a rescue boat to arrive at the scene? Deputy Chairman, I think this is a most reasonable and normal question but really, never had I thought that this safety guide jointly compiled by MD is entirely silent on these aspects.

Deputy Chairman, I then looked at the structure of MD. What I found convinced me of the need to speak on it at this meeting. Members may not have

noticed that MD investigates 400-odd accidents every year. Members, it is 400-odd cases, which means at least one case a day, and perhaps an accident has occurred today, just that it may or may not involve fatalities, but accidents occur every day. This is not only the number of this year. According to the relevant information, from 2010 to 2015, the number remained at 400-odd cases each year. Why should I talk about this? Because according to the current practice of the Civil Aviation Department ("CAD"), and as some Honourable colleagues who are members of the relevant panel may know, investigations into accidents are conducted separately by CAD. Deputy Chairman, it has been CAD's practice that in the event of an accident or when a report is required under the Mandatory Occurrence Reporting system, the case is dealt with by CAD internally but in case of a major incident or accident, the Director-General of Civil Aviation will instantly put on another hat and become the Chief Inspector of Accidents, leading an investigation team to probe into the serious incident or aviation accident.

It sounds that there seems to be no particular problem but Deputy Chairman, it is certainly not true that there is no problem. Why? Because apart from drawing up the relevant laws, ensuring safety of flights, and so on, it is also a role of CAD to provide aviation services, such as the air traffic control service provided by frontline air traffic control personnel. Therefore, any accident may involve the staff or certain functions of CAD. In this connection, as pointed out by the industry many years ago, such an investigation should be taken out and made independent by setting up an investigation branch to handle it, which is now truly brought into practice after many years of efforts. The underlying reason for this to come into practice is that the International Civil Aviation Organization ("ICAO") has made it a requirement for compliance by all of its members, requiring the agency investigating an accident to be independent of the civil aviation authorities.

In any case, we are still glad to see this direction of development. But coming back to MD, as I said just now, under the existing system of CAD, the Director-General of Civil Aviation will lead the investigation work in his capacity as the Chief Inspector of Accidents. As for MD, with due respect, I would say that their practice is several grades lower than that of CAD, as it is an Acting Assistant Director of the Multi-lateral Policy Division who is responsible for such an investigation and actually he does not carry out the investigation by himself

for he is only in charge of it. It is his immediate subordinate who actually carries out the investigation, that is, an officer from the Marine Accident Investigation and Shipping Security Policy Branch. What is the problem? According to the paper of MD, they even thought that they have already made an improvement. Why? In the paper it is pointed out that since January 2000 the Marine Accident Investigation Section is no longer under the Shipping Division and that this move enables marine accidents to be investigated independently of other Divisions of MD. But this is unreasonable indeed, because who are the staff in the Marine Accident Investigation and Shipping Security Policy Branch that I talked about just now, the department responsible for all the investigation work? Its staff includes senior surveyors of ships, surveyors of ships, assistant ship inspectors, and so on. In the Lamma Island maritime disaster, we have precisely seen where the problem lies, which was highlighted in one of the allegations too.

Of course, concerning the independent investigation into the Lamma Island maritime disaster, I will go into more details later if the time permits. Actually Members can read the report now by signing a declaration on secrecy. I declare that I have read the report but certainly I will not disclose the details in it. But what am I trying to say? In 2012 when the Lamma Island maritime disaster occurred, why did the Government eventually decide to establish an independent commission of inquiry to investigate this incident? It was precisely because there were queries about whether the surveyors of ships, senior surveyors of ships, and so on, whom I mentioned just now did not carry out the ship inspection work properly, hence resulting in this incident that injured and killed quite a lot of people. That is to say, we saw that there were these queries before, queries about MD investigating their own staff. This is why I saw a big problem when examining the structure of MD.

As I said just now, such an investigation is carried out by an official of the rank of Assistant Director and actually, the investigation is not carried out by himself, just that the results have to be reported to him. As I have said, it is his subordinate who carries out the investigation and I believe his post may probably be at ranked D1 under the government structure. If we endorse the practice adopted by CAD and as it is a requirement imposed by ICAO, should MD not follow suit?

If Members take exception to this view, arguing that aeroplanes and ships are different, never mind, Deputy Chairman, but let us look again at the Lamma Island incident. To put it bluntly, why was it that we seemed to be not trusting MD in investigating their own staff? The reason is identical. When investigating a case, should we not look into why it happened, what room there is for improvement in its wake and after the investigation, and whether the recurrence of similar accidents will be reduced after improvement is made? Deputy Chairman, our aim is exactly just this. Certainly, we may also look into whether anyone has committed mistakes and perhaps some criminal liability may be involved but this should not be our primary objective. Our primary objective is to find out how we can ensure a safe environment for the maritime industry.

Similar independent investigations can actually be found in many places overseas. They are carried out not only in respect of civil aviation, as we can see that in some countries, all the traffic-related incidents are referred to and handled by a department. Certainly, this department may be divided into various divisions for handling maritime, land or aviation incidents respectively, and there may also be other divisions specifically tasked to handle accidents involving railway, vessels or aeroplanes. Insofar as Hong Kong is concerned, since we have made the first step by taking out CAD's investigation work and the investigation team is to report to the Director-General direct, I think MD should do the same and for the resources hence required, reference can be made to the structure of CAD. There are about 800 similar incidents requiring mandatory reporting by CAD each year and of course, their investigation team will carry out investigations only into serious incidents or accidents.

Regarding marine accidents that I mentioned earlier on, there are some 300 accidents within Hong Kong waters and some 100 accidents that occurred outside Hong Kong waters but required handling by MD, totalling some 400 accidents each year. In fact, the number is quite close, and with regard to the structure, I still have to stress that under the existing structure, there is a chance that the subordinate staff responsible for conducting the investigation are among the targets of investigation. In other words, the investigator himself may be a target of investigation. As I have just said, under the government structure, the post title of these Senior Surveyors may only have a slash added to it, after which it is written Marine Accident Investigation. So, to us, the Lamma Island maritime disaster is certainly an accident which is heart-rending to many Hongkongers, but how can we learn a lesson from it and then make changes or improvement?

As I said earlier on, I do not intend to talk about the Lamma Island maritime disaster alone or disclose any detail of the investigation report. I have no such intention whatsoever. But let us review this incident in retrospect. Since we had these misgivings back then, thinking that MD should not investigate their own staff, should we not review its structure and make changes to it? Irrespective of the results of the report on the Lamma Island maritime disaster in future, this is indeed what must be done because many incidents of different scale and involving injuries and fatalities have happened before. For example, there were two deaths in 2015, one in 2014 and seven in 2013. All of them died in marine incidents.

Therefore, I absolutely hold that the relevant authorities should, and I strongly urge them to, carefully consider adopting the practice of CAD of extracting the investigation work for it to be conducted independently to ensure that, firstly, the public will not have the feeling that they are investigating their own peers and secondly, the investigation can be truly independent and comprehensive with the only objective of ensuring marine safety.

I so submit.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Let me remind Members that under Rule 68(3) of the Rules of Procedure, with regard to the scope of debate on a head to which no amendment is proposed, Members shall confine their speeches to the policy of the service for which the money is to be provided and shall not deal with the details of any item or subhead or other aspects, but may refer to the details of revenue or funds for which that service is responsible.

Members please focus on the policy of the service for which the money is to be provided or details of revenue or funds.

MR SHIU KA-CHUN (in Cantonese): Deputy Chairman, some government officials constantly appealed to Members this morning to not filibuster and hinder people's livelihood. I must first of all say that it is the duty of Members of the Legislative Council to ask questions. I do not object to the appropriation but to the fact that public funds are not being properly spent. What does it mean by "not being properly spent"? It means that those who hold certain positions do not fulfil their duties. Hence, today I would like to discuss "Head 63—Home Affairs Department".

As Dr KWOK Ka-ki has just mentioned, the Home Affairs Department ("HAD") has proposed to spend \$640 million on organizing activities to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the reunification. How much is \$640 million? Or how should the 20th anniversary of the reunification be celebrated? As I often said, to evaluate a place or an organization, we should look at its weakest link rather than its strongest aspect. What is the weakest link in our society? Within the brief of HAD, which group of people is the most vulnerable and most needy in terms of care? I believe it should be street sleepers.

I thought Secretary LAU Kong-wah would be present today, so that I would have the opportunity to talk about this issue with him. Unfortunately, same as other HAD officials in the past, Secretary LAU Kong-wah has been absent from meetings of this Council on several occasions. Hence, I am not able to talk to him direct today, but still I wish to share some of my thoughts with him.

Many people may not understand why I often talk about street sleepers, homeless people and "street friends". The reason is that I met an elderly person in her sixties named "Madam Tsui" during the "Occupy Central with Love and Peace Deliberation Day for the homeless" in 2014. She lived under a bridge on Yen Chow Street and was suffering from terminal liver cancer. When I chatted with her, she said, "I want to participate in the 'Walk for Universal Suffrage', I want to demonstrate in different places in Hong Kong just like Cardinal Joseph ZEN and many others with aspirations. Even though I cannot walk, could you push me in my wheelchair to complete the walk?" So we actually pushed her in her wheelchair during the demonstration in Sheung Shui. I remember that Mr Martin LEE and Cardinal Joseph ZEN prayed for her after the demonstration. Unfortunately, she has now passed away.

I joined this Council as a Member with the "street friends", street sleepers, homeless people and Madam Tsui deep in my mind. Hence, nine Members of the Panel of Welfare Services paid a visit to street sleepers, including "street friends", hostels for street sleepers, some fast-food outlets and subdivided units, from 8:00 pm on 6 February to 1:00 am the next day. We planned to attend the meeting of the Panel of Welfare Services on 13 February after the visit. Regrettably, HAD did not arrange for any official to attend that meeting, claiming that they had nothing to say. Our subject of discussion was support for the homeless and street sleepers, but the authorities did not attend the meeting as they claimed that they did not have much to say.

After Members had expressed regret and condemnation, we arranged for a public hearing on 27 March. Since the authorities did not attend the meeting, we then arranged for a public hearing, requesting the attendance of officials of HAD and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") instead of just those of the Social Welfare Department and the Police Force. HAD and FEHD are closely related to this subject, how could they not attend the public hearing? After negotiations, HAD eventually sent the District Officer (Sham Shui Po) to attend it. We had already indicated that the problem of street sleepers was not unique to Sham Shui Po. It also existed in many other places, such as Hong Kong Island, the New Territories, Kowloon East and Kowloon West. So why was it that only the District Officer (Sham Shui Po) attended the public hearing? Regrettably, HAD only sent the District Officer (Sham Shui Po) who gave entirely irrelevant replies to many questions. This is what I mean by "those who hold certain positions do not fulfil their duties".

I think this is not simply a problem of the frontline officials. Rather, this is a matter of how policymaking officials look at the Legislative Council, the policies on people's livelihood and how street sleepers should be treated. They treat the Legislative Council as an automatic teller machine whenever necessary, making all kinds of pledges, and disappear once funding is granted. HAD seeks a funding allocation of \$2.6 billion while shirking its responsibility in the street sleepers issue over and over again, refusing to formulate a policy on street sleepers over the years. I believe this is unacceptable and cannot be supported.

Secretary, if you were present today, I would like to tell you: you did not attend the public hearing last time, but I really hope that you can pay a visit to street sleepers with me. I understand that you may not remain in office after 1 July. Even so, I hope the next Secretary will pay a visit to them with me. I clearly remember when I first saw the appalling conditions under the bridge with that uretic odour, even I, as a social worker, hesitated. Afterwards, reflecting on this hesitation, I on the one hand felt sad that people like us who are engaged in social work education still have this kind of rejection, and on the other, I felt angry that so many homeless people in Hong Kong were living in such appalling conditions. What basic human rights did we offer this group of people who are the most vulnerable? I hope officials can come with me to make contact with them. If the officials still have a little conscience and humanity, I think they will be touched.

Precisely for this reason, we are still making efforts on the problem of street sleepers, making contact and cooperating with many concern groups for the homeless. I understand that social workers and Members are not necessarily experts in this area. Concern groups for the homeless and street sleepers themselves may be such experts. They can share experience on how to build up contact with street sleepers throughout the years; how to handle different cases, such as allocation of public housing, unemployment, infirmity, drug and gambling addiction, debt, medical appointment escort service, mental health and application for various services and allowances. Unfortunately, not only do they not receive any policy support, they are facing difficulties generated by the policies ...

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr SHIU, I have already reminded Members that, under the Rules of Procedure, the debate shall be confined to the policy of the service for which the money is to be provided. At the beginning of your speech, you mentioned that you would speak on "Head 63—Home Affairs Department". I noticed that you have expressed your views on the policy on street sleepers in the last seven minutes of your speech. Could you point out directly on which service under head 63 for which the money is to be provided are you speaking?

MR SHIU KA-CHUN (in Cantonese): Deputy Chairman, I would like to speak on the fact that HAD has proposed to spend \$640 million on organizing activities celebrating the reunification, yet nothing is spent on caring for the weakest link of society, that is, the street sleepers. I hope you will understand that I am presenting my argument this way.

Deputy Chairman, as I said, with the \$640 million public funds sought by HAD, no measures for the welfare of the disadvantaged are proposed. On top of that, some policies even make their lives more difficult, for example, halfway houses allow them to stay only half a year and impose many rules on them. Some "street friends" were forced to leave the halfway houses before having found a proper place for dwelling due to various reasons, and might have to sleep on the street again. The various actual situations faced by "street friends" definitely cannot be explained in just a few words. If the officials did pay attention in the last public hearing, they would have heard how "street friends"

were being discriminated against and driven away. I really do not understand how the Government can delay time and again formulating a policy on street sleepers.

Do you know how high is the status of "street friends"? A "street friend" once told me, "We, who sleep on the street on the floor, have a status as high as the mouse and cockroaches running around on the floor." FEHD cleanse the streets four times a day to drive them away; their belongings would be dumped by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") if they leave the parks briefly; police officers would wake them up for identity card checks in the middle of the night; in regard to public facilities, public toilets are deliberately locked so that "street friends" cannot use them; pitches/courts are locked at night so that they cannot stay there; armrests are installed on all benches so that they cannot sleep on them; disinfection powder which causes body itchiness is sprinkled over dry places; pavilion canopies which can shelter them from the elements are removed. These are all policies that drive them away. And they are ways how HAD, LCSD or other departments spend public money. So how is this irrelevant to the Budget?

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr SHIU, let me remind you that you have just repeated the arguments you made earlier. Please speak on the sums for head 63 and do not digress too far from the question.

(Mr CHAN Chi-chuen stood up)

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, what is your point?

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): I request a headcount according to Rule 17(3) of the Rules of Procedure.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr SHIU Ka-chun, please sit down first.

Will the Clerk please ring the bell to summon Members back to the Chamber.

(While the summoning bell was ringing, a number of Members returned to the Chamber but some Members did not return to their seats)

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Will Members please return to their seats so that a headcount can be done.

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

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr SHIU Ka-chun, please continue with your speech.

MR SHIU KA-CHUN (in Cantonese): Rather than spending \$640 million on offering "fortune bags" to all Hong Kong people, why does the Government not spend \$640 million on formulating a policy "fortune bag" for street sleepers, "street friends", the homeless and Madam Tsui?

I so submit.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy Chairman, since the Chairman is not here now, it is less embarrassing for us all, for you are not the one who ruled my amendments inadmissible.

Actually, it is not the case that there is no amendment to "Head 120—Pensions". There are indeed two amendments, one seeking to "reduce \$20.6 billion, an amount equivalent to the annual estimated expenditure for the payment of pensions and miscellaneous allowances for public and judicial service pensioners" and the other seeking to "reduce approximately \$13.5 billion, an amount equivalent to the annual estimated expenditure for public and judicial service pension benefits under pension subhead 015". Mrs IP is a former civil servant who joined the service before the year 2000, and thus she said she would be affected by the amendment.

Why would such a case occur? Since the President of the Legislative Council did not allow my amendment to "Head 120—Pensions", there is no amendment to that head now. However, I have to explain to Members why I have to propose a reduction of provision to the head on pension. There are several reasons. First, I oppose the expenditure under that item, and thus I propose cutting the full provision for public service pensions. It seems to be extremely unsympathetic to cut their pensions in full. Yet why did I still have to propose this amendment? In fact, I knew surely that the amendment would not be passed. My aim is to make civil servants, particularly those who are in charge of the handling of pensions, their supervisors, to learn to be considerate of others' positions. As they are enjoying good retirement protection, have they ever considered the consequences faced by the elderly who have no retirement protection at all?

In fact, negotiation with the Government is not totally impossible. The Administration once said that if universal retirement protection was to be provided between 2015 and 2064, the Government would have to incur an additional provision of \$47.9 billion per annum on average. It was an estimate projected by the authorities. The authorities had calculated the amount involved carefully. If all elderly persons aged 65 or above were entitled to a pension of \$3,500, the Administration would have to set aside \$47.9 billion, which it considered an unsustainable proposal. The Government gave us a straightforward solution—Honourable Deputy Chairman, since you used to be a Member of the Executive Council, I guessed you have heard about this—increasing tax by 4%.

During a consultation exercise, Carrie LAM told me proudly, "Our proposal is to increase tax by 4%, will you agree with this?" I definitely gave my agreement. Hong Kong is an affluent society, thus an 4% increase in tax will not be of any problem. After all, I am referring to profits tax, which will only be levied when a profit is made. For this reason, I have proposed an across-the-board cut of the provision for pensions for all civil servants, and even the pensions of Judges will be cut. My amendment seeks to remind Members of this point.

Deputy Chairman, Mrs IP walked passed me just now and told me not to be so harsh for she is also a pensioner. At present, the annual provision set aside for public service pensions is merely kept in the Treasury. Whenever I propose a social reform, the authorities will criticize me for being ignorant, overlooking

the reality that the Government has to set aside provisions for the payment of public service pensions. An annual provision is made for this purpose by the authorities. Last year, the provision was \$31 billion, and this year, the provision is increased to \$34.1 billion, whereas the number of beneficiaries is 130 000. Buddy, the proposal I put forth could have benefited millions of people and it would only cost \$47.9 billion per annum. The 130 000 pensioners are collecting a monthly pension of \$21,800 per head on average. This is not a small amount, a much better pay than many wage earners. Besides, they receive the payment without doing anything. Of course, they have worked for many years to earn their pensions. Yet, our request for the authorities to provide a monthly payment of \$3,500 to elderly persons aged 65 or above will benefit up to 1.1 million people. On which purpose should authorities spend the provision? In other words, they are only concerned about themselves, inconsiderate of the needs of others.

Honourable colleagues, I am now expressing the positive in the negative. Members and the Chairman know that we are not allowed to propose any increase, not even an 10 cents increase, in government expenditure, under the relevant financial legislation. Honestly, Mr CHAN Hak-kan, if there is universal suffrage one day and if I win, the LEUNG Kwok-hung government will propose to the Legislative Council an increase in the relevant provision. By then, I do not have to act aggrievedly by expressing the positive in the negative, do I? Calm down, I need no public opinion but the support of the public. Exactly because we are under a distorted system, we have to face the situation today. People will inevitably query if "Long Hair" is crazy for he seeks to cut others' wages and expenditure every year. Yet this is the not case. Since the President has ruled my two amendments on pensions inadmissible, I cannot debate on the issue. Yet he has generously granted us seven hours to speak on items without any amendment, so I can only speak on this issue in this session.

In actuality, unfair retirement arrangement also exists among civil servants. Deputy Chairman, the expenditure on public service pensions now covers 120 000 employees. I am not going to compare the arrangement for civil servants with other employees but only among civil servants. There are 29 persons receiving a monthly pension of over \$100,000, an annual amount of \$1,334,000 per head. We are talking about a monthly amount of over \$100,000, Deputy Chairman, yet your remuneration as a Member may be less than \$100,000. But since you are the Deputy Chairman, your remuneration should be slightly higher. In other words, they who are in idleness are getting a higher pay

than me. As for those receiving \$50,000 to \$100,000, there are 1 472 of them and they are receiving an average of \$719,000 per annum. The number of pensioners increases as the amount of pension receivable decreases. I will not go on with the list lest the Deputy Chairman will lecture me.

Let me tell you all. There are 29 persons receiving a pension of over \$100,000, which is an average of \$1,334,000 per annum. Some pensioners are receiving less than \$5,000, what a scant amount, not even enough to support three meals daily. How many pensioners are receiving less than \$5,000? There are 45 456 pensioners who are receiving an average of \$33,000 per annum.

Deputy Chairman, a reform of the system which is very unreasonable is long overdue. Yet, there is another issue which Members should pay attention to and listen carefully. There are some civil servants whom I dubbed as "unwanted oranges". Who are they? During the era of TUNG Chee-hwa—I guess Mr CHAN was still studying at university and had not yet entered the political arena at that time—a deficit was projected in the Budget one year, TUNG then said that civil servants should be subject to a pay cut because the Government was in deficit. Honourable Members, may I have your attention that the salary of civil servants was cut by 6%. Mr CHAN Hak-kan, you should be studying in The Chinese University of Hong Kong back then. TUNG Chee-hwa said that the remuneration of civil servants should be reduced by 6% due to the deficit of the Government. In addition to that, he ceased the pension scheme for civil servants and launched a new policy, the Civil Service Provident Fund ("CSPF") Scheme, in its place. The arrangement resulted in the division of civil servants into two grades. As a common saying goes, when a team is united, it can overcome the toughest obstacle. However, the Civil Service is now divided.

In 2012, 126 131 civil servants were employed under the privileged scheme with pension entitlement, whereas 32 217 civil servants were employed under the Mandatory Provident Fund ("MPF") scheme or the CSPF Scheme. Is it fair? They have to discharge the same duties yet they are affected by the wrong judgment of the Government. Deputy Chairman, I know you in the pro-establishment camp have frequent contact with the Government. Yet when you criticize the Government, it may be better to confirm if the officials concerned are under the pension scheme or the MPF scheme. If they are under the pension scheme, the rebuke can be sharp and loud, but if they are under the MPF scheme, it is better to make it soft.

In respect of pension arrangement, not to mention the unfair treatment between civil servants and general employees, we all see that it is extremely unfair even among civil servants. The increase in the expenditure on public service pensions is really alarming. If the same logic is applied, the pension scheme should not be implemented in the first place. Now, I would like to report to the Deputy Chairman that from 2011 to 2012, the expenditure incurred was \$18.93 billion and the number of beneficiaries was 103 374. Yet, the expenditure has increased rapidly to \$34.15 billion in 2017-2018, in a period of less than 10 years, and the number of beneficiaries is 133 040. Deputy Chairman, think about this. The authorities said that the introduction of universal retirement protection for the general public was impracticable for the amount to be incurred between 2015 and 2064 would be too enormous. However, if Members had listened attentively to the figures I have just read out, they would have noticed that the expenditure on public service pensions which I have quoted for 2011-2012 and 2017-2018 has nearly doubled. By the same logic, should the Government not consider ceasing the civil service pension scheme? The authorities cannot do so, am I right?

We understand that civil servants have signed an "indenture" to serve Hong Kong and not to take up outside work. They will contribute their youth and sweat despite the elements and continue to serve Hong Kong even if they are deployed to different departments. Alright then, give them slightly more. However, Deputy Chairman, I would like to seek your advice. You are a member of the Kowloon City District Council, a district hard hit by the problem of population ageing. Have not those elderly contributed to society throughout their life? When you first assumed office as a member of the District Council, some of the targets of your service were housewives, but now they are elderly persons. You have witnessed how they have brought up their children, have you not? Their children are now working. Are these housewives serving Hong Kong? Yet these housewives are not receiving any wages, and they are not rewarded under the social mechanism. I have not yet mentioned their contribution in the 10-month pregnancy.

Buddy, how can I put up with this any longer? At present, for the 100 000-odd civil servants employed by the British in the early years and the SAR Government later between 1997 and 2000—they are really lucky to be employed in those three years—society has to continuously set aside a provision of an increasing amount for their retirement protection. I cannot but ask one question. How about protection for those who have toiled and moiled and lived a frugal life in Hong Kong to bring up their children and feed their families? It

was because of their sacrifice that their children could grow up like the Deputy Chairman—I guess the Deputy Chairman does not come from a wealthy but a thrifty family. Had not your parents nurtured you, you would not have been able to sit here today, would you? Whether or not your parents have worked in Hong Kong, they have made contribution to Hong Kong. Why would this group of people be denied a secure life during their old age? They are the citizens who paid tax back then to enable the implementation of the civil service regime.

I have been striving in vain for universal retirement protection here for five years. I do not know how Carrie LAM will address the issue, nor do I know if she will insist on not introducing universal retirement protection after she has assumed office as the Chief Executive. Deputy Chairman, regarding this session arranged for debate on items with no amendments, I must tell the rationale though my amendments have been ruled inadmissible. If the Government says that public service pensions are important and that a provision must be set aside to fulfil its contractual obligation, I have to ask LEUNG Chun-ying why his promise of setting aside funding for resolving retirement problems as mentioned in his Manifesto has not been honoured.

Moreover, I have to report to the Deputy Chairman that it has been learnt that out of the \$50 billion which LEUNG Chun-ying claimed to apply for the purpose of solving retirement problems, the Government has privately allocated \$6 billion to providing assistance to employers for offsetting MPF. The funding of \$6 billion is provided in the Budget this year, yet we are dazed and know nothing about it, as if we are sleeping. We have approved the \$50 billion yet he does not use it for the introduction of universal retirement protection but instead set aside \$6 billion privately for another purpose.

There is one more concern. Paul CHAN said that the estimate this year was inaccurate for the proceeds from the sale of land had exceeded the estimate by over \$10 billion, and he said that the amount would be allocated to education expenditure. Is he anxious that he may not be appointed a Secretary of Department in future? Carrie LAM said that \$5 billion would be invested in education and he allocated over \$10 billion. Why did he not use this for the introduction of universal retirement protection? I am not saying that we should not invest in education. Yet now, the Government is spending proceeds arising from inaccurate estimates arbitrarily and randomly.

With these remarks, Deputy Chairman, I oppose the whole Budget. Thank you, Deputy Chairman.

MR NATHAN LAW (in Cantonese): Ms LEE, our first debate today involves 26 heads with no amendments, covering the largest number of items among the six debate sessions. But it is rather unreasonable that we are only given seven hours to debate. I have done some calculations just now to divide 26 heads by seven hours, and found that the duration of debate is just 16 minutes for each head. In that case, what can we say about the relevant heads in the debate? The time is actually rather limited. Hence, I consider that Members should be given more time to speak if the Legislative Council seeks to facilitate free expression of views by Members as far as practicable, particularly for such an important discussion of binding budgets every year. The Deputy Chairman may say that since Members have not put forward any amendment, it indicates that they do not intend to say much. This is actually not true because budgets are different from other Bills. The absence of amendments by Members does not mean that the motion is insignificant or that there is no controversy. Instead, we are at our wits' end as we are unable to increase the expenditure on certain items under the Rules of Procedure.

I am going to put forward some proposals not seeking to cut budgets, but to increase them. I am unable to move an amendment for this purpose, and again, the Deputy Chairman will in turn think that I have nothing to say. I consider this a bit ridiculous. We are well aware of the constraints under the existing Rules of Procedure. Hence, I very much hope that if we are lucky enough to be given the opportunity to discuss this again next year, please do not think that Members have nothing to say about this part. In fact, we have much to say.

Next, I am going to speak on various items. The first one is "Head 45—Fire Services Department". The estimated expenditure of the Fire Services Department ("FSD") is \$6,049.8 million this year, and its establishment has grown by 331 posts to 10 709 posts. In comparison, the estimated expenditure of the Hong Kong Police Force is \$18,495.7 million, and its establishment has grown by 608 permanent posts to 34 660 posts. All of its data are a few times greater than that of FSD.

While I have put forward such an argument, some Members will definitely wish to ask me again whether I am hostile to or dislike the Police. In putting forward such an argument, I just mean to make a comparison because among the

eight regular and auxiliary disciplined services in Hong Kong, the Police Force get the best remuneration package. For this reason, I hope the Administration will squarely address the situation. In my view, the remuneration package for firemen should be brought on par with that for the Police Force or even granted a greater upward adjustment given the substantial workload and risks they face.

Last year, just like now, some Members wished to speak on this motion. But as they were unable to increase the budgets, they had no alternative but to cut them, and they just made some nominal statements. But they drew flak from a number of Members. Now a year has passed. What have those Members severely condemning the budget cuts done for the well-being of firemen?

As FSD is regarded as a general disciplined service rather than an emergency disciplined service, its entry point is only \$19,780. On the contrary, the entry point for the Police Force, as the group getting the best package among disciplined services, is \$22,410, which is 13.3% higher given its nature of establishment as an emergency disciplined service. Such a decision originated from the Rennie Committee's Report of the British Hong Kong Government published in 1988, and we can see that there is indeed a gap between the two.

In the following part of my speech, I also wish to point out why I hope the Government will increase the budget for FSD, so as to offer firemen a better remuneration package. These days, we have heard quite some news about firemen who unfortunately died or got injured on duty. We feel deeply sorry about that, and hope the recurrence of similar incidents can be prevented by the provision of additional resources, be it in terms of remuneration or equipment.

At present, firemen have to handle complicated chemicals, and their duties cover a large number of buildings that warrant inspections. The situation is far different from that three decades ago when the Rennie Committee's Report was published. Hence, the unpredictable and potential pressure and risks currently faced by firemen are poles apart from that three decades ago. Hence, concerning the absence of a full review or a study on whether there is room to improve the salary structures over the past three decades, I consider it most inappropriate.

Staff associations of FSD have also put forward the same proposal seeking recognition of FSD as an emergency service with an independent pay scale, so that their remuneration can be brought on par with that of the Police or made commensurate with the risks and responsibilities they face. According to records, some 30 frontline firemen died on duty while performing bravery acts over the years, including the search and rescue incident at Tiu Shau Ngam this year and the fire at the mini-storage of Amoycan Industrial Centre last year, which also claimed lives of firemen, topping the list of fatalities among the disciplined services. Its number of injuries is also high, with 932 cases recorded over the past five years.

Furthermore, as shown by all the opinion poll results, the popularity rating of firemen is also the highest among the disciplined services. If the Government can heed our advice and offer firemen a better remuneration package commensurate with their duties, in addition to upgrading the status of firemen, it will actually serve as encouragement to them and boost their morale. In recent years, we can see that the number of applicants for the post of Fireman has been low. Compared with other disciplined services, while the Customs and Excise Department receives an average of 11 000 applications per year, FSD only gets 4 000 applications. It is evident that the relevant demands and social expectations are high. For this reason, I hope the Government can allocate an additional provision to the head in relation to FSD, and consider adopting policies in support of this initiative to offer firemen a better remuneration package, so that their performance and popularity rating will be reflected in their pay, thereby protecting them from a lot of unnecessary problems.

Next, I wish to talk about head 63, the Home Affairs Department ("HAD"). In this Budget, the annual expenditure of HAD is about \$2,340 million, covering the expenditure of the District Councils ("DCs"), the District-led Actions Scheme, the DC community involvement projects, etc.

In the years of the former Municipal Councils, the Municipal Councils had the authority to exercise most powers and functions of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Liquor Licensing Board, and were financially independent. Their annual disposable resources amounted to as much as some \$8 billion, making them the key pillar in district administration. Compared with the resources available to the Municipal Councils, the expenditure of some \$2 billion

of HAD appears far inferior. What is the reason? In fact, the performance of municipal management in Hong Kong has been rather disappointing in recent years.

In the following part of my speech, I wish to point out that I expect an additional funding to the District-led Actions Scheme, so that those schemes which can practically improve the districts or district municipal affairs will be given more support.

Under the District-led Actions Scheme, every district is allocated a funding of only \$63 million per year. Most of them are just short-term schemes, such as the Central and Western District scheme under which only three rounds of cleansing services are provided, actually rendering it hard to weed out district problems. Nevertheless, the funding allocated to the community involvement projects which organize activities, as we perceive, in the form of holding snake feasts and vegetarian feasts and handing out moon cakes and rice dumplings, has been increased by \$100 million to \$460 million. It shows that the Government attaches importance to giving away "candies" to the neglect of people's livelihood, which is also something I am rather unhappy with for this Budget. A professor of politics once said that regarding such a focus of DCs on "community welfarism", people held that the Government should prevent such a trend from spreading. Instead, it should enable DCs to give play to their powers and functions in response to more issues relating to district policies, and enhance their studies on how to improve district municipal affairs through the District-led Actions Scheme.

Hence, I suggest that the Government allocate the additional funding of \$100 million to the District-led Actions Scheme, so that DCs may truly address district issues and genuinely give play to their key function of formulating policies that carry public opinions, instead of getting obsessed with snake feasts, vegetarian feasts, moon cakes and rice dumplings.

Apart from addressing such district issues as transport and environmental hygiene, anti-mosquito measures, street cleansing services, and so on, are supposed to be the duties of local councils. But surprisingly, the Government takes them forward in the name of the District-led Actions Scheme. Even under the current setting, the Government still finds it hard to vest DCs with powers.

But I consider it rather ridiculous, for district administration has been left in a vacuum state following the abolition of the Municipal Councils by the Government. DCs really can do nothing as they have no real powers. They can only make their views known to the Government when the Government is willing to consult them, so that the Government may introduce amendments. However, there are great problems with the bureaucratic system. Hence, as far as the funding is concerned, while I hope the District-led Actions Scheme will be granted an additional funding, in the long run, it may just be a piecemeal approach treating the symptoms but not the root cause of the problems.

In addition to my comments on the funding allocated to the District-led Actions Scheme and community involvement projects, actually there is another provision which has aroused my concern, and that is the \$640 million earmarked by the Government for organizing events in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the reunification. I do not know whether it is the deliberate intention of the Government to use such sensitive figures as 4 June and \$640 million. Maybe when the Government submits the documents to the Central Authorities, it will not manage to get an approval. In short, it actually costs much to organize the celebration events on this occasion. Members should think about whether we should spend such a huge sum of money on marking the 20th anniversary of the handover of sovereignty with these so-called celebration events, or all we need is a group of public officers and Members sitting there to reflect on their own and think about why Hong Kong, having come a long way from the old days, is now laden with problems. It is downright ridiculous to spend a huge sum of money on celebrations while an unjust political system is in place and that our deep-rooted conflicts remain unresolved.

Let us look at the events organized with the \$29 million earmarked by HAD. They include "Inventing le Louvre: From Palace to Museum over 800 Years" jointly organized with Musée du Louvre, "Eternal Life—Exploring Ancient Egypt" co-organized with the British Museum, and "Yangxindian Exhibition from Palace Museum" presented in collaboration with the Palace Museum, as well as mega sports events which are respectively the "Volvo Ocean Race" and "UCI Track Cycling World Championships". I consider it ridiculous if these are the events meant to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the handover of sovereignty. At the panel meetings, some Members who loved the country and Hong Kong indicated that it was "crying up wine but selling vinegar", not truly

meant to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the handover of sovereignty. I do not share his criticism on most occasions, but this time around, I quite agree that the events listed do not really seem relevant.

HAD has earmarked \$29 million for organizing such events. In fact, is this the role to be played by HAD according to public expectation? Can they meet the actual needs of members of the public? I believe many do not think so. It is not known how many members of the public can get involved in the whole lot of so-called events and community activities listed just now. In fact, this sum of \$29 million can indeed be deployed to areas in greater need.

I wish to move on to talk about my views on the expenditure under "Head 121—the Independent Police Complaints Council", seeking likewise to increase rather than reduce its expenditure.

Last December, LEUNG Chun-ying completely replaced the membership of the Independent Police Complaints Council ("IPCC"), only appointing those from the pro-establishment camp, while none of the incumbent or former Legislative Council Members from the pro-democracy camp was appointed. The prestige of IPCC, perceived by people as a "toothless tiger", is already low. Such a purge has even destroyed its last shred of credibility, thereby turning IPCC into a club for "LEUNG's fans", the pro-establishment camp, anti-Occupy Central supporters, etc.

In fact, IPCC has long been conducting peer investigations, which means that the police officers investigate their own peers, thereby subjecting IPCC and the Complaints Against Police Office to grave public queries, and it is indeed difficult for the existing system to inspire in the public confidence.

Hence, I propose that additional resources be allocated in respect of the scale of IPCC. Reference may be made to the British IPCC to vest IPCC with the power of independent investigation, followed by the provision of associated resources, with a view to properly investigating the police officers' disciplinary issues or abuse of power. We can see that, compared with overseas countries, the membership of our IPCC is smaller. Now my speaking time is running out. I will talk about my views on IPCC further in the next session.

Thank you, Deputy Chairman. I so submit.

MR KWONG CHUN-YU (in Cantonese): Before all else, I will express my views on head 160. There is a place where there will be serious water seepage problems with its ceilings on rainy days, and it even becomes "The House of Dancing Water" during heavy downpours. In recent years, its soil pipes have also reportedly broken on several occasions, turning the place into a terrible mess. Moreover, folding chairs have to be improvised because it is small and crowded with people. It seems that I am talking about a subdivided unit in Sham Shui Po. Actually, this is not the case. This place, the Radio Television Hong Kong ("RTHK") under the Lion Rock, is situated in Broadcast Drive.

In fact, we have seen the budget for RTHK in the Budget this year reduced rather than increased. The situation described by me just now is actually the description made by its frontline staff of the use of folding chairs when meetings are held. Folding chairs are no longer exclusively used by LEUNG Chun-ying. Folding chairs have to be used when meetings are held, because the place is too small. It is indeed necessary for government officials to review the internal conditions of its facilities, namely the Television House, Broadcasting House and ETV Centre. What is most interesting about the \$900 million or so allocated by the Government for the operation of RTHK is that you might think that it is fair for \$900 million or so to be allocated to operating a radio station. But the point is RTHK is not just a radio station. It is also a television station, including RTHK32, which is broadcasting the Legislative Council meeting live at the moment.

RTHK reporters are jacks-of-all-trades who can perform recording while filming. Why do they have to be multi-tasked? Because they have to feed information to several departments to meet the latter's needs, so that the services provided by RTHK can be sustained. Honestly, this problem is faced not by radio reporters alone. Reporters in Hong Kong very much merit our respect. Very often, they have to be jacks-of-all-trades. Since one of the heads involved in this debate session is RTHK, we have to express our views on it.

In fact, the most miserable thing is not that reporters have to be jacks-of-all-trades. They might be most willing to do so because their ambition is to be reporters. They must report the truth no matter how painstaking it is. It is most reasonable that a pen and a microphone are required to report the truth. It is even more miserable that someone who is called Carrie LAM has expressed some very interesting views. Her direct criticism reads like this, to this effect: "The quality of the television station of RTHK is not really good enough because

of the broadcast of too many photographs. Why does RTHK not broadcast the views of government officials? For instance, I have once described myself as 'a courageous government official with no expectation'. How excited was she to demand a television station to broadcast her sound bite in order to upgrade the quality of its programmes? In her opinion, the audience rates and ratings of RTHK will continue to rise should her sound bites be broadcast.

In that case, it might as well operate a channel specifically for government officials. As Members can imagine, if a channel for government officials is operated by RTHK, a bunch of star programme hosts are readily available. Eddie NG, who travels many times every year, can host a travel programme to promote the idea of travelling hard. Actually, he is now in Vietnam. It is a brilliant idea to let him host a travel programme. Meanwhile, Paul CHAN can also tell us how to create a good living space. Since he has the experience of operating subdivided units, he can give us some ideas as to how a small space can be designed like the homes designed by IKEA, so that people can enjoy a comfortable living space. In addition, we have Andrew FUNG. He is the best person to administer Facebook. He can definitely come up with ways to help you administer Facebook in the most presentable manner. Not only can he induce coverage by mainstream media, but he can also be a Facebook administrator. Superb! Lastly, the news report at 6:30 pm. The problem can be resolved with Carrie LAM playing the role of a news anchor and broadcasting her sound bite that she is "a courageous government official with no expectation".

However, can the problems really be resolved in this manner? In fact, not only does RTHK have no room for slashing its budget, but the Government has completely ignored the problems currently faced by it. On the one hand, RTHK is required by the Government to do a good job and deliver, but on the other, it is not given adequate resources. RTHK is also required to produce special programmes for major events, festivals and even activities celebrating the reunification. This will really drive RTHK crazy. Hence, one of the highlights today must be the \$900 million or so expenditure estimate for RTHK.

Meanwhile, this debate session involves a head called Innovation and Technology Commission ("ITC"). Deputy Chairman, ITC, or "Head 155—Government Secretariat: Innovation and Technology Commission", is really remarkable. I really have no idea how to comment on ITC because I do not know what it has done. I recall Members once asked the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology what could be done since their Facebook had received only 2 000 "Likes", whereas the photograph of the Commissioner

delivering a speech had received only seven "Likes", given that she was responsible for innovation and technology ("I&T") and social media was most important. In response, she said that "Likes" did not mean everything, and "Dislike" was not at all important, because they had really put their heart and soul into their work and people should appreciate their efforts as their manpower and resources were inadequate. Buddy, they have got more resources than many others, such as RTHK, which was mentioned by me just now and described by people in the industry as "being operated like a subdivided unit", not to mention the miserable condition of its staff. Why did the Government not allocate more resources to RTHK but inject resources into I&T instead?

If my memory is correct, they have launched a most laughable programme called the Technology Voucher Programme ("TVP"), which is considered their pride. They said TVP has a success rate of up to 91%. Such a percentage appears to be very good, and it seems that all funding requests will definitely be granted. But is it really the case? According to the relevant figures, approximately 120 companies had submitted applications, but before the assessment, the applications from about 90 companies had been rejected. Some applicants of the remaining 20 to 30 companies were granted approval probably because they had submitted all the required documents. The authorities are really remarkable for claiming a success rate of 91% on basis of these figures only.

Meanwhile, I wish to ask them what they have done. Deputy Chairman, according to the past information, many of their projects have yet to be activated. Insofar as I&T is concerned, where can we find innovation? Should resources be distributed in this manner? Under the same project, I prefer that additional resources be allocated to RTHK to enable it to work hard to deliver more by injecting resources into making RTHK more pervasive, with a view to upgrading the image of Hong Kong, pursuing the truth of news, and so on. Such a distribution will be even better.

Certainly, when it comes to splurging money, I must mention "Head 63—Home Affairs Department", which is a very important and remarkable subject today. With youth hostels nowhere in sight, I recall that the Hong Kong Government once advised young people that it does not matter even if they cannot afford buying a flat for they can do so in more remote places, such as Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai. Such a comment sparked an uproar at that time. Regarding the Government's advice for people to move to Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai, first of all, I live in Yuen Long, and I do not see any problem with

living there. But the point is the property prices of Yuen Long have already risen to between \$6 million and \$7 million in 2017. Now the Government is saying that it does not matter even if the public cannot afford living in Hong Kong, for they can move to the Bay Area for living. Today, the Government also advocates the Bay Area as a liveable city since people living there can watch Hong Kong television programmes and use WhatsApp and Facebook. Buddy, what has actually happened?

(THE CHAIRMAN resumed the Chair)

We can see that the Government is advocating the youth hostel policy concurrently. I once asked the Government a question at a meeting, and the Government indicated in its reply that the programme required the donation of land by private developers. Since many different obstacles might be encountered during the process, the hostels can still not be built. This is perfectly normal, and I certainly understand it. I am not compelling the Government to identify several plots of land for the construction of youth hostels. However, if the Government really believes the youth hostel policy is feasible, and given such a vigorous promotion campaign, it should allocate land for the construction of youth hostels, work out a solution and provide a revolving door. Why does it insist on making it nearly impossible for young people to buy a flat? Even if they give up the idea of home ownership, renting a flat is still almost impossible. There are still problems with the distribution of resources when it comes to some of the simplest and most basic things. Where is all the money spent? The answer is remarkable. A sum of \$640 million will be committed to the hosting of events to celebrate the reunification. According to Chief Secretary Matthew CHEUNG, these events are very important because people need care and concern. For this reason, family visits will be conducted and "fortune bags" distributed. Since the Government has to come into contact with the ordinary masses, these activities play a very important role, and this provision is reasonable. Actually, funds can be allocated for these initiatives even if there is no need to celebrate the reunification, right? Does it mean that when there is no need to celebrate the reunification, the Government will see no need to allocate funds to "show care and concern", conduct family visits and come into contact with the ordinary masses on a daily basis? The Government should not behave in this manner, should it?

Should we ask the Chief Secretary about those "fortune bags"—honestly, community workers are experienced in the distribution of "fortune bags" or staging of community activities—as we all know, "fortune bags" have many shades of meaning. Firstly, they have something to do with the appearance and contents of the bags. What matters most is the person giving away the bags. If the person is LEUNG Chun-ying, most people will pull a long face, though some people will still feel happy because they will be pleased whenever they see those "fortune bags". Actually, Buddy, the distribution of "fortune bags" and spending of enormous sums of money by the Government has not brought much good fortune to the people. Are these initiatives really beneficial to people's livelihood? While we are talking about its lavish spending of \$640 million on events celebrating the reunification, the Government is proposing that the disbursement of living subsidy to the "N have-nots" be scrapped, whereas the provision of dental services for people with intellectual disabilities will be extended for a year only.

A news report today is even more laughable. I would like to follow up a question about "Head 37—Department of Health". According to a news report issued a couple of hours ago today, some organizations have obtained subsidies from the Department of Health ("DH") by claiming to provide tooth-filling services for the elderly. However, it was discovered by enthusiastic reporters that these organizations had simply not provided any filling services for the elderly, but they had received the relevant subsidies all the same, thereby revealing the perfunctory attitude adopted by DH in vetting and approving the relevant subsidy applications. Why did this happen? This news report is "hot off the press". I have to ask DH to give an explanation. It appears that DH is not short of resources. Among the departments with inadequate resources, as cited by me just now, the one with the least resources must be RTHK. I do not understand why this would have happened.

Under "Head 37—Department of Health", I am more concerned about the new dermatology cases. Chairman, in the past, the target set for new dermatology cases was for 90% of the patients to be treated within 12 weeks. According to the relevant figures, however, the treatment rate is only 31% in 2017. The difference between 31% and 90% is more than double, which means that the new treatment rate has failed completely to catch up. What has happened? Members will certainly ask: why can these patients not receive proper treatment given that the resources allocated to DH are not inadequate? This situation is very problematic.

Having said that, I have found out how public funds should be used when it comes to the several heads mentioned by me just now. Funds should not be allocated to areas already flooded by cash. Is there a need to spend \$640 million on the reunification celebrations? Or should this sum be spent in a practical and effective manner on improving people's livelihood in addition to distributing "fortune bags"? On the other hand—as I mentioned just now—since the frontline staff of RTHK are faced with major problems, should additional resources not be allocated to give them a helping hand? In particular, they have to work for the radio and television stations concurrently. Should more assistance not be provided by the Government?

In the final analysis, despite these figures we have seen today, Matthew CHEUNG considers every penny spent on the events celebrating the reunification worthwhile. However, we find that that is not the case upon closer examination of some subheads. Therefore, the Government had better conduct a review and consider afresh how money can be put to good use than to inject public funds into certain areas—such as the Innovation and Technology Bureau, which is given abundant funds for issuing a few posts monthly on social media—while the funds allocated to some other areas are absolutely inadequate.

Chairman, I so submit.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): Chairman, I will focus on "Head 121—Independent Police Complaints Council". I believe whenever mention is made of this organ known as the Independent Police Complaints Council ("IPCC"), many members of the public must have, especially in the wake of the Umbrella Movement, seen or experienced how IPCC has failed to exert its utmost in fairly and impartially investigating the many incidents of abuse of power or improper use of force by the Police. As shown in the latest opinion poll, in the minds of the public, it may be more appropriate for IPCC to be renamed "LEUNG's Fans Council".

In the Gazette published on 23 December 2016, "689" LEUNG Chun-ying appointed nine new members to IPCC who are all, needless to say, members of the pro-establishment camp. As we all know, in the many terms of the Government in the past, if we care to do some counting, we will see that even though the pro-establishment camp still made up the majority members of IPCC,

there was participation from some pro-democracy legislators or members in IPCC before LEUNG Chun-ying took office, such as our Honourable colleagues, Dr Helena WONG, Mr Kenneth LEUNG and Prof Joseph LEE, though you may consider this a window-dressing gesture or sheer mendacity. However, since a change of IPCC's Chairmanship in 2014 with the replacement of former Chairman, JAT Sew-tong, Senior Counsel, by a "LEUNG's fan", Larry KWOK, as the incumbent Chairman, we have seen IPCC being turned into a "LEUNG's fans club" and a "hotchpotch of LEUNG's fans".

Mr Larry KWOK has been a member of the Guangxi committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference for a decade. Apart from chairing IPCC, he is also a member of the Land and Development Advisory Committee and Rimsky YUEN's successor as Chairman of the Transport Advisory Committee. In the Financial Services Development Council set up by LEUNG Chun-ying, Larry KWOK is a member of the Mainland Opportunities Committee. Shortly after Larry KWOK took office as Chairman of IPCC, the Umbrella Movement broke out. I believe Members will still recall that during the Umbrella Movement, many policemen were queried by the public for abusing their powers and not abiding by the law in a number of clashes. But what did Larry KWOK say in his capacity as Chairman of IPCC? He said that if the police-community relations were that bad, there would not have been only one member of the public assaulting the cops for many members of the public would have done so. That he made such a description of the police-community relations is indicative of his standard. For a watchdog set up to check police powers, monitor the Police and ensure that the Police do not abuse their powers, the more responsible, neutral and objective it is in performing its roles in the eyes of the public, the better the majority of the people would feel towards the Police, for they will think that as IPCC is fair and impartial, the Police will not behave wantonly and in that case, the public would not have so many queries about the behaviour of the policemen in the many clashes between the Police and the public or in such incidents as the 1 July rally. But when IPCC is turned into a "LEUNG's fans club" purely made up of "LEUNG's fans", the reputation of IPCC is thrown down the drain.

An opinion poll conducted in June 2015 showed that only less than half or 44% of the people considered that IPCC could monitor and review the investigations of the Complaints Against Police Office ("CAPO") fairly and impartially, and the percentage of people not having any confidence in IPCC rose to an all-time high of 24%. From this we can see that with an IPCC which has

performed poorly and an IPCC which considers itself to be a socializing coterie for cronies to have fun given its composition of pure "LEUNG's fans", public confidence in IPCC and even in the Police will only vanish without a trace.

According to some reports, how does IPCC conduct its meetings nowadays? It is reported that in the past when JAT Sew-tong was the Chairman, even a meeting expected to last two hours would overrun because they were serious about their work, and all of its members, including JAT Sew-tong himself, would meet with many complainants who were dissatisfied with the police systems in order to listen to and understand their views. What is more, as Members may know, very often when rallies were held, the former Chairman and members would personally conduct site observation at sites where clashes or conflicts were likely to take place. As for the existing IPCC, since its members all take it as a coterie for socializing with cronies or they may be anxious to leave because they have to attend feasts or banquets after the meeting, there have been cases when a meeting ended in less than an hour and in haste. In cases where a member had spoken a bit longer, the Chairman would grow impatient and cut him short.

Think about this: Hong Kong is an advanced society and whoever has powers is monitored by a corresponding party. We in the Legislative Council are precisely monitored by the voters. In the election held once every four years, if we failed to do our job properly or win the trust of the voters, we would have to pay a price in the polling. However, does the same go for the Government or similar statutory bodies? No, they are not subject to monitoring. As a result, concerning this organization with superior powers, and as we all know, the Police are equipped with firearms and batons and the Police Force has a strength of several tens of thousand cops and a plethora of ways to enforce the law. If they do their part properly, they can certainly eradicate the bad elements for the safety of law-abiding citizens, but if they perform badly, they would be a source of dangerous powers and this is precisely why IPCC was established.

However, today's IPCC has not become independent as consistently suggested by the results of consultation in the past. Investigations continue to be conducted by CAPO first. Regarding the case of Franklin CHU, as Members should still remember it vividly, what were the results of CAPO's investigation and the recommendations made by it initially? It said that no prosecution would be necessary and it was fine to assault people. He was hitting them with his baton over and over again, and it is still considered alright even when the entire

media was filming it. It was only when IPCC rejected the results, holding that the investigation was unfair, and when even members of IPCC considered the results unacceptable that an investigation was conducted again in a more serious and fairer manner. Finally, as Members all know, former Superintendent Franklin CHU has to face punishment of law. This is actually all that we have demanded. We demand that IPCC upholds justice.

If a person breaks the law, the Police will have every reason to arrest him. There is no problem about that, and it is the wish of most Hongkongers. However, an unrestrained Police Force can be most horrible. As Members may recall or may have experienced, in this term of the Government, why are the Police called "black cops"? Because the Government has turned the Police into a political tool for suppressing the dissidents and enforcing the law selectively, exhausting all means to remove the thorns in its eyes. If this is what the Police have become of and if IPCC is full of "LEUNG's fans", then their use is only to shield this Government which fails to command popular support, hence enabling it to do as it wishes. It is not true that IPCC does not incur expenses. It has cost us several tens of million dollars. If these several tens of million dollars are spent in exchange for an organization which fails to command the trust and support of the people and is incapable of investigating complaints against the Police for the people, what use is this organization? We have spent several tens of million dollars on maintaining the operation of IPCC but in return, public confidence in the Police has further dwindled because the leader at the top has set a bad example. Who are the people appointed to IPCC by the Government? They are just "LEUNG's fans" or their cronies.

Let me cite an example which is terrifying to anyone on hearing it. A new appointee to IPCC is Barry CHIN. He is a lawyer, a member of the Silent Majority for Hong Kong and a columnist of Speakout HK. He once wrote in an article that Yvonne LEUNG, former Council member of the Hong Kong Federation of Students, sought to claim credit for herself in filing a judicial review against the Government, and in making comments on some people in the political sector, he made such remarks as "the smart one talks while the stupid one acts". He also said that the incident concerning the Council of the University of Hong Kong was like "a doorless chicken coop". And, in the incident of Causeway Bay Books, despite the cross-boundary abduction of LEE Po by Mainland public security officers, he went so far as to say in his article in *Ta Kung Pao* that the Chinese criminal law could still apply disregarding the factor of nationality. He, a lawyer by profession, is a member of IPCC and

when a powerful agency of the Mainland crossed the boundary to take away the owner of a bookstore in Hong Kong, he outrageously said that the Chinese criminal law could apply. IPCC is exactly comprised of people of this standard now. Besides, I think Members will still recall that there is also Dr David LEE who assisted LEUNG Chun-ying in his electioneering campaign. He, who engages in the same field as mine, is quite laughable, too. I think the appointment of these "LEUNG's fans" is indeed a disgrace to us because we have seen that the quality of IPCC members has deteriorated continuously, and so has their credibility.

Moreover, we all know that on the appointment of the three Vice-Chairmen of IPCC, it used to be an established practice to appoint Members of the Legislative Council from different backgrounds to IPCC. What about the current practice? Of course, there is no standard practice but LEUNG Chun-ying has gone so far as to appoint Tony TSE, who is not an incumbent but only a former Member of the Legislative Council, as a Vice-Chairman, rather than following the fair practice of appointing pro-democracy Members as Vice-Chairmen. As a result, IPCC is comprised of even more "LEUNG's fans" and has become darker and worse off in terms of credibility.

Hong Kong is an open society that attaches importance to institutions, to the law, and also to fairness and impartiality. But precisely when it comes to the Police Force with several tens of thousand policemen, even though there used to be a slightly credible IPCC, in the several years during the term of "689" LEUNG Chun-ying it has been turned into a pro-establishment statutory body filled with "LEUNG's fans" and devoid of credibility. What purpose does it serve? To protect and shield the Government, and if the Government wants the Police Force to be its lackey for carrying out political missions, it would not be restrained or checked at all. Tell me, when compared to those despotic states—I do not wish to name them—what difference is there? Why has the Government degenerated to such a sorry state? Why does the Government not even have the confidence to appoint people who do not belong to its coterie of cronies? The appointment of a few pro-democracy Members is not going to change the reality but the Government's magnanimity and vision are as poor as such. If you ask us to support such a government, such practices and such IPCC, I am afraid not only Hongkongers will bear the brunt; not only the armless victims of abuse of power by the Police (*The buzzer sounded*) ... but also all the people of Hong Kong ...

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Dr KWOK Ka-ki, please stop speaking.

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): Chairman, I request a headcount.

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Will the Clerk please ring the bell to summon Members back to the Chamber.

(While the summoning bell was ringing, a number of Members returned to the Chamber but some Members did not return to their seats)

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Will Members please return to their seats.

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

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Members, some Members who have proposed amendments have repeatedly said that committee should set aside sufficient time for Members to debate on the amendments proposed by them, but I have noticed that these Members have kept on making requests for a headcount, consuming the time of the debate. I think this precisely shows that these Members have not made good use of the time, nor do they intend to engage in a meaningful debate. Let me point out once again that I have, based on the past experience, reserved sufficient time for Members to speak. Members should stay in the Chamber and make good use of the time of the debate to express views on the Appropriation Bill 2017 and the amendments. If Members consider that too much time is reserved for the debate, I will listen to their views and consider revising the arrangements already made.

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): Chairman, you should remind Members to stay in the Chamber to maintain a quorum for the meeting, rather than blaming those Members who requested headcounts because there were only a couple of people in the Chamber. As I said just now, I will not request a

headcount if 34 or 25 Members are present, but when there are only three or four people in the Chamber, I will definitely request a headcount. Moreover, Chairman, you should not thus consider that I do not treasure the speaking time.

Back to the question. I will continue to speak on "Head 45—Fire Services Department" ("FSD"). Just now some Members spoke on this head, and I also agree that the expenditure for FSD should not be reduced. On the contrary, it should be increased. In our view, the remuneration package for firemen is poorer than that for policemen. They should be put on the same par as soon as possible. Inside FSD, however, the package for ambulancemen is indeed poorer than that for firemen. Earlier I talked about the problem of meal breaks. To date, FSD has still not promised that ambulancemen on duty can have a continuous meal break of at least 30 minutes. Although the percentage of ambulancemen who could take a continuous meal break of at least 30 minutes reached 96%, it only means that if their first meal break is interrupted, they will be compensated with another continuous meal break of 30 minutes to finish the leftover in their meal boxes after they come back. For ambulancemen who have to do physical work and who may be infected through contact with patients and thus need stronger immunity, such a practice is unhealthy and inhumane. In a nutshell, why do ambulancemen have no fixed meal breaks, and why should their meal breaks be interrupted? The reason is that given the manpower shortage, some ambulancemen have to answer service calls during their meal breaks. In the past, the Government did not substantially increase the manpower of ambulancemen so that they could have their meals and replenish their strength without interruption. My greater worry is that the wastage rate of ambulancemen will keep rising if their remuneration package and working conditions see no improvements.

As we all know, the remuneration package for ambulancemen is not particularly handsome among the disciplined services, but their training is very comprehensive. In fact, after graduation, they have many better opportunities. For example, they will be given additional scores if they wish to emigrate to countries with an ageing population or developed countries where they can provide their service. If their physical strength and academic qualifications meet the requirements, actually they can choose to join the other disciplined services, including the Hong Kong Police Force, the Immigration Department and the Customs and Excise Department, to enjoy a more comfortable—not more comfortable, but more stable environment for meals. Hence, if the Government wishes to attract aspirants to join the ranks of ambulancemen and reduce the

wastage rate, it must increase the expenditure and improve the remuneration package for ambulancemen. At least their salary structure, in my view, should be brought on par with those of firemen and policemen. To attract outstanding talents to join the ranks of ambulancemen, the Government must squarely address the ambulancemen's problem of having limited room for promotion.

Ambulancemen have always been under FSD. Such a subordinate status has, on the one hand, placed ambulancemen at a disadvantage in fighting for resources. They cannot be detached from the force and strive for government resources on an equal footing. On the other hand, it has also restricted their promotion prospects. At present, the highest rank to which an ambulanceman can be promoted in the ambulance crew is only Chief Ambulance Officer. Under Chief Ambulance Officer, the number of Senior Assistant Chief Ambulance Officers is only one tenth of that of Senior Divisional Officers. It is thus evident that it is much harder for an ambulanceman than a fireman to be promoted to the management level, thus making it more difficult to attract aspirants to join the ranks of ambulancemen.

To sum up, I consider that the expenditure for FSD is absolutely insufficient and should be drastically increased. I hope all the more that one day, the ambulance service can be separated from the fire service so that the former will have its own head and its own director who can strive for fairer and more reasonable allocation of resources for ambulancemen.

Next, I will talk about "Head 160—Radio Television Hong Kong" ("RTHK"). Chairman, I did not propose any amendment in respect of RTHK. This year, I have proposed 67 amendments only. Compared with 200 last year, I have actually made a great reduction with careful and thoughtful choices. No other Members have proposed any amendment to slash the estimated expenditure for RTHK either. I believe it is obvious to all members of the public that over the past four years, RTHK has operated in straitened circumstances, and its staff have endured great pressure physically, mentally and spiritually. Do Members still remember that when LEUNG Chun-ying assumed office, it was reported in the press that he had four major political missions, including legislating for Article 23 of the Basic Law, implementing national education, soft landing of the constitutional reform and "sapping" RTHK dry? All along, the Government of the previous terms had wished to turn RTHK into its official mouthpiece, but the staff and even the middle management of RTHK stood firm, so the Government

failed in the end. After its failure, it could not but resort to an opposite approach, which is allocating to it a smaller amount of resources or limiting its resources so that it cannot do too much work.

LEUNG Chun-ying's term of office is ending soon. That RTHK can hang on up to today is by no means easy. In my view, the budget estimate for RTHK should not be reduced. On the contrary, it should be increased. Regrettably, Legislative Council Members do not have the power to increase its estimate in respect of head 160. Otherwise, I would definitely make such a proposal so that RTHK, which has been hard up to eke out an existence over the years, can have more resources.

There is no increase in resources, but the workload has kept increasing instead of decreasing over the past four years. RTHK bears a great responsibility in public broadcasting. In addition to maintaining the existing broadcasting services, as we remember, it also has to take over the analogue channels vacated by Asia Television Limited ("ATV") owing to its closure. At the same time, it has to deal with digital audio broadcasting ("DAB"). Certainly, DAB is another policy failure of the Special Administrative Region ("SAR") Government which has wasted public money. However, now RTHK has to maintain DAB alone, though DAB is meeting its demise.

Furthermore, in response to the public demand for public broadcasting services, over the past year—as mentioned by some Members just now, RTHK is not simply a radio station. Now it is also a television broadcaster—the number of broadcasting hours of its television programmes has drastically increased by one fold to over 35 000 hours. For example, the number of production hours for current and public affairs programmes has surged from 354.8 hours in 2015-2016 to 490.4 hours last year. Among other things, the enhancement of morning programmes and provision of evening news reports in the RTHK television channels have led to the drastic increase in the production hours for current and public affairs programmes.

Relative to this, however, the Government did not make any big increase in the estimated expenditure for RTHK. Last year, the increase was only 0.6%. As pointed out by the staff union of RTHK, the programmes of RTHK focus on current and public affairs programmes, but given the shortage of resources, the production of high-quality programmes will add to the pressure on the staff. RTHK lags behind the other broadcasters in terms of both hardware and

manpower. Last year, the News Department only hired three more employees, while the Television Division only employed three more technical staff members. The obvious shortage of manpower has imposed great pressure on frontline work.

Another point mentioned by me just now is that after the official end of ATV's broadcasting in April last year, two of the analogue channels were taken over by RTHK, whereas the original digital channels of ATV were recovered for use by the free-to-air television stations. In view of its lack of resources and manpower, we are very concerned whether RTHK can smoothly take over the analogue channels of ATV. As stated by the Radio Television Hong Kong Programme Staff Union, in the actual situation in which resources, manpower, hardware and equipment are currently inadequate, they are in fact unable to provide a channel operating round-the-clock within a short period. The Chief Executive-elect Carrie LAM is even more ridiculous. Earlier on, when she attended a forum of the Hong Kong Journalists Association, she was asked whether she had watched the television programmes of RTHK. She replied that she had watched the programmes of RTHK TV 31, 32 and 33. She considered some of the channels not good enough as they kept displaying still photos, feeling outdated. Good gracious! "With hair, who would like to go bald?" We cannot expect a horse to run fast if we do not feed it.

In a nutshell, the lack of resources for RTHK is the main reason. As a matter of fact, when it took over the analogue channels from ATV, the television channels of RTHK had been launched for less than two years and were yet to set into the groove. Given its limited resources, RTHK was originally supposed to broadcast programmes only in the evening time slots, but since it took over the channels, it has to broadcast programmes almost round-the-clock. Following the increase in the broadcasting hours, there was no corresponding increase in manpower and resources. Actually, even if it was immediately granted funding and manpower, it was still difficult to cope with such a huge change and demand within such a short time, not to mention that there was no increase in its funding.

At the same time, the News Department of RTHK has to produce a detailed news report of nearly half an hour every night. Actually, when we watch the news, we may not know how expensive the production of a news programme is. As we can see, even i-Cable News, which has been the most successful, may have to cut its expenditure now. As a matter of fact, to broadcast a news report for as short as two minutes, the work from the conception of ideas, interviews, filming,

script writing, editing to post-production can hardly be finished in two hours. "Cooking limited meals with a limited amount of rice", it can still manage to produce an additional half-hour news programme in respectively the morning and the evening to satisfy the demand of members of the public. It is really the result of hard efforts.

Moreover, now RTHK is using the two analogue channels of ATV. The Government has stated that the analogue format will be abolished full scale in 2020, but according to the document submitted by the authorities earlier in relation to the deferral of analogue switch-off, since analogue broadcasting in Guangdong Province will not be switched off until the end of 2020 at the earliest, without any technical coordination, an earlier analogue switch-off in Hong Kong will not yield any digital dividend, so RTHK has to hang on. Consequently, the earliest target of switching off analogue broadcasting in 2020 may not be achieved. In fact, we also need to find out the actual time of analogue switch-off in Guangdong Province. RTHK still has to continue to operate analogue broadcasting for quite a long period before that. Hence, if the next Chief Executive Carrie LAM does not want RTHK to keep displaying still photos and does not want it to have bad performance, mere empty talk will not do. She should first increase the estimated expenditure for RTHK rather than criticizing it.

Another point mentioned by me just now is about the problem of DAB. In 2011, the Government issued licences for DAB, and RTHK has shouldered five DAB channels. However, before seeing its peak, DAB is coming to an end. Pursuant to the surrender of licences by three operators, namely, Digital Broadcasting Corporation Hong Kong Limited, Metro Broadcast Corporation Limited and Phoenix U Radio, the SAR Government eventually announced last month that digital broadcasting would be terminated in Hong Kong in six months at the earliest. That is to say, the DAB services of RTHK will be ended, and the six-year digital broadcasting plan will also come to a close.

Although the Government has now surrendered to cut its loss, RTHK has already suffered a huge loss during this process. It has injected a lot of resources, manpower and materials into the provision of DAB services, and ultimately, now it has to work alone to support the remaining days of DAB.

Last month, the Acting Deputy Director of Broadcasting disclosed in the Legislative Council that the present DAB programmes of RTHK mainly targeted the disadvantaged, including a number of ethnic minorities and local

communities, and its Pilot Project for Community Involvement Broadcasting Service had already become a regular service. He said that there were many popular DAB programmes. However, in the financial aspect, each year RTHK had to bear at least \$1.9 million in rental for the site and \$1.8 million as maintenance fees for the DAB equipment and facilities, while the amount of programme production fees was \$6 million.

Commercial organizations have completely withdrawn from the market, but the Government still requests RTHK to stick to the post alone to provide DAB services. This is unreasonable. In fact, I consider digital broadcasting a wrong choice. Back then, when the Internet had yet to gain such pervasiveness, we said digital broadcasting was good in that it could transmit data and pictures, the sound quality was fine, etc., but now we have realized that the market does not need these things at all. It prefers speed to sound of high quality in broadcasting. As regards the transmission of pictures and data, now the online stations can do that, too.

In closing, I wish to talk about the problem of the new Broadcasting House of RTHK. Last month, at the Finance Committee meeting examining the estimates of expenditure for the new financial year, I asked Secretary Gregory SO why the funding plan for the new Broadcasting House of RTHK (*The buzzer sounded*) ... was still not submitted to the Legislative Council ...

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, please stop speaking. Does any other Member wish to speak?

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): I hereby implore other Members intending to speak to seize the opportunity lest the Chairman will say that Members do not wish to speak. I have a lot to say. Yet if I have to speak for an hour on my own, I am afraid I may collapse.

Let us return to the subject on the new broadcasting house project of Radio Television Hong Kong ("RTHK"). As early as January 2014, the Government planned to spend \$6 billion on building a new broadcasting house in Tseung Kwan O. However, when the document was submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee ("the Subcommittee") for examination, the pro-establishment camp, in a rare move, opposed the proposal on the grounds that it was a waste of

public coffers and requested the Government to withdraw the document of its own accord. The motion on the funding application was eventually negated with 10 in favour of it and 15 against it. The legislature definitely has the authority to veto funding applications, and we have done that, too. The point is that it was the pro-establishment camp playing the opposition role this time around.

Yet, it has been three years since, and the new Legislative Council has commenced for nearly a year. The Government is unwilling to resubmit the funding application to the Legislative Council, though those people who strongly opposed the application are no longer in the Council—I recall that Christopher CHUNG was one of them back then. What does the pro-establishment camp, like the major political party the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB"), think about the incident? Has the Secretary done any soft lobbying? Theoretically, he is in charge of the relevant policy and if he intends to put it into implementation, there is no reason for him not asking Members whether or not they support the policy. As in cases involving issues he wants to bulldoze through, he will lobby Members even if they do not support the proposals. Yet, at issue is not whether or not he has lobbied Members but that he has not even asked Members of their opinions. I guess if he had asked Members, it would not be too difficult to secure 30 votes in support of the policy in the Subcommittee or the Finance Committee.

Some Members mentioned earlier that due to the issue of the red rainstorm signal last summer in Hong Kong, the RTHK incident was brought to public attention again. According to the RTHK Programme Staff Union, the corridor outside the on-air studio could be likened to the House of Dancing Water on that day. Water dripped continuously from the ceiling, filling several buckets. Part of the false ceiling was soaked with water and collapsed. Since a lot of wires were covered by the false ceiling, there was a risk of electricity leakage. Are we in a third world country? Why would this happen to RTHK, a government radio station? Since the water seepage occurred close to a room where the server was located, staff members feared it would affect the live broadcast of the station, so they piled up sandbags outside the entrance of the server room and checked whether or not other locations and wires were affected. I trust that the scene is still fresh in many people's mind.

As for the RTHK Television House located in 1A Broadcast Drive—I trust many Members must have been there, for election forums are held there. The run-down television house was plagued by unceasing rain. Due to the sudden

collapse of the ceiling in the temporary film editing room on the third floor, two computers and some filming equipment were soaked and needed to be blown dry with a hairdryer, and programme production was directly affected.

Actually, the existing facilities in the houses of RTHK located in Broadcast Drive, be it the radio division or the television division, are in extremely poor conditions. This is the first point. Second, in view of programme demand and workload, there is a general shortage of space, equipment and manpower. At present, RTHK has to set up a container as a temporary office. During the rainy season, water keeps dripping in the broadcasting house. Frontline staff are troubled by the possible disruption to programme broadcast and production. I wonder if they have to hold umbrellas during programme broadcast or while they control the panel.

At the same time, RTHK faces the problems of inadequacy and depreciation of hardware. According to some staff members from the television division, full-scale computerization has been launched in other television stations, so that raw films can be uploaded into the server after filming, whereas editing, subtitle production and official broadcasting can all be completed via computers without using any external storage device. However, the television division of RTHK is still using video tapes as the means of storage. In urgent cases, staff members have to run up and down to carry video tapes to different floors of the building to facilitate the completion of editing work and subtitle production, so that a programme can be broadcast on time.

Finally, regarding the head on RTHK, I consider that the provision of funding for the new broadcasting house can brook no delay. Though the funding application had been reduced by \$750 million with the consensus reached with staff members and the management and resubmitted to the Legislative Council subsequently, it seemed that the application failed. At the meeting of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting last month, the Director of Broadcasting, LEUNG Ka-wing, told Members that one of the possible options then was to share the broadcasting house with other government departments. In other words, several government departments would be using the building jointly. The new broadcasting house will likely be located in Tseung Kwan O, depending on with which departments will RTHK share the building. Since the previous funding application, which had been reduced from \$6 billion to \$5 billion, failed the passage and the room for further cost reduction for exclusive use of the building by RTHK is very limited, the aforesaid option allows RTHK

to bear only half of the cost, which is \$3 billion if the cost for the joint-user building is \$6 billion, whereas the remaining \$3 billion will be met by other departments. Besides, times have changed, and digital broadcasting will soon be phased out. Theoretically, some on-air studios will be vacated and the number of on-air studios required will be reduced, meaning a reduction in the funding required. In this connection, when I settle score with Gregory SO, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, shortly, I will deal with him item by item. Since RTHK is under the Commerce and Economic Bureau, the Secretary should atone for his sin with this kind act before his term of office expires. Otherwise, after the failure in the issue of a licence to the Hong Kong Television Network Limited, the drying up of RTHK will become another blot on his reputation.

Next, I would like to give an account on "Head 63—Home Affairs Department". Many Honourable colleagues have expressed their views on the Home Affairs Department ("HAD"), particularly on the lavish spending on and criticisms against the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the SAR reunification. Yet, I would like to highlight a few other things. First, it is the Signature Project Scheme ("SPS"). Under Programme (1) District Administration of "Head 63—Home Affairs Department" of the Budget, matters requiring special attention in 2017-2018 include supporting District Councils ("DCs") in the implementation of SPS. To support DCs is one of the major tasks of HAD, and I will talk about the disorder of HAD and areas where it has to put in an extra effort later. Now, I will focus on SPS, which is commonly known as the "\$100 million for each district" scheme.

In the Policy Address of 2013, LEUNG Chun-ying announced the implementation of SPS and reserved a provision of \$100 million for each DC to implement one to two SPS projects. All the projects are proposed, discussed and agreed by DCs. An DC must be satisfied that the projects would address the needs of the district and have visible and lasting impact in the community. An SPS project may be works or non-works in nature, or a mixture of both. DCs may partner with non-profit-making organizations, business organizations, statutory bodies or government departments to deliver these projects.

Though we say that the "\$100 million for each district" scheme is comparable to publicity offering seasonal delicacies, it is not so in actuality, and this may just be some kind of catch phrases. Many SPS projects implemented by a number of DCs have really catered for the needs of the district. At a

meeting, I once commended the projects implemented by the Kwai Tsing DC, which include enhancement of the community health care services on dental care and the provision of ophthalmic care services. Since we often commend the Kwai Tsing DC, the Southern DC has learnt from their experience. It has shelved the project on constructing a restaurant near the Aberdeen Promenade and followed the approach of the Kwai Tsing DC by providing ophthalmic care services in the next five years. This is a benevolent initiative.

However, some SPS projects are opposed by local residents and considered "small white elephant" projects which fail to meet the needs of the community. These projects cannot be called "big white elephants", for the scale of a \$100 million project will not be too big after all. Three SPS projects have aroused strong opposition, namely, the construction of the music fountain at the Kwun Tong Promenade, the Moreton Terrace Activities Centre in the Wan Chai District and "Lam Tsuen Tiananmen Square" in the Tai Po District. These projects have caused bad headaches to the Legislative Council, put the Council in a difficult position and aroused considerable controversies. I think Members still remember the circumstances surrounding the examination of the three projects. First, we requested the authorities to separate the items included in the motion, so that each item could be handled separately and those desirable SPS projects would not be bundled with the questionable projects. The Government eventually heeded the advice and made improvement, so that the three projects could be handled separately. However, the relevant funding has yet to be granted, and other funding applications have also been affected. Members should still remember the scrutiny of the application for \$12.4 billion one-off allocation under Capital Works Reserve Fund last month. Precisely because the application included the funding for the preliminary studies and preparatory work for the three projects on "Lam Tsuen Tiananmen Square" in the Tai Po District, the Moreton Terrace Activities Centre in the Wan Chai District and Kwun Tong Promenade respectively, many Members opposed the application.

In fact, in November, the Panel on Development proposed a non-binding motion requesting the Government to withdraw those projects from the block allocation for separate scrutiny, and the motion was passed by Members. But since these motions are non-binding, those projects continued to be bundled in the funding application under the Capital Works Reserve Fund, and the application was eventually granted by the Finance Committee at the meeting on 18 March. Yet the funding application for principal works has not yet been submitted to the Legislative Council. During our attempt to stop the granting of the block

allocation application under the Capital Works Reserve Fund, I heard someone say that granting the application would not be a problem, for the three projects might not necessarily commence even if funding was granted, and the authorities were required to submit an application to the Legislative Council again when the three projects commenced.

The current-term Government had better not submit the application to the Legislative Council again, for we all know that the Finance Committee is scrutinizing a number of controversial proposals now. Since these "\$100 million for each district" schemes have aroused enormous opposition in the districts, the DCs concerned should follow the Southern District in heeding good advice. They may "work on software but not hardware", putting forth proposals providing assistance to the elderly in dental and ophthalmic care. By then, we will definitely be eager to endorse the application.

In this connection, I understand that HAD is in a rather difficult situation in the dealing with these projects. We have queried HAD if there is any problem with the scrutiny process and had much discussion about this. Today, a problem is revealed, yet not by me but by the Audit Commission ("Audit"). Audit said that the problem of "granting money to their own people" had been in existence in DCs for a long time, where DC Members endorsed funding applications by organizations in which they were directors. According to Audit, there are many problems with declarations of interests in the examination of funding applications in DCs. Of course, individual DC Members and DC Chairmen both have to bear the responsibility, yet I think HAD, as the department providing direct support to DCs, also has an extremely important role to play. Is it because the funding we granted for HAD under the Budget is inadequate, that is, under Subhead (1)—District Administration for supporting the relevant work of DCs, thus resulting in a shortage of manpower and the failure to do what should be done?

I will go through the content of the Direct of Audit's Report briefly. According to the report, last year, 76 DC Members in eight DCs had only made verbal declarations at meetings but not registrations of such interests; 34 DC Members had not declared their interest in considering the earmarking of funding; in over 60% of the cases involved, DC Members continued to attend meetings examining the projects after declaring their interests, and the Chairmen of DCs involved had not followed the standing orders of DCs to make and record rulings on the interests declared.

In fact, the declaration arrangement of DCs, like that of the Legislative Council, is divided into two tiers. The first-tier declaration is made at the assumption of office, and the other tier of declaration is made prior to discussion and voting of the relevant agenda items. It is interesting that in the Director of Audit's Report, at meetings in 2016, 129 declarations of interests in the second tier were made by DC Members, yet 122 of such declarations had not been made in the first tier at the assumption of office, involving 76 DC Members in total. This situation is ridiculous. When DC Members declare their interests prior to voting, it means that they notice they have not made any declaration in the first tier, and they should resubmit their declaration of interests or HAD should remind the DC Members to declare such interests. Since Audit is not responsible for investigation, they will not investigate the cases of all DC Members. Had DC Members not made any disclosure, Audit would not have known. In the present case, DC Members have declared interests in the second tier but not the first tier.

Audit recommends HAD to provide guidelines to DCs explaining the major principles in defining "other declarable interests" and remind DC Members to declare their interests, and HAD should ensure DC Members have declared interests before earmarking funding for organizations tasked with implementation. When we queried if the problem of transfer of interests existed, the authorities said that the mechanism was proven. But now it turns out that the mechanism is fraught with problems. I hope the authorities will pay special attention to this.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): Chairman, just now, I heard Mr CHAN Chi-chuen mention the Home Affairs Department. Actually, I had proposed six amendments to head 63, but they were considered by your goodself to be irrelevant and thus deleted. As a result, I can only conduct a general discussion, instead of discussing each and every amendment. Nevertheless, I am not going to talk about the amendments. I will talk slowly.

I am going to talk about "Head 45—Fire Services Department", which has no amendments. Before all else, I would like to appeal to Mrs Regina IP to speak because she is a senior consultant for the Hong Kong Fire Services Department Staffs General Association. The New People's Party has been campaigning for the working hours of firemen with its utmost in a humble manner. On such a solemn occasion, Mrs IP ought to speak for the firemen.

I am going to speak for the firemen now. Chairman, people have been moved by the bravery of firemen who died recently while on duty, especially the one who died during a major fire breaking out in mini storage units. Certainly, other departments were also at fault and responsible for the occurrence of the problem of mini storage units. I believe the Chairman is also aware of these questions asked by LAU Wong-fat before he left the Legislative Council: How many mini storage units are there in the territory? Has the Government inspected the fire escapes of these units? Although these questions were raised a long time ago, no answer has been given. Finally, the occurrence of a major fire in mini storage units led to a comprehensive inspection being conducted at the moment. Certainly, the Fire Services Department ("FSD") itself is duty-bound to conduct inspections, too. It can hardly shirk its responsibility, for its failure to carry out inspections has led to the deaths of many firemen in the line of duty. We all find this most regrettable. I believe a number of Members who are present here—though not many Members are present—have gone to their funerals to express condolences. Nonetheless, how can paying tribute to the dead compare to the wisdom of people who prefer to accord better treatment to the persons when they are still living.

Chairman, how many hours do firemen in Hong Kong work? I wish to test Honourable Members who are here, but they are absent. Firemen in Hong Kong are required to work 51 hours weekly. What does it mean by 51 hours? It will be May Day a few days later. The Chairman should have been invited to attend a banquet to propose toasts with LEUNG Chun-ying in celebration of May Day.

The origin of May Day was to fight for an "8+8+8 system". With the implementation of a six-day work system in the past, it meant that the weekly number of working hours was 48. Now, thanks to human progress, if the daily working hours is eight, and the weekly number of working days is five and a half, not to mention five days, the weekly number of working hours is only 44, not to mention the fact that the weekly number of working hours is 35 in Europe and the United States. Such being the case, why should firemen work 51 hours weekly? Being a disciplined force, FSD can be compared with other disciplined forces. The weekly numbers of working hours for the Hong Kong Police Force ("HKPF"), the Customs and Excise Department, the Correctional Services Department, the Immigration Department, the Government Flying Service and the Independent Commission Against Corruption are 48, 48, 48, 44, 44 and 44

respectively. Firemen are subjected to discrimination and treated like "second-class" citizens.

Chairman, while the weekly number of working hours for the six major disciplined forces is 40 hours or so, only FSD, which is also a disciplined force, is required to work 51 hours a week. Although people say that they will pay tribute to those firemen who have died in the line of duty, has it ever occurred to them that the firemen have been required to work a few extra hours over the past couple of decades? Actually, this comment is not entirely appropriate because it was only in 2001 that HKPF adopted a 48-hour work system. When I was arrested by police officers years ago, they said, "Long Hair, you need not fight for anything else. Just fight for a cut of our working hours by three hours first". Their weekly number of working hours was 51 at that time.

Certainly, it remains an enigma as to why firemen are subjected to discrimination. Chairman, since you have frequent contacts with the Government, it will definitely explain the rationale to you, just like what you did to me. In a movie called "A man of reasons", one of the characters has reasons to do everything, even to kill people. Chairman, what is the rationale put forward by the Government? You should hear how ridiculous it is. The Government said that it had heard the views expressed by everyone, be it Mrs IP or others. The Government may slash the working hours of firemen under one condition called "three nos", meaning no increases in manpower and resources, and no impact on services. When this condition is met, the weekly number of working hours of firemen can be reduced by three or even more.

Chairman, the condition is unrealistic. I think Members should understand it, too. In the words of SHAKESPEARE, "I can repay a loan with flesh cut from my body, as long as I will not bleed when the pound of flesh is cut out of me." This is a meaningless trick. If the "three nos" are feasible, why do we have to get the Government involved? We are voicing our aspirations at the top of our voices here—Mrs IP, I would like to extend another invitation for you to come to the Chamber—firemen are being treated by the Government in this manner. In the opinion of the pro-establishment camp, LEUNG Kwok-hung is really bad, for he often seeks to propose reducing the salaries of and resources for firemen. Chairman, what can I talk about besides proposing such cuts? There is nothing I can talk about except these cuts. Even if I do, the amendments have been cut by you indiscriminately.

I am now speaking for the firemen by pinpointing the long-standing discrimination against them. The work of firemen puts emphasis on physical strength. Should their physical strength fall, they might make mistakes at critical moments. Is it fair for them to work longer hours? Am I wrong in making this point?

Chairman, fire services and water have a close bearing on each other. Usually, water is used for putting out fires, though chemical substances will sometimes be used now. Our Government has been making some efforts in water with the procurement of several water tankers for spraying people at a cost of \$27 million per vehicle. Now, water cannons are used by firemen for putting out fires. Is it fair for firemen to work 51 hours weekly while others are required to work 44 or 48 hours only?

Chairman, the Government will again offer an explanation with rationales, saying it is actually very impartial and its comment is not unfounded, which means that it has a clear basis. What is its basis? Listen carefully. It is about the Rennie Report, not "Wisely". Of course, Rennie is the name of a "gweilo", for Hong Kong was under the rule of the British prior to 1997, or more than two decades ago, when the incumbent high-ranking officials should be sitting the entry examinations for the Administrative Officer or Executive Officer posts at that time. There was no need for Secretary Prof KC CHAN to sit the examination, for he joined the Government as an outsider. Buddy, more than two decades ago, there was this "gweilo" ... excuse me, it was an expatriate—I have no idea of the gender, for discrimination is prohibited. But I am certain that he or she was an expatriate called Rennie—and a report was compiled under his or her name. He or she had also proposed a "three nos" policy, suggesting that the conditions of firemen as a disciplined force could be improved. And as I read them out just now, under the "three nos" policy, additional manpower and resources must not be incurred, and the existing level of service must not be affected.

The Government has been adhering to this standard adopted more than two decades ago prior to the reunification. The standard in society at that time was miserably low when the standard working hours were not set and the establishment of the Mandatory Provident Fund had yet to come to fruition. How can the Government treat its employees in this manner? Civil servants, who are inextricably linked with the ordinary public, offer assistance to the disadvantaged and the needy. In order to pay my tribute, I read out the names of

the three fire fighters who died recently in the line of duty: YAU Siu-ming, Principal Fireman; and Thomas CHEUNG, Senior Station Officer and HUI Chi-kit, Senior Fireman, and both of whom were killed on duty in a major fire that broke out in mini storage units. Certainly, we feel very sad about their deaths. Meanwhile, being good to the dead will definitely arouse pity for the living. Since there are no amendments to "Head 45—Fire Services Department", the relevant government officials may even refrain from coming to this Council, for no answer was given despite my having asked questions on so many occasions.

Chairman, there are problems with entry points and salaries, too. What is the entry point for the post of Fireman and Ambulanceman? The answer is \$19,780, or less than \$20,000. Their pay is nearly the same as that of an Customs and Excise officer, Assistant Officer II and Immigration Assistant. However, the entry point for a Constable is \$22,410, which is \$3,000 more than the entry point for other disciplined forces. We can only say that men are not equal.

Chairman, had I not shouted loudly here once every year, who would have known how the firemen were treated? All firemen who died in the line of duty were described as dying a glorious death. It is sad that there is no mention of a profession unless someone in the profession has died. LU Xun once rightly said that a person is really dead if he is no longer in someone's heart. Fortunately, Hong Kong is not that bad. "You are still in my heart even if you are dead." This is why I have to speak out.

Chairman, I have to sing praises of the Government. Since it is often scolded by me, it is useful for me to speak out. Even if the Government does not admit any wrongdoing, it still has to make improvement because after all, the Secretary has no tail, and he is a human being, too. It is useful to scold him constantly. Do Members know someone called Clement CHEUNG? He is the Secretary for the Civil Service, who is at this meeting with us. He said with clear articulation that "we will study the feasibility of upgrading FSD as an emergency service", meaning that firemen will be brought on a par with police officers. Since fire-fighting is like rescuing people, what is FSD if it is not an emergency service? Imagine your home is on fire, you will, as *I Ching* puts it, feel uneasy. In helping the public extinguish a fire, firemen have to battle a fire and may lose their lives at any time. If FSD is not an emergency service, what is it?

Since Mr CHAN Chi-chuen mentioned it just now, I will not make any repetition here. The ambulancemen under FSD are also treated in the same manner, for they do not have any meal break, either. When the Legislative Council was doing a headcount, a Member once complained, "Long Hair, I have got a stomachache. I am going to be choked to death." How terrible can Members feel for they receive a monthly honorarium of more than \$90,000 and can leave the Chamber for a meal, a piece of cake or a cup of tea at any time? If Members consider it inappropriate for a headcount to be requested at lunchtime, what about the ambulancemen? When they just have their first bite of rice, the siren bell might be sounded, and they might have to go to perform duty for an hour. Upon their return, it will take them another 30 minutes to finish their meal. But then, they will be deemed to have spent 30 minutes on their meal. Is it not ridiculous? Ambulancemen are treated by FSD like "second-class" staff. Although they are rescuers, they are unable to rescue themselves. Chairman, let me get to the point by making a few comments first. How sad this is!

Secondly, FSD has additional manpower this year with the creation of 331 additional posts, thanks to the Government having been scolded. Would there be additional manpower had the Government not been scolded? I think FSD will not have additional manpower had the Government not been constantly scolded by Members here. Let me introduce myself. Dear firemen, my name is LEUNG Kwok-hung. The 331 additional posts were created because I scolded the Government. I am going to scold it again and demand that working hours be slashed. Dear ambulancemen, I am going to scold the Government again and demand that working hours be slashed.

Chairman, there must be a huge surplus before 331 additional posts can be created for FSD. Thanks to the wrong estimate made by "Uncle Paul", there is an additional \$10 billion of surplus. So, can assistance be offered to firemen by increasing the existing resources and manpower and slashing their working hours to 48? Do Members dare say it is futile to scold the Government? It will not do anything unless it feels ashamed for being scolded. Can Members insist that it is futile to scold the Government? I am going to scold the Government again. Do not be pretentious.

Thank you, Chairman.

MS CLAUDIA MO: "Head 63—Home Affairs Department". The Home Affairs Department ("HAD") is supposed to be looking after our ethnic minorities' welfare and interests, but its performance is quite a disgrace.

I just received a letter dated yesterday from the United Welfare Union Hong Kong Limited and it is about the Muslim community in Yau Ma Tei. They have this Muslim praying hall in Hoi Wang Road in Yau Ma Tei. It is a temporary tenancy, but now they are being forced out, forced out to make way for the Central Kowloon Route, and they are being forced out by the Highways Department. And you would assume HAD should have done something for them, or at least they should have looked for a replacement site as their praying hall. And so we have got this complaint, and I hope HAD would look after that particular complaint.

I said that HAD has failed in its duty to really care for our ethnic minorities, and we just have to look at the Director of Audit's Report issued this morning. Of all the district level activities organized by HAD, while up to 10 million people or attendants participated in those activities and events, less than 20 000 of them were of an ethnic minority origin. That is less than 0.1%. So, what sort of events or functions and things in general are you working for the community? Is it that our ethnic minority does not count, really? Is it not that our non-white ethnic minority groups make up a total of 5% of the population?

I would also hope that HAD would seriously listen to what the Equal Opportunities Commission ("EOC") has said. It said that there should be a supervisory body within the Government to look after translation services for ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong. Just count the government services to the people: medical, housing, employment, etc., and practically in every single sector, things got lost in translation. The Housing Authority said, "Well, we tried our best when it comes to translating languages."; and the Hospital Authority is saying, "The linguistic demands and services are surely not part of our responsibilities." So, could not the Home Affairs Bureau take up that responsibility?

And, allow me to digress a tiny bit. When it comes to unemployment, the percentage for the entire population in Hong Kong is barely 3% to 4%—I understand that it is quite low—but for ethnic minorities alone, it is up to 23% to 24%, and very often, it is the linguistic barrier that stops them from getting jobs, not to forget about racial discrimination.

When it comes to racial bias, the anti-racial discrimination law is being looked at, and again, we thank EOC for suggesting that we should amend some of the provisions in that law because at the moment, while it claims to bind the Government when it comes to racial bias, crimes, offences, that anti-racial bias provision does not cover services provided by government departments or public bodies, right? So, how do you define services? There was one particular case that was taken to court, alleging racial bias offence on the part of the Hong Kong Police, but then, that case was thrown out of court in the end because apparently according to that law it does not cover Police performance nor behaviour when they arrest you because they are rendering some public services at the time. So, however they behave just does not count. So, we are having that amendment, and again, can I urge the Home Affairs Bureau and HAD to help expedite the reform of this particular law.

And thirdly but not lastly, is this exclusion business ... allow me to go back to what I was saying right from the beginning that HAD's public events were hardly attended by ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. Is this feeling or aura, almost, of exclusion has got nothing to do with us, so they do not come to take part in the events? Do you actually encourage them to come and participate in the events? How large, how really forceful your effort has been? And do not say, "Well, you see, there is some racial bias stuff in the community because people just don't understand." But ignorance is no defence, and please do not say we have no racial bias at all, because everything looks OK, if not actually harmonious, and things are looking OK. Please be reminded, "indifference" is the worst form of bias. They are somebody else; they are not part of us; they are not Chinese, so they are not one of us, they are not true Hongkongers somehow, and you encourage that sort of mentality, and that is simply not right.

And please, can I remind the Home Affairs Bureau and HAD that you do not just fulfil some sketch of doings and then you can claim that you have done your job. It does not absolve you from any of the blame. The ignorance, the indifference, and please don't think, well, at the end of the day, we can just employ some art of the rhetoric, we can just babble away, we can just talk about things and give them loads of figures and claim that we have done a lot already. This is not right. And what I said that should be done should have been done yesterday, and I repeat, this Hong Kong Government's work on and for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong has been a disgrace, and please stop it.

Thank you.

MR NATHAN LAW (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, from my visual observation, there are only three or four Members in the Chamber, so I request a headcount.

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Will the Clerk please ring the bell to summon Members back to the Chamber.

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

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr Nathan LAW, please speak.

MR NATHAN LAW (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, just now I spoke on the head covering the Independent Police Complaints Council ("IPCC"), but I also wish to add a few points on the head for the Fire Services Department ("FSD"), since many Members also spoke on this item just now.

As mentioned by me earlier, the fact that we did not propose any amendment does not mean we do not have any views on these provisions because according to our powers and duties, we cannot increase government expenditure. Yet I am speaking in the hope that the Government will increase the expenditure for FSD.

As mentioned by a Member just now, the number of posts in FSD has indeed increased by 303 this year. However, I have asked some frontline officers of FSD whether such a growth is sufficient to cope with the increasing demand of work. Their reply is rather negative. In fact, subsequent to the occurrence of many accidents in the community, FSD was required to increase its workload. Simply put, it was "left holding the bag". An example is the fire which broke out in the mini-storages in Ngau Tau Kok earlier. Apart from extinguishing the fire immediately, FSD has to do some follow-up work, such as the inspection of industrial buildings. A lot of the additional work has fallen onto the frontline officers of FSD. Hence, all along, many firemen have been telling me that their workload is indeed too heavy.

Actually, I may have to make a declaration of interest. I have relatives who work in FSD. Their personal experience has made me understand that it is a very high-risk profession. One of my relatives took part in the firefighting

operation in the mini-storages in Ngau Tau Kok. When he entered the scene, actually his families were gravely worried, fearing that he would sustain injuries or meet an even more serious accident at work. These sidelights have illustrated that FSD really needs improvement to its remuneration package. In my view, at least an independent salary structure on a par with the Police Force should be set up, or it should be listed as an emergency service like the Police Force. Only then will it be compatible with its contribution to society and the danger it faces. It can also encourage more people to join this profession.

So much for my speech on increasing the funding for FSD. Next, I would like to add some points in respect of the head for IPCC. As I mentioned just now, regarding the head for IPCC, actually my proposal is to increase its resources. Just now a Member mentioned that it was merely a "toothless tiger" and we had better dissolve it. Yet I propose increasing its resources on the premise that it must open up its structure and be given more powers. Only then will it be able to bring its function of monitoring the Police Force into place.

As we can see, in the past there were actually many cases of the Police Force which made members of the public deeply worried whether IPCC was able to exercise its function so that abuse of power or disciplinary issues in the Police Force could be handled in a timely manner. IPCC had raised various queries with the Police on matters including change in the classification of findings, recommended improvements to police practices and procedures, reasons for exercising police power, clarification of information in investigation reports, etc., and made 793 recommendations, but only 381 queries or recommendations were accepted by the Police. On average, only 59.28% of the queries were accepted by the Police. Judging from this, the Police Force actually enjoys an enormous power on this front. Simply put, it will only listen to comments which are pleasant to its ears and ignore those which are not. Such a phenomenon is very common.

As I said in my first speech just now, I propose that Hong Kong draw reference from the practice of the British IPCC of vesting IPCC with an independent power of investigation. Only this approach can prevent the situation of "police officers shielding one another" which will cause IPCC to be unable to bring its function of monitoring the Police Force into effective play.

Just now some Members also mentioned that members of the public had gradually lost their confidence in IPCC. Certainly, one of the reasons was that after a great purge of its composition in December last year, all of its members

were replaced by appointees from the pro-establishment camp. Besides, its response to a number of major cases or cases of social concern was rather slow. While the Police responded slowly, we did not see IPCC effectively monitor the Police and take timely action.

In the past, there were two serious cases involving the rank of Superintendent. Even though IPCC found the complaints substantiated, the Police firmly refused to accept them, and the deadlock lasted as long as several years. Even if a case is substantiated, the Police may refuse to take any follow-up action. For example, in the case of Superintendent CHU King-wai, it took some 800 days to officially initiate prosecution. Hence, to restore public confidence in IPCC and convince them that police power is subject to appropriate checks and balances and IPCC can monitor on behalf of the public whether the power of the Government has been abused, some reforms are certainly necessary.

As I said just now, IPCC must open up its structure to attain a wider internal membership which, for example, includes pan-democratic Members or other representatives so that the views will be better balanced. Furthermore, IPCC must enjoy an independent power of investigation and may directly refer cases to the prosecution authority for deciding whether to initiate prosecution or otherwise. This also involves the matter of resources. I hope resources for IPCC will be increased after these two reforms. Only then can the investigation work be conducted effectively.

At present, the Hong Kong IPCC consists of 51 staff members. Among them, 16 are directly responsible for handling cases. Let us compare it with other examples overseas. For instance, the British IPCC comprises 804 staff members, 482 of whom being responsible for investigation and follow-up of cases; the Office of the Independent Police Review Director in Ontario comprises 51 staff members, 30 of whom being responsible for investigation and follow-up of cases. Compared with the United Kingdom and Ontario, the ratio of staff members, especially investigators, of the Hong Kong IPCC to police officers is the lowest. Hence, to enable IPCC to fully exercise its investigative and monitoring functions, it is imperative to increase the number of investigators. The existing structure is not sufficient to support IPCC in independently investigating complaints against the Police from a neutral and impartial angle. For this reason, in respect of head 121, I hope the Government can conduct a review and consider increasing the resources in the future.

The next item I wish to discuss is the expenditure under "Head 169—Secretariat, Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance". This year, the estimated expenditure is \$21.2 million. The total establishment is 23. In June 2016, the Legislative Council passed the Interception of Communications and Surveillance (Amendment) Bill 2015, empowering the Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance ("the Commissioner") to request law enforcement agencies to submit products of interception and surveillance for examination. It was a significant reform, vesting the Commissioner with the real power of monitoring law enforcement agencies.

However, many standards still fall short of public expectations. Moreover, given the rapid technological advancements, some applications relating to communication technology might not be covered by this Bill and all the relevant laws in the past. For example, the regulation of hacking software, cracking of mobiles, interceptions of digital communications, requests for provision of users' information from Internet service providers, etc. are not regulated by the Ordinance.

Some time ago, Under Secretary for Security John LEE personally admitted that the Police possess the technology of cracking passwords of mobiles, but he refused to deny that the Police have used hacking software on the grounds of affecting law enforcement, thus causing us to reasonably doubt that the Police may have intercepted personal data of members of the public through different technologies. In this regard, relevant scandals have appeared in various parts of the world. The regulation over how the Government protects the privacy of members of the public is a grave issue in civil societies around the world. Many similar cases have occurred in the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe, triggering great reactions in the community.

Hence, apart from the need to eradicate crimes through the collection of such data, we must also respect members of the public and protect their privacy. This is an important consideration when we examine legislation on communications.

Following the expansion of the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau, the relevant Ordinance should be reviewed in a timely manner. As I said just now, we are very concerned whether the privacy of members of the

public has been infringed upon. We also need to prevent the Police from making use of the new technologies to stealthily obtain the privacy data of members of the public without any restraint.

As pointed out in paragraph 6.31 of the Annual Report 2015 submitted by the Commissioner, "This was not the first time that the Officer was found not exercising due care in the performance of duties under the ICSO (Interception of Communications and Surveillance Ordinance)." In other words, this officer in question was a recidivist. That means in many past cases, the law enforcement officers had obtained privacy data by using technologies not covered by the Ordinance without being subject to regulation. I believe such a phenomenon bears testimony to the fact that the relevant Ordinance warrants updating and review in a timely manner. Hence, this time the estimated expenditure for the Secretariat, Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance may need to be increased so that it can really discharge the function of monitoring the Government.

The next item is "Head 120—Pensions". I had proposed some amendments in respect of this head, but regrettably, they were rejected owing to some discrepancies in the amounts. I had originally proposed a reduction of \$690,000, approximately equivalent to the monthly pensions of the four police officers convicted of "causing grievous bodily harm with intent", and \$12 million, approximately equivalent to the lump sum pension gratuities of the four police officers convicted of "causing grievous bodily harm with intent". However, since the information on the head written in the amendments was wrong, it was ruled that they were not in order. But never mind. I wish to take this opportunity to express my views.

In fact, in past meetings, the relevant Members have discussed this matter, including the pensions of the convicted police officers in the "furore of the seven cops", which is indeed controversial. Of course, many Members of the pro-establishment camp will certainly say that the authorities have already gone through the established procedures to determine whether they should receive the pensions. However, let us take a step back and think about this. How do the community at large or the other stakeholders actually look at this matter?

Since the verdict of the case of "The Seven Cops" was delivered, public opinions have been divergent. Please do not be mistaken that speaking here against the payment of pensions to these several police officers means hatred

against the Police. It absolutely does not mean so. We all understand very well that if there is any black sheep in a group, we must address it squarely and seriously because the image of the whole disciplined service or the whole group may be severely tarnished by the slightest mistake. Members who have noted a recent public opinion survey about the disciplined services will find that the score for the Police Force has become increasingly low. As we can see, its score in the latest survey is 64.6, and its lowest score in the past was 60.3 in the last survey, whereas the latest score for FSD is 83.9. It thus shows that after the indiscriminate arrests in the Umbrella Movement, the subsequent indiscriminate and political prosecutions, coupled with the numerous cases, the social image of the Police Force has been badly tarnished. This is not my personal opinion. Rather, it has been clearly shown by the public opinion survey. Hence, the pro-establishment camp needs not pin any label on me, accusing me of smearing them. This is absolutely not true.

These several police officers meted out extrajudicial punishment on an unarmed demonstrator who had already been cuffed during the Umbrella Movement. For this reason, they were convicted and thus sentenced to imprisonment by the Court. This is a most clear fact.

Facing these judgments of the Court, they should exercise greater restraint and set a good example for society as a disciplined service. Such extrajudicial punishment is absolutely not allowed in society. As stated by Max WEBER, a sociologist, the state is an entity that can claim monopoly on the use of violence. The Police are exactly a symbol of monopoly on the use of violence. Armed with guns and batons, they enjoy every condition for protection of themselves. They should not hurt other people at will.

Hence, facing such a situation, I implore various sectors of society to seriously review this matter and consider whether the black sheep should continue to collect their original benefits, in which case the image of the Police Force will only be further damaged. Nor can we mend (*The buzzer sound*) ... the rift arisen in society.

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr Nathan LAW, please stop speaking.

MR KENNETH LEUNG (in Cantonese): Chairman, I would like to comment on "Head 121—Independent Police Complaints Council". From 2011 to 2016, I was a member of the Independent Police Complaints Council ("IPCC"). Given my six-year services on IPCC, under the relevant rules I retired from IPCC. As regards the structure, membership and resources of IPCC—financial or human resources—I have many views to express.

In a nutshell, Chairman, firstly, I believe the resources of IPCC should be increased rather than reduced in order to prevent its degeneration. As a matter of fact, from the initial organization similar to an advisory body to the subsequent statutory body established by virtue of the Independent Police Complaints Council Ordinance ("the Ordinance"), IPCC had been doing its job well, but after the Umbrella Movement, both the independence and credibility of IPCC have called into question by many members of the public because of various reasons and the utter lack of transparency in manpower arrangements.

In retrospect, during the era of the Chairmanship being held by Mr Ronny WONG, Senior Counsel, the Independent Police Complaints Committee ("the Committee", predecessor of IPCC) was also plagued with problems, in particular litigations. Indeed, a case of personal information disclosure had embroiled all members of the Committee in civil proceedings—the Ordinance had not been enacted at the time. After the incident, the Government reviewed the structure of the Committee and decided to turn it into a statutory body through the Ordinance. One of the purposes of the enactment was to exempt members from certain civil liabilities in the discharge of their duties in their capacity as members. In other words, in exercising their powers as members of the Committee, they are exempted from civil liabilities should litigations be brought possibly due to negligence. Certainly, the Ordinance is not perfect. Just now many Honourable colleagues (such as Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Mr Nathan LAW) have mentioned the many problems with the functions and duties of IPCC.

Regarding the change of IPCC from decline to prosperity and then to decline, I would like to express some views. In respect of its structure, from Mr Edward CHAN, Senior Counsel, Mr Ronny WONG, Senior Counsel to Mr JAT Sew-tong, Senior Counsel, IPCC Chairmen have all been independent and venerable figures in the legal profession. Why does the Chairman need to

be a Senior Counsel? I believe the reason is the public and people's impression that independent and very professional individuals will not be easily susceptible to various kinds of social pressure.

Therefore, since Mr Larry KWOK assumed the Chairmanship of IPCC in 2014, many of Honourable colleagues have asked the Secretary for Security in the Council why the position is held by a solicitor, instead of a Senior Counsel. In this regard, I can actually provide some background information. When Mr Larry KWOK was appointed, Hong Kong was in the midst of the Umbrella Movement, and the position of Chairman was truly a very hot "hot kitchen". I did make enquiries with the relevant government officials and was told that at the time no Senior Counsel was willing to take the helm. It is a big problem. Why was there no Senior Counsel willing to make contribution to society and assume the Chairmanship of such an important statutory body? The crux lies in the considerable politicization of both the structure and membership of IPCC in the last two to three years.

Regarding the membership of IPCC in its early years, there were individuals who fell in the left, middle or right of the political spectrum. Among the 24 members, there might be five or six IPCC members who had strong political inclinations. Other members were all pragmatic professionals without any strong political inclinations, such as solicitors or Senior Counsels, as well as doctors, psychologists and social workers. However, among the members appointed in the last two to three years—or course I cannot name them here—some are very supportive of the Government and the Police.

Let me give an example. In the past when we had meetings we would examine the cases one by one. But in a meeting held around half a year ago, I found that members would express a great deal of appreciation of the Police for their efforts made in some tasks or minor achievements. In fact, IPCC's role is not to support the Police, but examine complaints received by the Police in a fair and impartial manner. Such politicized membership is completely counterproductive to the credibility and independence of IPCC.

In the last three years, the publicity department of IPCC has commissioned the University of Hong Kong to conduct questionnaire surveys of public perception of IPCC's credibility. Chairman, as we can see, the survey results

indicated that there is a declining trend of IPCC's credibility. Of course, some Honourable colleagues present are probably still members of IPCC. The power of appointment is absolutely one that the Chief Executive can exercise, and it cannot be swayed by us. However, when the Chief Executive appoints members to such an important statutory body with a narrow mindset, it is a given that the functions of this statutory body will be seriously undermined.

In a recent discussion with some former colleagues, we held that IPCC probably needed four to five hours to deliberate the cases in past meetings; but I was given to understand that in the meetings now—as I am no longer a member—it is done within an hour or two. It also results in a high turnover of staff of the IPCC secretariat. Usually staff of the IPCC secretariat have previously worked in relevant law enforcement departments, such as the Independent Commission Against Corruption ("ICAC") or the Customs and Excise Department. IPCC has recruited calibre staff from these departments. Certainly, IPCC must not recruit serving or retired police officers. It is a very good firewall. Staff of the IPCC secretariat have often worked in ICAC or other disciplined forces, or have a legal background or experience in investigations. But it is obvious that there is a high turnover of both frontline investigation personnel and supporting staff. From 2014 to 2017, there has been a persistent turnover of all supporting staff in the secretariat. Many people will say it may not be related to the membership of IPCC, but whether the "bosses" served by staff of the secretariat are open-minded and hardworking will have an effect on their work.

If the situation continues, what are the values of IPCC? Some Honourable colleagues have mentioned in the Council that in this way, we might just as well cut the resources of IPCC and all of its funding. I do not subscribe to such an idea, because IPCC has two major problems: first, difficulty in staff recruitment. It is the manpower resources issue I have just mentioned. Many outstanding staff have left. For example, a former staff member of IPCC has recently joined the Legislative Council Secretariat.

Moreover, space is an issue as well. The IPCC office in Wan Chai is indeed very crowded. Also, in the last couple of years, given the large number of cases to be handled, more frontline staff, who are vetting officers, have to be employed, making the floor area even more cramped. I heard that some IPCC

colleagues have their desks placed in the corridor. I think more financial resources should be allocated to IPCC. Yet the problem is, even the secretariat under IPCC is competent, its members must be fair and impartial, and individuals holding strong political inclinations and blind support for the Police must not be appointed because IPCC is an independent body whose function is examination of complaints.

Mr Nathan LAW has just asked why IPCC does not have any power of investigation. It is a problem left behind by history. During the drafting of the Ordinance, this issue was given lengthy discussion. I understand that society has an aspiration for IPCC to have power of investigation. But I also understand why frontline police officers fear IPCC being given this power. In these six years, I had followed up over 100 cases, and I noticed that the great majority of cases—Chairman, it was the great majority, not all—were lodged by people holding bias against the Police and they kept lodging pointless complaints with the Police. Nevertheless, these cases did not represent the totality; of course there were some police officers who did not obey the law.

Therefore, I think most cases can be handled by the Police internally. Yet for some very important cases, such as the case of Superintendent CHU—I can quote this case as an example because IPCC has made the final decision about it—I believe IPCC absolutely needs the power of investigation under some special circumstances. However, such an independent power cannot apply to all cases. Then in what cases can the power be exercised? I wish to propose an amendment to the Ordinance to stipulate that, under special circumstances, IPCC can exercise its independent power of investigation in cases society considers important. It is of crucial importance. This so-called reserved power is an "imperial sword". However, as regards other cases in general, I have found the investigation and review of cases in the first three or four years of my term as an IPCC member the smoothest and most satisfactory.

On the other hand, I believe the change that needs to be made to the Ordinance is, when IPCC makes a decision on a review case which is contradictory to the conclusion of the Complaints Against Police Office of the Police Force, there is a mechanism for discussion between both parties. But when a discussion has turned into endless accusations against each other, or even one or two years later, both parties remain unable to draw an ultimate conclusion,

of course we can write to the Chief Executive and inform him of the IPCC decision. However, eventually whether the Complaints Against Police Office will accept the IPCC decision hinges on the former's judgment.

As a result, I hold that IPCC as a statutory body should be able to make a final decision under the Ordinance after all coordination and discussion procedures are completed to determine if a case is substantiated, partly substantiated or requires other decisions. Without such power to make final decisions, IPCC is no different from a "toothless tiger". Of course, these changes involve amendments to the Ordinance and also in-depth discussions in society.

I hope the Government of the new term will review the appointment system of advisory and statutory bodies. As Ms Carrie LAM has declared her intention to do so to make the system more transparent and fairer with more participation from society, I think the first advisory or statutory body to undergo reform is IPCC because people hold very high expectations of it.

Chairman, I so submit.

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Let me remind Members that according to the debate arrangements, this debate will end at 7:15 pm. Council will then immediately vote on whether the sums of the heads stand part of the Schedule.

Will Members who wish to speak, especially those who have not yet spoken, please press the "Request to speak" button as soon as possible.

MR CHU HOI-DICK (in Cantonese): Actually, when I heard that the first debate will end at 7:15 pm, I considered such an arrangement indeed regrettable. In fact, Members seldom have the opportunity to speak on policies at great lengths and in depth, and the Budget debate is a good opportunity for Honourable colleagues to speak on funding allocations in focus. The first debate covers a lot of heads, yet we are given only seven hours in this debate. I think it is terribly ridiculous.

In this speech, I will focus on "Head 31—Customs and Excise Department". In the past couple of years in Hong Kong, an issue, brownfield sites in the New Territories, has been a frequent topic. Sometimes, we regard brownfield sites an internal issue of land management in Hong Kong. For instance, in the face of environmental issues like vehicle scrapyards, container storage and construction waste disposal, and so on, more often than not, we will intuitively regard these issues as domestic problems. However, according to a recent report by the media, environmental issues involving brownfield sites in the New Territories and open storage are not domestic problems but imported in nature in a large measure. The present debate does not cover the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD"), yet the environmental issues I am talking about involve the Customs and Excise Department ("C&ED"). More often than not, these problems involve not only waste or pollution generated domestically but the import of "overseas waste" in bulk into Hong Kong, which is processed on brownfield sites or in open storage in the New Territories.

According to the report of the media, the situation is quite alarming. Chairman, there are over 200 recovery yards in the New Territories at present, and many of them are used for handling electronic waste. Where does such electric waste come from? Hong Kong has just introduced the arrangement for handling waste electronic equipment, "four categories of electrical equipment and one category of computer products", and the recovery industry for local electronic waste is at the beginning stage. In that case, why would there be over 200 recovery yards in Hong Kong now and why would the majority of these yards be handling electronic waste? It is because a large amount of waste is imported into Hong Kong on carriers by sea.

There is an electronic waste concern group called the Basel Action Network ("BAN") in the United States. BAN conducted a tracking project between 2015 and 2016 by attaching 200 tracking devices to waste electronic items, including printers, LCD and CRT monitors dumped at various locations in the United States. Eventually, it was found that among the 200 waste electronic items with tracking devices, 66 items were exported to 10 countries and regions around the world. Among the 66 waste electronic items, Chairman, 51 items were shipped into Hong Kong, which was 80% of all the items exported. According to BAN's estimate, 50 to 100 containers of waste electronic items are exported to Hong Kong daily from the United States. The estimate just covers

waste exported from the United States but not that from other countries. Based on the capacity of 20 tonnes per container, at least 1 000 tonnes of waste are imported by Hong Kong daily. What happens to the waste upon arrival at Hong Kong? They are delivered to hidden electronic junkyards for primitive dissembling where precious metal is extracted for sale.

According to a table in the investigation by BAN, among the 36 tracked LCD monitors exported from the United States, 24 monitors were delivered to Hong Kong and only two monitors were delivered to Mainland China. Chairman, according to the Waste Disposal Ordinance, apart from printers, LCD monitors and old-fashioned CRT monitors are regulated chemical waste items the import and export of which are subject to stringent control and requires applications for permits. However, in the past five years, EPD has not issued any permit for this purpose. Chairman, the manpower of EPD is very limited. Staff members of EPD are tired out in monitoring the illegal disposal of construction waste in the New Territories alone. We can hardly require EPD to make continuous efforts to intercept the 50 to 100 containers illegally shipping electronic waste into Hong Kong from the United States every day, and if electronic waste from other overseas countries is included, the number may be even larger. For this reason, it is an important task of C&ED.

Let us look at the work of C&ED under Programme (1) Control and Enforcement of this head. One of the tasks mentioned in the brief description is "conducting primary checks on passengers, crew, cargoes, postal parcels, aircraft, vessels and vehicles, and secondary examination of those considered high risk, in order to detect contraband, controlled items and other violations of the law". Chairman, in other words, if these electronic waste items delivered to Hong Kong are in violation of the Waste Disposal Ordinance, C&ED is obliged to intercept them. As for matters requiring special attention in 2017-2018, I notice one point. At present, C&ED is also responsible for other tasks, that is, to suppress copyright infringing articles and combat narcotic smuggling, yet for other violations, C&ED lacks any crisis awareness in specific fields to launch targeted combat action. Chairman, this is the crux of the problem, for the situation is mushrooming all over the New Territories in Hong Kong. Of course, narcotics and copyright infringing articles must be combated, yet "imported waste" is also a cause of concern. Since Mainland China has already prohibited the import of

such waste, and C&ED of Hong Kong is unable to detect these containers and exercise interception, Hong Kong is now facing a serious environmental problem. The authorities must make this the important task of C&ED.

Extensive reports about the problem have already been made. In the past couple of months, this Council has discussed the issue a number of times and kept reminding C&ED that it must step up its effort in this area, particularly in preventing "imported waste" from entering Hong Kong. Regrettably, despite all these, the Budget this year has made no mention of the work in this area. Once again, I have to stress that the problem of importing waste from overseas is different from the smuggling of other goods. The smuggling of other goods is only about evading tax but the importing of waste is taking up farmland-turned brownfield sites in the New Territories for disassembling operations and causing serious pollution. Hence, the environmental cost we borne and the price paid by society as a whole for this are much higher than other smuggling activities in general.

Specifically, among the tasks to be undertaken by C&ED as mentioned in the Budget, one is particularly necessary, that is, setting aside specific resources for detecting "imported waste", as it does in detecting narcotics. Chairman, C&ED's information network for detecting narcotics is not restricted to Hong Kong but covers places around the world. The authorities have to know the places from which the waste is exported to identify more accurate details so that those articles can be intercepted when they are shipped to Hong Kong. However, the work of C&ED in this aspect is obviously inadequate. In fact, certain organizations in the United States, like BAN, may assist Hong Kong. When the organization conducted an investigation and found out that 66 of the 200 electronic items with tracking devices attached had been exported from the United States, among which 51 items had been shipped to Hong Kong, they hurriedly came to Hong Kong to stage seminars and do interviews with the media, and they also had the opportunity to have dialogue with government officials. Hence, it is possible to set up an information system designated for the detection of "imported waste" in C&ED.

As for manpower, I notice from Programme (1) Control and Enforcement of C&ED that its staff would have increased from 4 419 in 2014 to 5 500 by the end of this financial year. We notice the growth, yet it is merely an overall

increase in control and enforcement manpower, so we cannot rest assured that C&ED is determined to deal with electronic waste, "imported waste" and illegal imports affecting all the citizens of Hong Kong and causing tremendous environmental costs.

Therefore, apart from the manpower increase, the Government should set up a task force to detect and conduct random checks at various ports, particularly container terminals, so as to minimize the amount of electronic waste being illegally shipped into Hong Kong as a result of the existing loophole in our system. It is necessary for us to start addressing the issue this year. I hope C&ED has heard my message, such that it will stop thinking it is the responsibility of EPD to protect the environment of Hong Kong, for C&ED should play an important role in the problem of "imported waste".

Thank you.

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): I wish to speak on "Head 63—Home Affairs Department". In this session, I wish to discuss in particular the matters requiring special attention set out in Programme (1), District Administration, namely the pilot schemes in both Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long spearheaded by the Government since 2014, renamed as the "District-led Actions Scheme" to be extended to all 18 districts now as stated by the Government, so as to take forward "addressing district issues at the local level and capitalizing on local opportunities", which is also a pet phrase of LEUNG Chun-ying. This scheme empowers the District Management Committees chaired by District Officers to tackle some management and environmental hygiene problems of public areas in the districts, and then enhance the effectiveness of the District Administration Scheme by increasing manpower support in District Offices ("DoJ"). While it has made such a high-sounding statement, what is the actual funding allocated to the districts?

In 2016-2017, under the "District-led Actions Scheme", the 18 DOs launched 42 projects, among which 37 were measures targeted at improving environmental hygiene and district management. In 2017-2018, the amount of provision for recurrent expenditure on the "District-led Actions Scheme" is \$63 million only. In the Policy Address 2014, LEUNG Chun-ying proposed strengthening the role of District Officers, empowering them to coordinate the

work of different departments with the District Councils ("DCs") in the capacity of Chairman, so as to tackle some management and hygiene problems of public areas. Pilot schemes have also been implemented in Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long. The scheme taken forward by the Sham Shui Po DC is called "Strengthening support for street sleepers" and "Strengthening support for 'three-nil' buildings", while the one taken forward in Yuen Long is called "Curbing shop front extension, clearing illegally parked bicycles and enhancing anti-mosquito and grass-cutting efforts". LEUNG Chun-ying indicated in the Policy Address 2016 that the pilot schemes had achieved satisfactory results and would be renamed as the "District-led Actions Scheme" and extended to all 18 districts. For example, the projects of "Cleansing common areas of buildings", "Mosquito, rodent and pest control" and "Hearing Care Action" are now being carried out in the Yau Tsim Mong District, while in the Southern District, it is currently improving the overall traffic conditions of Aberdeen, stepping up action against illegal parking and pick-up/drop-off of passengers in the Southern District, and stepping up efforts to address the environmental hygiene problems in the town centre and Typhoon Shelter of Aberdeen.

(THE CHAIRMAN'S DEPUTY, MS STARRY LEE, took the Chair)

However, we have found that in implementing such schemes, the District Officers have neither respected the views of DCs nor upheld the district-led spirit. Let me cite an example. Last October, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") positioned more than a hundred mills barriers at locations underneath the Tung Chau Street flyover. By late November, a fire broke out under the flyover, destroying the living places of a number of street sleepers. According to eye-witnesses, blocked by the mills barriers, ambulances could not reach the scene. Subsequent to the fire, those mills barriers remained at the locations underneath the flyover, putting the street sleepers at risk. For this reason, a motion was passed at a meeting of the Environment and Hygiene Committee of the Sham Shui Po DC in early December last year urging FEHD to remove the mills barriers. However, FEHD just erected iron frames attached with wooden boards in the area subsequently in a bid to force the street sleepers there to leave. Obviously, the District Officers have not endeavoured to assist the Sham Shui Po DC in achieving the objective of its project seeking to strengthen support for street sleepers as set out in its action scheme.

Another example is that they would rather leave the conference rooms of community halls idle than make it available for booking by the public, commonly known as the "standby" arrangement. According to media reports this January, while more than 100 conference rooms of community halls or centres under the Home Affairs Department in the 18 districts were available for booking by local organizations, the average usage rates of conference rooms of community halls in various districts were just 14% to 59%. The reporter inspected three districts, namely the Eastern District, Sai Kung and Kwun Tong, and found that in certain time slots, some conference rooms recorded a zero usage rate. Why do such conference rooms persistently record poor usage rates? It is because the application procedures are cumbersome. Most of the available time slots for conference rooms cannot be found on the web page, and applications have to be made by post, by fax or in person. The most rigid requirement is that even if there are available time slots for conference rooms, bookings have still to be made at least seven working days in advance. If someone does not show up, how will I know? And how can I place a booking seven working days in advance? Will I be put on a waiting list?

In fact, the Home Affairs Department has put in place a number of measures that drive people away. First of all, the application method is old-fashioned. Applicants in most districts still have to go to the DOs in their districts in order to check the records for availability of conference rooms. Such information is not available online. Moreover, to apply for the use of conference rooms, prior bookings have to be made to the Department, and lots drawing will take three months, which just sounds ridiculous. The reporter made enquiries with the staff members of a number of community halls or centres about the procedures for advance booking. According to one of the staff members, applicants had to fill out an application form stating the period of use first, and they then had to expect months to pass before the assessment of applications and lots drawing could be completed. I mentioned earlier on that applications had to be made at least seven working days in advance. Hence, such facilities are often left unused when someone does not sign in as scheduled. Although we have not sought to reduce the expenditure under the head of Home Affairs Department, they have to pay more attention to these issues.

Another one is "Head 162—Rating and Valuation Department". I really have some stories to tell about this. I do wish to reduce its expenditure. What expenditure is that? I seek to reduce its expenses on publicizing the rates concession. But after I had asked my question, the Government gave a reply only on 26 April or so, telling me that the expenses actually involved a cost of

\$480,000 for publishing pamphlets to publicize the rates concession. If the Government had given me a reply earlier, I would have been able to propose a reduction of expenditure in relation to this head and put it to the vote because I would only submit one amendment for each head to reduce the said expenses on publicizing the rates concession. Members may think that the reduction proposed by me is frivolous, but it is actually not. It serves a specific purpose. If I seek to reduce in full the expenditure of the Rating and Valuation Department, it will serve to paralyse it, rendering it unable to collect rates. But what I am suggesting now is that it should not refrain from collecting rates. In fact, we have long been opposing the approach of making rate concession arrangements while refusing to dish out money in the Budget. It is actually tantamount to dishing out money seeking not to "return wealth to people" or "return wealth to the poor", but to "return wealth to the rich". Why did I say that the cost of \$480,000 for publishing pamphlets to publicize the rates concession is a waste of money? I think it is simply superfluous because if people are not aware of the rates concession after the notice has been served, they will still be granted the concession by then. Should we fear that they will pay more or pay the wrong amount? Even if they pay the wrong amount, they will get a refund, so what is the point of spending money on publishing pamphlets to publicize the rates concession? I consider such publicity efforts redundant. In fact, it may publish an advertisement on the Internet or post the relevant message on its web page. By then, it will be published on all local newspapers and circulated across the territory. I do not understand why it is necessary to publish pamphlets to be served as a notice to the property owners by post. Will there be more people applying for the rates concession as a result of such publicity? I came to learn about the reason afterwards as I had asked another question. In fact, instead of the poor, the target audience of the Department is the major real estate developers, telling them that it has again saved them rates payments this year. I came to learn about the details about the rates concession amounting to \$6.9 billion from the reply to another question. Members may think about and guess the total amounts enjoyed by the top 10 ratepayers receiving the highest amounts of rates concession. I mean the top 10 ratepayers. Certainly, there are many who get the concession, but I am just referring to the top 10 beneficiaries who receive the highest amounts of concession. The total amount of concession enjoyed by the 10 parties is \$125 million, and what is the total amount of concession enjoyed by the top 100 beneficiaries? The amount is \$248 million. That means the average amount of concession enjoyed by each of the top 10 parties is \$12.5 million, while the average amount of concession enjoyed by each of the top 100 parties is \$2.48 million. Is this not "returning wealth to the rich"?

Why have we been opposing the rates concession for years? If the Government generously dishes out money to all, it will be another story. Some people do not see it this way, and some from the pro-democracy camp also do not favour a refund of \$10,000 to all. But it mentions that it is a targeted relief measure. May I ask what hardship is faced by each of those 10 parties receiving the concession amounting to \$12.5 million? What assistance do they need from the Government? The total amount of concession granted to the 10 units is \$125 million, yet the Government still has to spend money on publicity. What does it need to publicize? It might as well print the figures mentioned by me just now on the pamphlets so that members of the public will know even though the Government is giving them the rates concession of a few thousand dollars now, they are not the ones who will gain most. It just uses members of the public to achieve its ends, and the ones who will gain most are the major real estate developers. Let me make it clear that I am saying this with sarcasm intended.

As I cannot seek a reduction in respect of the rates concession granted by the Government—because granting the rates concession just means that the Government will not levy such charges—I originally intended to seek a reduction of the administration expenses incurred by the rates concession. My question is about the operational expenses, staff establishment and estimated payroll cost involved in the 2017-2018 rates concession. As advised by the Government in its reply, in fact, it has not deployed any dedicated manpower to handling the work on the rates concession and therefore does not have any manpower and payroll cost involved. It has got a point because deployment of manpower is not necessary if it does not have to do such work, and no cost will be incurred. That is why I said I could do nothing to stop the Government from granting the rates concession. Hence, I could only raise a question in relation to the cost of \$480,000 for publishing pamphlets about the rates concession, seeking to reduce such an amount.

Nevertheless, Deputy Chairman, I was eventually not able to seek a reduction because the Government was rather slow in giving replies to questions this year. Certainly, some will say that how it will be possible to give replies to some 7 000 questions asked by us in time. But the Government should still submit a schedule telling Members that, for example, the first batch will cover replies to 50 questions, and the second batch of replies to our questions will be available by a certain month and date, namely the deadline for us to move amendments to the Budget at the Committee stage. For some replies, I only managed to get them by pressing the Government in the last few hours on the last

day. I had to do so because if I were to put forward an amendment to the Legislative Council, I could not seek a reduction of \$500,000 just by drawing inference about the amount. In that case, the Legislative Council Secretariat will give me a call asking me if I have any supporting documents, that is, whether I have any information papers to justify the reduction. We will not be able to submit any amendment without the replies from the Government.

Another point that I wish to raise is about "Head 168—Hong Kong Observatory". I do not seek to reduce any expenditure of the Observatory. Let us imagine, if I seek a reduction of the expenditure of the Observatory, it will meet with people's strong reactions because with a reduction of the expenditure of the Observatory, who will be responsible for weather forecasts? And how can we get information about the weather? But I wish to say that as far as the expenditure of the Observatory is concerned, according to Programme (1), Weather Services, the overall estimated expenditure for 2017-2018 has just edged up by 1.4% from that of last year. In the Budget this year, its expenditure is \$258 million, only up by \$3 million from the \$255 million of last year. I think such an amount is actually not adequate because given global warming and that the weather has become increasingly extreme, additional resources are required to enhance the accuracy of weather forecasts by the Observatory.

In fact, in the past year, I have noticed a phenomenon, and that is the worsening accuracy of weather forecasts by the Observatory. In winter and spring, the temperatures on a few days deviated from the projected ones a couple of days before. We should know that with a temperature difference of 3°C, people will wear long-sleeved shirts instead of short-sleeved ones and shorts. Hence, a significant deviation of the projected temperatures from the actual ones will render members of the public unable to make timely preparations. This year I have not put the question in a smart way. But next year, I will ask at a special meeting of the Finance Committee the number of days on which a deviation of more than 3°C is recorded from the projected temperatures of the Observatory three days before. We may find shocking figures in the reply. No matter what, we have to study it in some way. Otherwise, the absence of the Observatory will actually not matter much if we do not care about how large the deviation is between the projected temperatures and the actual ones.

Moreover, there are two items which, in my view, indicate that the Government lacks any sense of crisis. One of them is seismological studies and monitoring, under which Programme (3) is about Time Standard and Geophysical Services. According to the Budget, the expenditure under this item is

comparable with that of last year, also amounting to \$12 million. Given the recent occurrence of earthquakes in many parts of the world, if the Government reduces the expenditure on services in this respect, I am afraid it may affect such services and earthquake forecasts, thereby putting the lives and personal safety of people in Hong Kong at risk. Although Hong Kong has never been struck by any strong earthquake, one of the functions of the Observatory is to ensure that precautionary measures are in place.

I may not be able to finish in this session, but let me finish the part on the Programmes first. Another Programme involves the expenditure on Radiation Monitoring amounting to \$32.1 million. But I also consider the expenditure under this item inadequate. Nevertheless, I think I will go into further details about it if I have time to speak again in the next session.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): I wish to remind Members that according to the debate arrangements, this debate will end at about 7:15 pm. Then the question that the sums for the relevant heads stand part of the Schedule will be put to vote by this Council soon afterwards.

Members who wish to speak, particularly those who have not yet spoken, will please press the "Request to speak" button.

DR LAU SIU-LAI (in Cantonese): Deputy Chairman, I will speak on the estimated expenditure under "Head 120—Pensions".

The expenditure on public and judicial service pensions is ever increasing. According to the information under subhead 015, there will be around 14 000 civil servants receiving pension next year, involving a provision of \$34.1 billion, whereas the provision for pension listed as government liabilities exceeds \$800 billion.

I do not oppose the payment of pension to civil servants, for civil servants have made contribution to the Government and society and we are obliged to provide retirement protection for them. Yet, why can this rationale not be extended to each and every citizen of Hong Kong, so that they can enjoy retirement protection, too? This is the right of the citizens of Hong Kong and the Government must shoulder this responsibility. Of course, this is not only the obligation of the Government but also that of employers.

Yet, we see that the Government is trying to evade and shirk its responsibilities. Since it lacks the courage to touch the vested interest of large consortia and large enterprises, it eventually resorts to the setting up of the Old Age Living Allowance ("OALA") under which applicants have to pass several levels of examination. On the one hand, the Government distorts retirement protection into a poverty alleviation policy. On the other, we have to bear the higher OALA, a burden which should have been borne by Government single-handedly and may become unsustainable anytime.

The "Universal Pension 2064 Scheme" proposed by scholars only requires a provision of \$100 billion as the seed fund, which is a meagre amount compared to the fiscal reserve of over \$1,000 billion hoarded by the Government. However, the Government insists on rejecting this long-term commitment. As a kind of compensation and an attempt to escape our criticism, the Government introduced a so-called "annuity scheme", claiming it is starting to plan for the retirement life of citizens of Hong Kong. The Government is making up a lame excuse. Right, it seems that the elderly will receive a few thousand dollars as protection for their retirement life, yet what are the requirements? The Government is deceiving the elderly. First of all, the elderly have to invest a large sum of their saving as the principal, which means they will have to bear risks. The crux is that they must in the first place have a handsome sum of capital for investment to enjoy this retirement protection.

As for the group of elderly people who fall between the poor and the rich, have we made any plans for their retirement life? Why are some people always more equal than others in this society? It is most ridiculous that the Government has taken the initiative to create gender inequality. Why would women receive a lesser amount than men? It is totally unreasonable. It is obvious to all that the Government is hoarding a fiscal reserve of a colossal amount. It is stated in the Budget that the Government will set aside \$450 billion as provision for the payment of pensions in the next 10 years. This sum is contributed jointly by all the citizens of Hong Kong. Yet when they request the Government to set aside \$100 billion for use as the seed fund for the universal retirement protection scheme, the Government simply ignores the aspiration of the public and gives no regard to the livelihood of the elderly. These practices are shameful ...

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Miss LAU Siu-lai, please pause for a while. I have to remind you that retirement protection is within the scope of the third debate. Please focus on the discussion of public and judicial service pensions relating to head 120.

DR LAU SIU-LAI (in Cantonese): Yes, I am going to talk about this in the next sentence. Why would civil servants be provided with pensions but not the citizens of Hong Kong?

Let us look at the relevant figures. Certain senior government officials with extremely poor performance, such as Carrie LAM, whose hands are stained with blood, Andy TSANG who has ruined the rule of law and Fanny LAW who has crushed the education system of Hong Kong, have received a lump sum gratuity of \$4 million to \$5 million and a monthly pension of tens of thousand dollars despite their poor performance in their positions in the Civil Service. Why can the grass roots in Hong Kong not be provided with a monthly payment of \$3,500 as retirement protection? Is it reasonable? It is reasonable for in Hong Kong, certain people are more equal than others.

In fact, every elderly person, whether he is a civil servant or not, has made contribution to society. Why does the Government, as an employer, know that it has to provide retirement protection to civil servants, yet allow other employers in the market to make light of their responsibilities despite the public power it holds?

Another point regarding the existing pension scheme for civil servants, which I agree, is that the payment will be adjusted according to inflation, where only upward but not downward adjustment is allowed, for the authorities hope to provide civil servants with better and more abundant protection. Yet, how does the Government treat the recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme? The Government imposes significant cuts in CSSA payment. In the handling of retirement protection for civil servants, we adopt a reasonable standard. Yet in handling the retirement protection for the grass roots and the public at large in Hong Kong—grass roots and elderly who have also made great contribution to the community of Hong Kong, we adopt a cruel and unsympathetic attitude. Why would we do so? This is mean to do so, and the Government has to reflect on this. It is about pension in both cases. Why would the Government do a great job in one case but perform poorly in another? This is worthy of deep thoughts by us.

The Government claims that it will protect the interest of the people of Hong Kong, yet we see that it is a hypocritical and canting Government. Recently, a former civil servant openly criticized the Government for its hypocrisy. The Government claims to attach importance to fairness and the sharing of fruits of prosperity, yet in actuality, all the fruits are allocated to people with vested interests, creating disparity between the rich and the poor. Despite the affluence in society, the interests of the grass roots are still subject to exploitation. What a shameful Government it is.

I will not propose any amendments to the pensions for civil servants, for I consider they are worthy of a decent retirement life. However, I will absolutely vote against this Budget as it makes no commitment to universal retirement protection. I so submit.

(Mr CHU Hoi-dick left his seat)

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr CHU Hoi-dick, please return to your seat.

MR CHU HOI-DICK (in Cantonese): Deputy Chairman, I really do not understand why the Budget debate will be labelled as filibustering. I consider this is a great opportunity for politicians to propose their political ideals and visions for the future of Hong Kong. So why would so many people, especially the pro-establishment Members, let slip such an opportunity? I am baffled. I hope more Members will speak to make the debate more meaningful. This has never been meaningless filibustering.

Deputy Chairman, there seems to be something wrong with my microphone, may I ...

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr CHU Hoi-dick, I can hear you, please continue.

MR CHU HOI-DICK (in Cantonese): May I use the microphone of the neighbouring seat?

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Yes. Staff members, please aid the Member.

(Mr CHU Hoi-dick put on the microphone of the neighbouring seat)

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Mr CHU Hoi-dick, please continue with your speech.

MR CHU HOI-DICK (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy Chairman.

This time, I would like to speak on Programmes (4) and (7) under head 37. Deputy Chairman, the problem of dental care has been under discussion for a long time. Dr Fernando CHEUNG wrote an article titled, to this effect, "Toothless, old and miserable" in 2013. Toothless means without teeth, while "old and harsh" means life is harsh for the elderly. In the article, he quoted the findings of the Oral Health Survey conducted by the Department of Health ("DH") in 2001 which indicated that, among institutionalized elderly people aged 65 and above, 27.2% had lost all their teeth while 24.1% had less than 20 teeth; and among elderly people living in the community, 58.3% had less than 20 teeth. In other words, in 2001, more than half of the elderly people in Hong Kong had difficulties in chewing food due to tooth loss.

Deputy Chairman, I believe the statistics have not changed much since then. Instead, the situation might have even gotten worse because if we look at the heads of the Department of Health in the Budget throughout the years, we will see that there has been a notable increase in the estimate for Programme (7) Medical and Dental Treatment for Civil Servants, and the dental services offered are comprehensive; however, when we look at the services provided to the general public under Programme (4) Curative Care, we will see that only emergency dental services, which include pain relief and extraction only, are provided.

Deputy Chairman, I am not advocating the "fishball theory" put forth by Dayo WONG, and that is, when one sees that someone else has got two more fishballs, one grows jealous and asks that the other person's extra fishballs be taken away. I wish to tell the people that everyone has teeth, and that everyone will develop dental problems in their old age. However, for a long time, a significant unequal treatment exists in the way the Hong Kong Government expends public money, that is, the estimate for Programme (7) Medical and

Dental Treatment for Civil Servants is increased by 12% this financial year, with an estimated attendance of 744 800 at dental clinics in 2017. However, when we look at Programme (4), the attendances of dental clinics relating to emergency treatment for the general public were 40 500 and 40 000 in 2015 and 2016 respectively. The attendance is estimated to be 40 000 in 2017. The Government did not plan to increase the dental services provided to the general public, which only include pain relief and extraction, as the figures remained at 40 000 every year. But surely, I believe many people do not even care to go to the clinics when they realize that only pain relief and extraction services are provided in dental clinics of the Government.

In addition, I am aware of an even more abnormal situation, which Dr Fernando CHEUNG also mentioned in his article in 2013. It is that the public can only have one tooth extracted on each visit. When I was preparing for this speech, I asked a friend about this just now. Indeed, a member of the public did call the Department of Health to enquire about a tooth extraction appointment, and the reply was that only one tooth can be extracted on each visit. But what if he has toothache in five or six teeth? Better go for an extraction in the Mainland. This quality of service is rather ridiculous. Foreign media would put this on their headlines as a joke if I write to BBC or CNN about this situation. How can a person have only one tooth extracted in each dental appointment when he has toothache in six teeth?

Deputy Chairman, with regard to these services, I looked at item 19 under "Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2017-18", which stated that "during 2017-18, the Department will continue to provide specialised curative services to the public and dental service to patients with special oral healthcare needs or emergency." If we do not know the truth, we may not reproach the Government on reading this bureaucratic talk. But once we learn about the truth, we do not even want to heap reproaches on the Government but feel disgusted instead. With the huge resources Hong Kong society has, the Hospital Authority does not take on dental services and DH provides these entirely inhumane dental services, which I do not know should be considered as services or an abuse.

I have just asked my friend: in Hong Kong, what if you need non-extraction dental services but you do not have any money? Then you will have to go to the Prince Philip Dental Hospital under the University of Hong Kong. The hospital trains dentistry students, integrating treatment with learning, I would imagine. However, I have heard that people were driven away after queuing up at 4:00 am at the Prince Philip Dental Hospital due to the complexity of their cases. So where can they go? They can only go back to the

government services which can only extract one tooth on each visit. Deputy Chairman, how many times does the word "shameful" have to be said to reflect the severity of this problem?

Deputy Chairman, Dr Fernando CHEUNG next to me may have more to add later in his speech. I read from his 2013 article that he had interviewed some old people. In fact, the demands of elderly people are very simple. Only some amendments to head 37 are needed. We are not trying to pursue Dayo WONG's "fishball theory" by taking away the dental services for civil servants. We only have three requests: first, establish dental clinics in all 18 districts throughout Hong Kong and extend their opening hours; second, the dental clinics must provide a full range of dental services, equivalent to the services provided to civil servants, because not only civil servants make contribution to society, so do the generable public; and third, annual dental examination and scaling services should be provided to the elderly by the Government.

I see that some officials who are listening have healthy teeth even at an advanced age. In Hong Kong, it is not easy for a person to maintain dental health at an old age. At present, there is only one way to do it: money. If one does not have any money, he or she can only have all teeth extracted. I hope the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, who is present today, will not turn a deaf ear to this just because it is often talked about. We will definitely keep talking about retirement protection and dental services, even though these issues have already been talked about 10 000 times. As a man with teeth for eating, you ought to think about what can be done about this, even more so as a Hongkonger.

Please take a look at the statistics of the Oral Health Survey in 2001. Let me read them out again: among institutionalized elderly people aged 65 and above, 27.2% had lost all their teeth while 24.1% had less than 20 teeth. These figures are clear indications. Please work with these figures in mind and formulate a sound policy by adding the provision of dental services to all Hong Kong people to Programme (4) Curative Care. If this can be done, I believe there will be more elderly people with teeth in the next Oral Health Survey. Elderly people with healthy teeth will be able to smile at you and will thank the Government. The Government has done many things badly, but if only it can handle the dental services right, which does not even cost that much money at all ... My advice to Carrie LAM is this: as she always talks about reconciliation, harmony and making the people happy, elderly people are the easiest to satisfy. What do elderly people in Hong Kong ask for? They do not ask for much, they just want to live a contented life. When the new Government takes office—I wonder if Carrie LAM has plugged her ears, accusing us of filibustering here—I

will give her an advice now: handle dental services well, let all Hong Kong people enjoy comprehensive dental services. These will only win her applauds and more elderly people will thank her with a smile. I guarantee that there will be no reproaches in that case.

DR FERNANDO CHEUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy Chairman, I thank Mr CHU Hoi-dick for mentioning the appropriation for "Head 37—Department of Health" with respect to the dental services provided for the people of Hong Kong, a large part of which is provided for civil servants.

I now speak on the appropriation for "Head 24—Audit Commission" which involves \$169 million in the Budget. A main duty of it is to carry out value for money audit which requires only about \$110 million, an increase of a mere 5.8% over last year. Here, I wish to particularly thank the Audit Commission for auditing the work of various departments of the SAR Government and some public bodies to ascertain their effectiveness over the years. Even from the value-for-money angle which is pretty much accountancy-led, and actually by taking just a brief look we will find that many areas of work are plagued with problems. For instance, the Director of Audit's Report No. 68 published just today has exactly mentioned the dental services over which Mr CHU Hoi-dick has expressed concern.

As we can clearly see from the reports today, there are altogether 47 dental clinics in Hong Kong providing dental services for civil servants and students or grass-roots people. Regrettably, as Mr CHU Hoi-dick has said, concerning the scope of the services provided, while a comprehensive range of dental services is provided to civil servants and eligible persons, the services for the public—the department definitely knows that the elderly account for over half of the public attendances at these clinics—are limited to pain relief and tooth extraction only. As Mr CHU Hoi-dick has said, the annual number of attendance is 40 000, and this number has remained the same for many years. Eleven of the 47 dental clinics provide these services but they are open only for one to two sessions weekly, either in the morning or afternoon. The total opening hours are actually very short.

I think the Audit Commission deserves our applause for identifying many problems with the dental services. For example, with respect to the provision of services for civil servants and eligible persons whom, I think, mostly refer to their families, the proportion of people who declined referrals had increased from 82%

in 2013 to 90% in 2016, which is astonishing. We have channelled public coffers into the Department of Health ("DH") for the provision of dental services for civil servants and their families and as a waiting period is required at certain dental clinics, their cases will be referred to other clinics with shorter waiting time but the rate of these people declining referrals is 90%. What has gone wrong? Does it mean that the resources are not put to good use?

Deputy Chairman, you may recall that last week I mentioned that I had visited an elderly lady who lives in Tung Chung. In Tung Chung, the clinic providing dental services for civil servants is quiet with a low attendance. This elderly lady has no alternative but to leave home at five o'clock in the morning, travelling to Tsuen Wan to seek consultation. If all the existing 47 clinics can provide services for the public, that would be most desirable, especially if they can provide services for the elderly and people with disabilities.

Deputy Chairman, I wish to point out that the Research Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat has conducted quite a good research study on this topic which was published just at the end of last year. The study pointed out that outpatient dental services are not provided in districts including the Eastern District, Southern District and Wai Chai on the Island side, and Wong Tai Sin, Sham Shui Po and Yau Tsim Mong in Kowloon, as well as Sha Tin and Kwai Ching in the New Territories. Members may wonder why Tung Chung is not among them. Tung Chung belongs to the outlying islands and the dental clinics are located in Tai O and Cheung Chau. In this connection, the Director of Audit's report also found that strangely enough, when we say that the elderly have to go out in the early morning to queue up at public dental clinics, which indicates an excess of demand over supply, the utilization rate nevertheless has not reached 100%. Obviously, the utilization rates in places such as Cheung Chau and Tai O tend to be low but they are also factored into calculation and so, the Government went on to say that the utilization has fallen short of the target and that an "overspill" has yet taken place. Deputy Chairman, how should our public resources be utilized? With regard to this Report No. 68, I think the Government, especially DH, must seriously examine whether the resources committed to these services have been put to good use.

Even for the School Dental Care Service, we have seen the Report indicating that many students did not show up to receive dental services as scheduled. The most outrageous point is that the proportion of Primary 6 students not attending scheduled appointments was as high as 26%, that is, a quarter of the students eligible for dental services did not show up. What

exactly has happened? Why is it that when resources are injected and dentists recruited for these services, the students nevertheless did not show up? Is this not a waste of resources? On the other hand, given such a high proportion of people declining referrals at clinics serving civil servants, many dentists may not have much to do at work—I do not know if that is the case but the Report published by the Audit Commission did reveal this situation. The Director of Audit also recommended that efforts be made to look into what happened and why such a high proportion of people had declined referrals and also monitor the waiting time for consultation at dental clinics in order to find out why this situation had arisen.

In the final analysis, the Government must enable the elderly and people with disabilities to enjoy some basic dental services, rather than making the elderly queue up at dental clinics in the small hours only when they are in great pain and then when it comes to their turn, as Mr CHU Hoi-dick has said, they can fix only one tooth at a time. This is true as I have seen elderly people who really had to queue up several times in order for several teeth to be treated.

I wish to again cite from the research report done by the Research Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat. As clearly pointed out in the report, there is a serious shortage of dentists in Hong Kong. Compared with member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the number of dentists per 1 000 elderly is 2.13 in Hong Kong; it is 3.15 in neighbouring Japan, 4.41 in South Korea, and 4.56 in Australia which is more than double the number in Hong Kong. Compared with Europe, such as Sweden, the number is as high as eight point something, which is more than four times of that in Hong Kong. There has been an acute shortage of dentists in Hong Kong over the years, but Hong Kong has neither made plans nor come up with views in this respect.

In fact, when we discussed this issue with the elderly, they said after reading this research report of the Legislative Council that even Japan has followed the standard of the World Health Organization ("WHO") for dental and oral health in setting the "8020" target, which means maintaining at least 20 teeth at the age of 80. But Hong Kong has not done it, and we cannot even reach this standard. Among the elderly aged 65 in Hong Kong, 40% have less than 20 teeth. Moreover, elderly poverty is serious and as pointed out in the research report of the Legislative Council, the elderly poverty rate in Hong Kong is as high as 30%, meaning that 30 out of 100 elders are living in poverty. Imagine: If these elders cannot even make ends meet, how can they address their dental

needs? If they really suffer from a toothache, what can they do other than going out in the middle of the night to queue up at a clinic? Visiting a dentist in private practice can cost them a thousand or even a few thousand dollars.

DH and the Census and Statistics Department have also conducted surveys which found that for elderly aged above 65, even if they had a toothache to the extent of causing insomnia, only 40% were willing to go to a dentist, whereas the remaining 60% of the elderly whose toothache had caused insomnia only dealt with the problem on their own. Why? Obviously it is due to financial reasons.

Come to think about this: As the health of the elderly gradually declines, it would not be easy for them to move around and so, they are already unable to enjoy a lot of things. The difficulties they face may deny them almost all opportunities of enjoying life or harbouring any hope. Therefore, to the elderly, eating may be the last kind of enjoyment in life. I believe you, Deputy Chairman, certainly appreciate this point. But when their teeth are all gone, or worse still, when they suffer from a toothache or other dental ailments, in this cosmopolitan city of Hong Kong in the 21st century, our Government is nevertheless making the elderly queue up at a clinic in the middle of the night, and the Government has been turning a blind eye to this over the years. In fact, nothing has changed over the years. The arrangements adopted before the reunification have remained the same after the reunification. What exactly is the attitude of the SAR Government towards dental health?

In preparing the Budget and making provisions to DH or the Hospital Authority in respect of dental care, has the Government considered these needs? Does the Government have any policy? Over the years, whether from the work of the Legislative Council, the work carried out in the community and the Director of Audit's Report No. 68 now, the picture is actually all clear to us. We can see with just a brief look that we are entirely not up to the international standard. WHO has announced the basic requirement that a person should at least maintain 20 teeth in a lifetime, and other countries have made plans accordingly for their people to be able to maintain 20 teeth at the age of 80.

What about us? The Government has no target at all and it has taken a laissez-faire attitude, saying that a preventive approach is adopted for dental care and hence focusing only on the students in its measures, which means giving up the elderly and people with special needs. Even Singapore and Taiwan have put in place dental clinics for the elderly and people with special needs. Other

dental schools in overseas countries generally offer programmes on special care dentistry. Hong Kong is recognized for having a top-notch dental college which is second to none in world ranking and yet, we do not have this specialty. Is this not an irony?

Why is it that Hong Kong does not have any view and policy on dental health and oral care? In allocating resources or drafting the Budget this year, why did the Government always neglect these needs? Since how many years ago have we heard these complaints from the elderly people? I wonder if you, Deputy Chairman, was there back then. I recall that those elders were holding placards that carried the slogan which read "無牙老苦" (Toothless, old and miserable), and the word used is "苦" as in "苦澀" (bitterness) and "苦困" (distressing), not "虎" as in "老虎" (tiger). These elderly people were in their twilight years and they still had to come to the Legislative Council to lodge a complaint with us. This happened many years ago, and they have all along been neglected.

So, Deputy Chairman, I think this debate has just started as we have only touched on the very surface of the problem. I cited the Director of Audit's Report today in the hope that Members and the Government will seriously pay attention (*The buzzer sounded*) ...

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Dr Fernando CHEUNG, your speaking time is up.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy Chairman, up to this point, there is only one Chinese idiom that best describes the present situation: "罄竹難書" (meaning the misdemeanors are too numerous to record on all the bamboo strips). The Chairman may have gone to have dinner now. He said, "You have nothing to say. You will only request headcounts." Frankly, my purpose in requesting a headcount is simply to prove how rotten this legislature is.

Honourable Members and Deputy Chairman, what do Members do? They deliberate on matters. Members are not amateur performers. What is an "amateur performer"? That means someone who performs in a show as an amateur. Rich people who wish to perform on the stage are called "amateur

performers". That means they do not really know theatrical performance. Just now Mr LEUNG Che-cheung pressed the button and wished to speak, but I saw you write him a note. Maybe it was to remind him not to speak, right? But I happened to see it.

No matter whether Members speak or not, they should fulfil their duties. What I say can be refuted by other people. The officials sitting on the opposite side can correct us one by one. The Chairman said, "This bunch of people like Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung do not have much to say. They only rely on headcounts." Actually that is not the case. It is not true that we have nothing to say. We are just contemptuous of those who do not speak.

Now I am going to speak. What are too numerous to record? First of all, I need to talk about the Home Affairs Department ("HAD"). HAD is a hot topic. I requested cutting all its expenditures, but the President did not allow me to cut its expenditures, including various items, and one of them was the expenditure for liaison with the owners' committees of buildings.

Buddy, Deputy Chairman, you have dealt with many relevant matters, too. The problem of bid-rigging is insolvable. Garden "Wu King", which is in my constituency ...

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): Garden Vista.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): Garden Vista. It is Garden Vista, sorry.

Garden Vista needed Members to go there and act as though they were fighting and wrestling with people. It was not until they were intimidated and nearly got beaten that the Government was alarmed. The Government said that it was really intolerable this time. If this can be tolerated, what cannot be?

Buddy, the reason for my requesting the cut of all its expenditures is that HAD should have deploy officials to deal with these problems, such as the disputes between owners and owners' corporations ("OCs") relating to the

Buildings Ordinance. As I have said here many times, a lot of people had to deal with the whole OC alone. Eventually, they had to sell their flats or an encumbrance was imposed on their flats, since they did not know whom they should consult, and they had no knowledge of this Ordinance either. They were caught by the law inadvertently, thinking that they could sue the other party; or they were sued by the other party. In the end, they had to sell their flats. Some even thought about jumping off a building.

Members do not understand what I mean, do they? I mentioned selling flats and jumping off a building because there was a case in which a Ms CHOW who lived in Tai On Building had inadvertently broken the law since she detested what was done by her OC, and eventually an encumbrance was imposed on her flat. She said, "I want to jump off the building, Mr LEUNG." I was so scared that my hair stood on end. Buddy, I had participated in dealing with her case. If she jumped off the building, how could I face it? I said, "Ms CHOW, do not worry. There is justice in this world. Just sell your flat as soon as possible. As you are in your old age, let me help you apply for a public housing unit." Eventually, her problem was resolved.

However, the question remains. Why do I wish to cut the expenditure of HAD? Because it did not fulfil its duties. Now it has run rampant. The problem has run rampant in my constituency. Now even Members of the pro-establishment camp have urged the authorities to amend the law and allocate additional resources to teaching the minority owners how to deal with the relevant problems. If the members of OCs are decent guys, HAD should teach them how to read the tender documents and what is meant by bid-rigging. They have done so, but only very slowly. Honourable Members of the pro-establishment camp, will they do any work if they are not scolded? They will not work until they are scolded. Hence, every time we fulfil our duty of speaking out here, frankly, we are like doing something beyond our ability. There is so much work to do.

Now let me state here that the performance of HAD is rather unsatisfactory. This is the first point. It did not fulfil its duty of monitoring all the OCs in Hong Kong, thus causing sufferings to the minority owners, resulting in the failure to deal with the problems of bid-rigging and overcharging of maintenance fees.

Even the simplest problem is not dealt with properly. Deputy Chairman, in the past, there were bogus proxy forms. I have had personal experience of this. We made a complaint to a certain officer—I will not name him—he did not address it at all. I said, "You have got to handle it promptly. At least you should report it to the Police." He said, "We are not responsible for making any reports to the Police. Neither can we offer any legal advice." In that case, for what did they go there? This is the first point.

The second point is about the problem of allowing the districts to decide their own projects, which has been mentioned for the umpteenth time today. LEUNG Chun-ying talked about "addressing district issues at the local level and capitalizing on local opportunities", that means taking charge by themselves. This cannot be achieved either. What is the reason? Deputy Chairman, you know it too well. Because there is too little funding. If the funding is too little, how can anything be done? The sugar bought will not be sweet enough and the vinegar bought will not be sour enough. They will be merely ornamental.

Deputy Chairman, I need to tender you a reminder. I guess you also remember that this job is actually a remnant of the territory-wide cleaning campaign which was launched when Carrie LAM had fallen out of favour—it should be the year before last. Why do I remember it so clearly? Because at that time I protested against the small-circle election. Wherever she went, I would go there to stage a protest.

Deputy Chairman, you have got to understand this. Just think about it, if the Government deploys the Chief Secretary to be in charge of improving the environment in all the districts, including your constituency, such a government is too mean, is it not? The Government assigned the Chief Secretary to conduct a territory-wide cleaning campaign across the 18 districts. It started off with a bang but ended up with a whimper. It said it would allocate some money to the District Councils ("DCs") and the latter could handle it themselves. Does the Government want the DC members to be exhausted to death? This approach certainly does not work. It should vest them with real strength. They are given some \$60 million and told to distribute it themselves, but how can they distribute it? It is unworkable. This is real work. I support doing it, but the amount is miserably small. This vanity project was originally commanded by Chief Secretary Carrie LAM, but later, the Chief Secretary left because LEUNG

Chun-ying was on good terms with her again. LEUNG Chun-ying thought the Chief Secretary was no longer a threat to him, and he later told her to come out to promote the constitutional reform proposals. Whatever work they do, they should carry it through. I guess the pro-establishment camp accounting for the majority in DCs may also wonder whether he is serious. Showing up with a great fanfare, he often asks them to accompany him in visits to the districts where they need to face protests. Yet the work fizzled out afterwards. It started off with a bang but ended up with a whimper. This is the second point.

Thirdly, each district is allocated \$100 million for "addressing district issues at the local level" and capitalizing on the "local opportunities" by themselves. Similarly, it has turned out to be a mess. Deputy Chairman, the problem lies in they having no idea about what to do. A few districts have considered providing the elderly with ophthalmic or dental services instead of doing any vanity project, but again, the funding is not sufficient.

Frankly, Deputy Chairman, now some districts engaged in vanity projects have been criticized by us. I am not going to argue about this point here. We have seen the need for DCs to provide genuine services for some or all of the residents, but the Government still refuses to come to its senses. If the Government now allocates more money to each district for the provision of ophthalmic and dental services at the local level, DCs will indeed be able to do real work, and we will stop ridiculing it as a rubber stamp from time to time. The Government is reluctant to spend money on good causes. This is another problem. HAD has failed to serve as a bridge. That is why I have proposed to cut all of its expenditure. Where does the problem lie? Deputy Chairman, the problem lies in the bureaucratic system. Here comes the story about the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB"). Why?

A windfall may forebode disaster. Someone lost what he had obtained. The former Secretary TSANG Tak-sing was fired by LEUNG Chun-ying in a fury. The work could not be carried through. The subsequent performance thus became poorer and poorer. Then the Government "fouled its own nest", and now another big loser from DAB has made a comeback. Despite losing his seat as a Member, he became an Under Secretary. The bureaucratic system is a

mess. That is why I speak on HAD. But now I will stop talking about it because the Chairman has returned. I have spoken for 10 minutes. I am afraid he will accuse me of speaking too long.

(THE CHAIRMAN resumed the Chair)

Next, I will talk about the Innovation and Technology Commission ("ITC"). Why do I wish to cut the expenditure of ITC? ITC per se may not be necessary. The Government has already put in place the Innovation and Technology Bureau, which is also something overrated. Why do I wish to cut its expenditure? As a matter of fact, its work has been very slow. Our injection in innovation and technology as well as technological research and development ("R&D") is indeed extremely inadequate. The percentage of our R&D in the Gross Domestic Product ("GDP") is tiny. Taiwan and Korea are our main competitors. How does Hong Kong compare with them? Let me read it out. Our R&D accounts for 0.73% of our GDP. What are the percentages in Taiwan and Korea? They are respectively 3.12% and 4.15%. The situation in Singapore is similar to ours, but its percentage is 2.02%. That is to say, our ITC fails to produce any effect.

Besides, the sponsorship for the industry is perfunctory. For example, in June 2005, the establishment of five Research and Development Centres under the Innovation and Technology Fund was approved. They were supposed to be self-financing upon a lapse of five years, and 40% of the R&D projects would receive sponsorship from the business sector in the fifth year, but now only 30% on average are sponsored. The target has not been achieved. Chairman, why am I speaking volubly on this issue? As a matter of fact, we have seen what happened to ITC and found that the establishment of the Innovation and Technology Bureau is not of much help. The reason is its failure to offer any incentive to attract real investments from the business sector.

In fact, we have degenerated into such a state that the genuinely rich did not make any investment, while those who have no money and only intend to reap gains from the Innovation and Technology Fund have made plenty of

investments. According to the report of the Audit Commission, all the five major Research and Development Centres have failed to reach the target. The problem is that ITC sought account books from the project applicants which had received sponsorship, but after a long period, they still failed to submit them. A most outrageous finding was that if they could not submit the accounts, it would rather not take any action. It would merely reduce the sponsorship or request them to repay part of the money. Chairman, you are a businessman. Would you run a company in such a way? Suppose your employee has taken a sum of money from you for doing business, but the accounts are not clear. Would you let it be? He has taken \$10,000. Can he just repay \$7,000 and forget about the remaining \$3,000? You will not work in this way.

Hence, on this point, my reason for cutting most of the expenditure of ITC is actually the same as my reason for proposing the other amendments: I need to alert Members to this question. After I had raised this issue, many people said, "Long Hair', do you not always only speak on matters relating to the elderly and labour?" Now I just find it necessary to talk about other matters. Chairman, the Innovation and Technology Bureau has been set up for such a long time, but ITC has failed to achieve anything. Of course, I will heed the Chairman's advice. I will not stray away from the question. I will wait and speak on this issue again during the debate on the head relating to the Innovation and Technology Bureau.

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): First, I will continue to speak on "Head 168—Hong Kong Observatory ("HKO")".

In my last speech, I pointed out that the provisions for two of its programmes were inadequate. Under programme (2), the expenditure on radiation monitoring is \$32.1 million, whereas the expenditure on seismic studies, and monitoring and management is \$12 million. I consider HKO has taken lightly the monitoring and studies of two major issues, namely radiation and earthquakes. I hope this will not affect the properties and life of the people, or lead to omissions of the relevant forecasts and records, thus preventing us from noticing the problems which will cause serious damage to the lives or health of the people.

Of course, I do not hope to vote against the provisions in principle, as I have not proposed any amendment to reduce the expenditure of HKO on this front. If additional expenditure can be provided, I all the more hope that major improvements can be made to the studies on the monitoring of earthquakes and radiation monitoring. Members should not always say that I will do nothing but criticize the Government. I will sing praises of the Government if it has done a good job. Of all the mobile applications ("Apps") of government departments, the HKO App is the most popular. It is estimated that the number of browsings of the HKO web page and using its mobile App reaches 75 billion times. In other words, each member of the public will press 10 000 times per annum, or more than 10 times daily, which is 10 billion times more compared to two years ago.

Actually, HKO deserves praises for such a good result. Nevertheless, I do hope the mobile App of HKO can provide more comprehensive information. I suggest that more functions be added to enable the public to more easily browse the typhoon tracks forecast by other observatories. At present, quite a number of people will look up the typhoon tracks forecast by other weather authorities through the so-called "underground observatory", with a view to predicting the chances of Hong Kong being hit by a typhoon. Whenever Hong Kong is predicted to be hit by a typhoon, such forecasts will appear. Sometimes, we cannot tell if the information, such as the timing of the hoisting of a certain typhoon signal, the wrestling with the LI force, and so on, is indeed true. More people will be drawn to using the mobile App if this additional function can be provided.

Furthermore, HKO may consider making it easier for the public to look up the radar images provided by the Guangzhou Meteorological Service. At present, the radar images provided by HKO cover the Pearl River Delta only. Under extreme weather, however, a rain area can move so rapidly that it may advance more than 200 km in a couple of hours. The public can have a clearer idea of its movement in the next few hours if they can view the radar images provided by the Guangzhou Meteorological Service to cover the whole of Guangzhou.

In addition, HKO should be granted a provision to set up a new organ, which is named an "inter-departmental liaison centre" by me, to study how to cope with unexpected natural disasters. I recall that whenever a heavy

downpour was imminent, HKO would know that it was approaching Hong Kong and an alarm would then be raised. But it seemed that other government departments and public transport operators had failed to take adequate precautionary measures. Consequently, accidents nearly occurred when the upper lane of the Tsing Ma Bridge remained open to traffic, even though the visibility on Tsing Ma Bridge dropped to zero once when Hong Kong was hit by torrential rains. At the same time, a number of Mass Transit Railway stations were hit by unusual floods. Similar chaotic situations can be avoided had HKO been capable of notifying these public transport operators and utilities at an early stage.

Furthermore, with growing development of the Internet and Internet of Things technologies, quite a number of places encourage their citizens to install household devices, such as anemometers, thermometers and barometers, to be connected with computers for transfer of information through the Internet to local weather stations, so as to enable the stations to better grasp the weather conditions of these places. Earlier, a mobile App was developed for the detection of ground vibration through cell phones. If everyone has installed this mobile App, so that several thousand cell phones can sense slight ground vibrations simultaneously, the approach of an earthquake can be predicted. Some scientists in Chile have already implemented the relevant system on a trial basis. I hope the authorities can provide HKO with additional resources to enable it to introduce the relevant technologies and encourage and help the public to install in their homes more devices that can facilitate weather forecasts, including anemometers, thermometers, hygrometers, ground vibration sensors, and so on, so that HKO can grasp the conditions of various districts more accurately.

Next, I will talk about "Head 78—Intellectual Property Department ("IPD")". It is not because I am satisfied with its work performance that I have proposed no amendment this year to reduce its expenditure. Members must vividly recall the very disappointing handling of the Copyright (Amendment) Bill 2014 by IPD last year, which gives the public the impression that no action will be taken unless IPD is pushed. It was only when the Bill was going to be read the Second time that IPD made belated efforts to cope with unexpected situations by accepting interviews in public and wasting a lot of money. I still recall the advertisement put up by IPD last year to explain the Bill. Nevertheless, it was too late to do so, for dissatisfaction had already escalated in society. Even Members of this Council who originally had reservations united together with a very clear stance of opposition to the Bill. It is thus evident that the response of

IPD in handling crises was quite slow. It could even be described as making a bomb for itself. Both the speeches delivered by its officials and the explanation given for the singing of the song "Loving You" by LEUNG Chun-ying also became public relations disasters.

Nonetheless, I have not proposed reducing the expenditure of IPD this time around because I hope that a new round of consultation can be launched expeditiously. Secretary Gregory SO and his colleagues in the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau have often threatened us, claimed the copyright law in Hong Kong seemed to be Stone Age or Ice Age, for it was more than a decade behind similar laws in other places. If it is not updated as early as possible, Hong Kong might be put on the observation list. Though this might just be a threat, we are indeed duty-bound to improve the Copyright Ordinance.

Last year, people seemed to believe that the Bill was derailed by filibusters, and I was asked if I considered myself a winner. Actually, I did not think so. Everyone was a loser. The Government, copyright holders and even users (netizens and members of the public) were all losers, since a win-win situation could only be achieved should the Bill allow open-ended exemption and include right of communication to benefit both parties. But regrettably, Secretary Gregory SO stated that day that the current-term Government would not introduce the Bill again. Of course, the Government could not possibly introduce the Bill again during its remaining tenure. However, even if the Bill will not be introduced into the Legislative Council again for Second Reading, the Government should still continue to make efforts behind the scene, instead of putting the Bill aside without any further follow-up actions. As Members are aware, with the advance in information technology, many disputes over copyright will continue to arise.

If Members have paid attention to the news in the past two days, they will definitely have noticed a news report about an Internet celebrity called Amo Good, who has caused a great sensation. He is fond of editing the films produced by others and summing up the plot of an entire movie or drama in five minutes. Eventually, he was sued by two film makers for infringing on the copyright of six pieces of work. Though I do not wish to discuss this subject in detail, this problem will definitely emerge in Hong Kong soon. The Copyright Ordinance in Hong Kong actually has unclear areas. The "fair use" exception mentioned in my proposed amendment is called "reasonable use" exception in Taiwan. For instance, since YouTube has "reasonable use" exception, the

relevant films will not be removed because there are no problems so long as the requirement of "reasonable use" is met. Follow-up actions will only be taken should prosecution be instituted.

I am not going to judge whether Amo Good has committed infringement or an offence, because we have no idea how he got hold of the relevant films, and such judgment should be left to the Court in Taiwan. I am citing this example here because I wish to make a fair comment. Secondary creation is not above everything. Should you use the works of others without obtaining his or her consent, you are not exempted from abiding by the rules simply because you are making a secondary creation. Nevertheless, there is still a need for legislation in Hong Kong to introduce some provisions that allow pastiches or parodies of secondary creation. This is why I proposed "fair use" exception at that time.

Now, both IPD and the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau have put this issue aside without further discussion. Certainly, the Director of Intellectual Property has also conceded that there are actually examples of open-ended exemption in foreign countries, and such an exemption can possibly be considered, but major changes to the copyright law will be entailed, and detailed studies must be conducted and all stakeholders be consulted. Such being the case, why did the Government or IPD not launch a new round of consultation or study immediately after the Bill was vetoed? Although the remaining tenure of the current-term Government is just a couple of months, I must still advise the next-term Government, including the Chief Executive-elect, Carrie LAM, and the next Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development—the Director of Intellectual Property should be the same person—that a new round of consultation and study on amendment of the Copyright Ordinance should be launched immediately. I recall that the Bills Committee at that time had spent a year and a half on the scrutiny of the Bill. If the consultation begins now and takes a year and a half, and then the Bill has to be submitted to the Bills Committee for scrutiny, the next-term Government and Chief Executive will probably say that the Bill can hardly be passed as that will be the last year of the current-term Legislative Council. Even if I promise to support the Bill, Internet users might refuse to render their support. Although I have not proposed reducing the expenditure of IPD, I hope it has learnt a lesson over the past year. If there is a need for more detailed consultation, the Government should allocate additional resources to enabling IPD to complete its amendment of the Copyright Ordinance.

I would like to spend the little time left to talk about "Head 166—Government Flying Service ("GFS")". The estimated expenditure of GFS has increased by approximately \$240 million, or 44.9%, over the revised estimate last year. Why is the increase so large? It is mainly attributable to the increased cash flow requirement for the procurement of helicopters and the creation of 31 additional posts to meet operational needs. Currently, with a fleet of four fixed-wing aircraft and seven helicopters, GFS provides search and rescue services in areas covering the majority part of the South China Sea, extending 1 300 km to the South of Hong Kong. Such being the case, I will definitely not reduce the estimated expenditure of GFS. As Members are also aware, GFS is probably the most dangerous post responsible for rescuing operations, because the degree of difficulty of working on aircraft is extremely high. Its responsibility is not only serving Hong Kong, but also places around the world.

In as early as 1998, GFS introduced two fixed-wing Jetstream 41 as rescue vanguards, and procured three modified Super Puma helicopters in 2001. In addition to the general search and rescue equipment, the Super Pumas were specially equipped with an automatic hover system and the Belly Mounted Fire Tanks. With an expected service life of 15 years, they will reach the end of their service life in 2016. Meanwhile, it was anticipated that the two new Challenger 605 ("CL 605") fixed-wing aircraft would be fully operational in mid-2016. Costing GFS nearly \$780 million, these two CL 605 were, according to the document provided to the Finance Committee at that time, originally expected to be operational in March 2013 to replace the two Jetstream 41 procured in 1998. However, for the purpose of equipping the new aircraft with an additional aerial camera, a big hole was required to be cut out from its bottom for the insertion of a piece of special optical glass and the additional installation of a sliding cover to protect it, thereby resulting in a six-inch bulge on the bottom of the aircraft. Another modification was also required since the aircraft was found to demonstrate rolling instability as a result of the occurrence of turbulence in a flight test conducted in Canada in the fourth quarter of 2013.

I believe many members of the Panel on Security were deeply impressed during its visit to GFS. A member of GFS was injured during an accident that happened in a rescue operation conducted the day before our visit. I was very puzzled at that time. Why did he still go to work and receive us since he had been injured while on duty the previous day? In embarrassment, he said that due to the manpower and duty schedule of GFS, they had to continue to work even if they were injured during operations, though they could work indoors

without going out on rescue operations. This arrangement is actually unsatisfactory. This is why I have to make a request to the Government for additional resources for GFS here. If they are willing to come forward to give an explanation, I am sure both the Panel on Security and the Finance Committee will support the request. Of course, some services are not up to standard. However, I cannot list them one by one because time is running out.

I support this provision.

MR CHU HOI-DICK (in Cantonese): Sorry, I wish to speak on the two Programmes of "Head 63—Home Affairs Department" in my last speech today. The first one is the part about the District Councils ("DCs") in Programme (1), District Administration, and the other one is Programme (5), Territory Planning and Development.

Let me start with Programme (1). What happened following the dissolution of the Urban and Regional Councils? It resulted in further centralization of regional powers, leaving a powerless DC at the district level, and a peculiar Home Affairs Department ("HAD") engaged in some low-profile yet essential political work. I wish to remind Members here my view on the motion "Strengthening the role and functions of District Councils" moved by Mr LAU Kwok-fan in this Council on 23 November 2016. In fact, my view is simple. When we talk about strengthening the functions of DCs, we should not just consider introducing patchy fixes or providing them with additional resources because if we take this as the starting point, it will easily lead to those situations of conflict of interest as stated in the Director of Audit's Report published today. Why? Given that DC members are not vested with any power, what will they do? On the one hand, they will attempt to continue to exert their influence in the districts and run their businesses while on the other, they will augment their influence and develop their network with such petty subsidies. This is not the kind of district democracy we want. But as we are aware, in Programme (1) of "Head 63—Home Affairs Department", the role of the District Offices or District Officers has precisely enabled such a peculiar, twisted, powerless yet influential DC system to be preserved for ages.

It is actually not desirable for the Home Affairs Department to act as the secretariat to DCs. The agenda items are determined by the Government before submission to DCs for handling. Simply put, what have DCs become? They

have actually fallen flat as flower vases. The Government has all the say about the items to be or not to be discussed. As mentioned in the matters requiring special attention in Programme (1), it will "carry out District-led Actions Scheme to tackle the management and environmental hygiene problems of some public areas in 18 districts to take forward the concept of 'addressing district issues at the local level and capitalizing on local opportunities'". Just like the dental service mentioned earlier, if we do not understand how it works in practice, we will be easily cheated. Such papers written in bureaucratic language sound pleasant. But if we do some careful thinking, we will actually realize that things cannot go on like this. The underlying meaning of the passage quoted by me just now is that the Government's attitude towards DCs is to give them some actual powers and funding when necessary, but on a limited basis. As to the so-called management and environmental hygiene of public places, it is like getting it fitted into a straitjacket, just like the straitjacket placed on us by Mr LEUNG today, leaving us trapped in it. Democracy is not like this. By the same token, the Legislative Council should not be like this either. How can he stop Members from speaking on the Budget monitored by us as he pleases?

Another Programme that I wish to talk about is Programme (5), Territory Planning and Development. In fact, this part is also weird. Why does the estimated expenditure in relation to territory planning and development fall under the remit of HAD? Is it not within the remit of the Planning Department or the Development Bureau? Why does it fall under the remit of HAD? I have again deciphered some untold stories here. In fact, the Government makes use of the system of HAD and the role of District Officers to get some people out of its way through such a peculiar district council system devoid of any actual power, so that those mammoth plans and infrastructure projects involving huge investment of public money which may practically be not in public interest can get their way through.

I have raised two points just now. The first one is that as the secretariat to DCs, HAD is actually like the Communist Party of China, of which the General Secretary has supreme power. Moreover, given its role of handling planning issues, actually we will understand what is going on now if we consider them both as a whole. First, the elected DCs are now led by the nose by HAD through the so-called secretariat services, which is an exchange of roles. Second, HAD is vested with the power to assist DCs—let me reiterate that they are elected DCs—in gaining an understanding of how much power they actually

have, advising them not to be over-ambitious because their power is confined to the management and environmental hygiene of public areas only, such as tackling the problem of rodent infestation together with Dr Priscilla LEUNG—now it seems that even Dr CHIANG Lai-wan is also in—and that is it.

Third, HAD is joining hands with the District Officers to ensure that local objections to those major planning and infrastructure projects can be suppressed. Who are their targets? I have plenty of such experience seeing them suppress the objections of non-indigenous inhabitants of the New Territories and people facing eviction. For this reason, I consider it necessary for DCs to have an independent secretariat. In fact, we should take out the funding allocated to HAD for DC matters to make it independent, so that DCs may have their own secretariat, recover their autonomy and be vested with greater powers.

On the other hand, I wish to talk about the District Officers. They serve to assist the Planning Officers and the Town Planning Board ("TPB") in ironing out planning conflicts in the districts as mentioned by me earlier. And the role of District Officers is to rally support of the Rural Committees and DC members to their side to suppress, control or manipulate local opinions together. There is a typical mechanism under the existing undemocratic TPB system, which we have got a taste of it in the Wang Chau saga, and that is, the District Officers being tasked with local consultation. Who will they consult? They will consult local leaders who are mainly DC members from the pro-establishment camp and those "rural bigwigs" of the rural forces. After listening to their views, they will treat them as local opinions and then compile reports on the basis of such papers for submission to TPB.

TPB members appointed by the Government are, on the one hand, part of the small circle while on the other, they have to attend meetings every Friday on a volunteer basis on top of their packed schedules. What can they do then? They can just rely on the reports submitted to them by the District Officers to gain an understanding of local opinions. They have come to learn that those "rural bigwigs" are concerned about the removal of their clan graves or whether any "fung shui" issues arise. In case there is any "fung shui" issue, allowances have to be given to them for the performance of rites. In the process, I have found that the same applies to the Wang Chau case and the Kon Hang case in Tai Po also followed up by me. The District Officers compiled the reports in

conjunction with the rural forces, totally leaving out the opinions of the genuinely affected residents facing eviction in the consultation exercise. What happened in the end? The otherwise clever plan backfired, leading to the outbreak of the incidents because in Hong Kong, aggrieved members of the public can still find some channels to make their voices heard. They will definitely voice their grievances whenever opportune, thereby revealing once again the tactics of HAD in manipulating local opinions, and this is not the kind of town planning system we wish to see.

To put it simply, the existing HAD and District Officers have actually evolved from the District Offices in the colonial era which engaged in some low-profile political connection and whitewash work without much actual power. With the rise in the number of infrastructure projects and the growth in the size of such projects in Hong Kong now, such a role has actually grown in importance nowadays and in other words, presented a greater need for reform.

Mr LEUNG, you should understand the two roles of HAD mentioned by me earlier. I have to reiterate here that the democratization of district administration that we look for is the kind of local democracy free from the control of HAD. The 2019 DC election is around the corner. We hope that the elects of every DC election will have the sense of getting rid of such control of HAD. We do not need the kind of Civil Service which appears to be neutral. As I said earlier, what we need is an independent secretariat under DCs at the district level, and we also have to vest DCs with greater powers to do their own estimates and make fiscal decisions. Such power should be taken away from HAD and returned to DCs and people in Hong Kong. In my view, both the pro-democracy camp and the pro-establishment camp should support this approach.

Let me come back to the Budget today. Today is the first day of debate. I very much hope Members from the pro-establishment camp will refrain from thinking that Members attempt to filibuster whenever they speak. They should never form such opinions. I hope Members will be keen to speak tomorrow or in the days to come. We may put forward proper and sensible points in respect of this major Budget covering a wide range of policy issues, so that members of the public will see a debate with constructive exchanges of ideas. Thank you.

DR KWOK KA-KI (in Cantonese): Chairman, I will speak on "Head 160—Radio Television Hong Kong" in this session.

Radio Television Hong Kong ("RTHK") is the only government radio station in Hong Kong. In the past few years, RTHK has had a hard time. RTHK applied for a provision of \$6 billion for the construction of the new broadcasting house in place of the existing headquarters located in Broadcast Drive. Though the headquarters is fraught with problems like water leakage, insufficient space and outdated facilities, the funding application was not granted. The crux of the problem lies not in Members from the democratic camp opposing the application but that the Government was just putting up a show and left it to Members of the pro-establishment camp to veto the proposal.

As the change of Government draws near, it is natural to enquire about our future. Let me check out the future of RTHK. It is said that when "777", Carrie LAM, attended a seminar for candidates of the Chief Executive Election organized by the Hong Kong Journalists Association, a staff member of RTHK insensitively asked whether or not she would strive for more resources for RTHK. "777" was very clever. She did not answer the question in the first place but said that one of the programmes of RTHK was very good, and it was the English programme produced by the China Central Television ("CCTV") re-broadcast by RTHK Channel 33. She then criticized RTHK Channel 31 for its poor quality and the outdated promotion materials broadcast which only included still photos.

Sometimes, these remarks made us furious, for it gives one the impression that Carrie LAM is only an anonymous passer-by and that she has nothing to do with the situation when she is actually the former Chief Secretary for Administration who has a part to play in the work of the incumbent Government. How can she suddenly say that she is not involved in any of these issues and that RTHK does not fall in the purview of the Chief Secretary for Administration? She is marvellous. She claims to a "good fighter" when it is necessary and says she has a role to play in every issue. Yet, when it comes to blunders or embarrassing issues, she claims no responsibility for any and will only shift the blame to "Mr Pringles" and the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development. Later at the seminar, staff members asked her if she would strive for the construction of the new broadcasting house, she gave a wonderful reply of telling them to first persuade Members from the pro-establishment camp to support the proposal. Members from the pro-establishment camp are those who

support her to be the Chief Executive. But now, she questions them. As I check out the future prospect of RTHK, I do not have to go to the temple to draw lots to tell Members confidently that the lot drawn will be an unlucky one.

RTHK's bad luck did not stop here, for its digital broadcast will soon be ceased. Was it RTHK which insisted on introducing digital broadcasting? No, it was not. Digital broadcasting was introduced six years ago. Back then, society, including the Legislative Council, expressed strong aspirations for the Government to open up the airwaves. However, the Government said that it would not open up the airwaves and merely proposed to introduce digital broadcasting. After that, the Government issued a number of licenses. We all know that the operation of digital broadcasting is not easy. First, the operator has to install a new re-broadcasting system, which costs several millions to a thousand million dollars per station. Second, it relies on people's willingness to buy a digital radio to tune into the programmes. Third, it relies on the Government to introduce supporting policies. Yet, the policies of the Government are really "great". After digital broadcasting was introduced, we discovered that the installation of digital radios for receiving digital broadcast was prohibited on vehicles. What kind of policy is this? The Government is slapping its own face by introducing digital broadcasting on the one hand and prohibiting its use on the other. The fact is straightforward. It indeed does not want the operation to go on. What is important to the Government is to narrow down the broadcasting or expression platform in Hong Kong as much as possible.

I wonder if it is not an irony that a report of RTHK today pointed out Hong Kong ranks 73rd in the latest World Press Freedom Index released by the Reporters Sans Frontières. Among the 180 regions around the world, this ranking is mediocre. Yet our Motherland Mainland China ranks the fifth—but from the bottom. Our government officials are great, for they dare talk enthusiastically about Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area. Today, CHENG Yiu-tong, Member of the Executive Council, said there was no problem with living there and WhatsApp was accessible there. Sorry, one may access WhatsApp there but it is definitely impossible to tune into RTHK programmes on the Internet in the Mainland. The Mainland has already blocked all the media of Hong Kong. Of course, one can definitely have access to official newspapers of the communist party like *Wen Wei Po*, *Ta Kung Po* and *Hong Kong Commercial Daily*. Yet for other newspapers, it is definitely impossible. What does the ranking mean to the people of Hong Kong? It means that we are in regression. Yet, it seems that government officials consider as if the regression is not bad

enough, so they implore people to live in the Mainland, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area, where the freedom of press is stifled and ranks the fifth from the bottom worldwide. This is utterly ludicrous. Will the officials please withdraw those remarks.

We notice that digital broadcasting is merely an excuse. After the Phoenix U Radio Limited renounced its licence, the DBC could not hold on and gave up, and then the Metro Broadcast Corporation Limited also gave up. Finally, RTHK's digital broadcasting services were cut. Has not RTHK performed its role in digital broadcasting fully? This is not the case. RTHK ran a number of digital broadcasting channels, including the channel using languages of ethnic minorities as media of broadcast and specific channels for the elderly, and so on. What has the Government done? The Government definitely does not want RTHK to continue with digital broadcasting.

According to the same report on the Freedom of Press Index of the Reporters Sans Frontières, among all the places where Chinese live, Taiwan has the highest ranking of 45. What is the situation in Taiwan? In 2007, the number of ordinary channels in Taiwan, that is, AM plus FM, but not digital broadcasting, stood at 178 in total. Despite that, there is no problem with the so-called frequency spectrum. Besides, there are over 70 domestic television stations. This really makes Hong Kong ashamed. How could Hong Kong, as a world city in Asia, be so poor and out of place in broadcasting? The reason is very simple. The authorities are using these means to stifle all broadcasting channels and reduce all kinds of platforms to the minimal. The case is obvious to all. The HKTU Network Limited was not granted a licence and the Asia Television Limited was closed. Now, the acquisition of the Hong Kong Cable Television was done and its future remains an unknown. The CHIU's family refuse to admit that they are "red capitalists", yet we have to wait and see whether or not it is true.

On the issue of RTHK being "drained", it is not confined to the conditions mentioned just now. Some RTHK programmes which the Government considers making a mockery of and embarrassing the Government, including the most popular programme "Headliner" and so on, are stifled, where the time slots of such programmes in major television stations are even withdrawn. The programme "City Forum" is another example. In fact, not only the democratic camp attends the programme, many people from the pro-establishment camp as

well as some "old men of the Victoria Park" also attend the programme every week. Despite that, the authorities still consider this unacceptable and have made up all kinds of excuses to prevent the broadcast of the programme in the airwaves. I think the SAR Government and the Central Government are making a joint effort to suppress the freedom of press and broadcasting platforms, and they will succeed undoubtedly.

Yet, they should not feel gratified, for these practices are injuring the fundamental values of Hong Kong. When no such platform is available in Hong Kong and when we cannot find a broadcasting channel, we have no way to speak out if anything happens in Hong Kong. By then, we can only remain silent. Do Members notice who are investing in the dominant television station now? They are red capitalists. Who are the new bosses of newspapers and magazines? They are supported by red capitalists too. The same happens even to the largest English newspaper in Hong Kong. We all know that Jack MA has acquired the newspaper.

Hong Kong has already come to this pass. If we cannot guard these things, Hong Kong will lose all of its characteristics. I would like to tell government officials and the pro-establishment camp that they should not complain about people not making investments in Hong Kong by then. It is because Hong Kong has fallen. When the freedom of press is blocked, suppressed and absent in Hong Kong, like the Mainland, why would investors do business in Hong Kong? They might as well go to the Mainland if both places are the same. Besides, bribery and corruption are no big deal on the Mainland, which will not bring any arrest by the Independent Commission Against Corruption ("ICAC").

We have now lost the only characteristic we have. They should not think that "draining" RTHK will bring any good. In a developed society and a civil society, it is most imperative that the public are provided with platforms to express their views. However, Gregory SO and LEUNG Chun-ying of the incumbent Government, as well as "777" Carrie LAM who has gone back on her words, are making an all-out effort to minimize the influence of RTHK. They resort to all kinds of tactics to "drain" RTHK, removing the only channel for communication with the public, unless RTHK is willing to surrender and compromise. Let me cite an example. Carrie LAM may tell RTHK to broadcast not only the English Channel of CCTV but also the Chinese Channel.

In that case, RTHK might as well broadcast CCTV programmes on all of its channels, and RTHK may even rename its channels under CCTV and change all channels to CCTV channels. By then, Hong Kong will be the same as the Mainland. All that they have done seek to bring Hong Kong on par with the Mainland. When they do so, they can realize genuine reunification, for they have removed the many differences, opinions they do not want to hear and programmes they do not want to watch. Hong Kong has fallen, yet we still pretend to be ignorant and that we know nothing about it. RTHK is only asking for a new television house in future, yet the Chief Executive-elect said that she had nothing to do with it and told them to persuade Members from the pro-establishment camp. Shame on her!

Of course, I cannot increase the expenditure for RTHK under the Budget. RTHK has considered developing into an independent and autonomous station like the British Broadcasting Corporation ("BBC"). This is wishful thinking. They definitely cannot succeed. What luck if RTHK is spared from an overall change in five to 10 years. What kind of public broadcasting policy is this? In retrospect, in the past 20 years since 1997, what have we seen? We see that the freedom of public broadcast and the press, and editorial independence, values always treasured by Hong Kong, are being taken away bit by bit, and that we are "going red" and approaching "Mainlandization", and will soon be on a par with Mainland. It will not take long, not necessarily by 2047, for our ranking to drop to 175, right next to the Mainland. What a companion. We will be in sixth from the bottom worldwide. By then, many people, including the pro-establishment, will be very happy, for they can watch CCTV whenever they switch on their television sets and listen to CNR whenever they turn on their radios. What a beautiful day it will be. It is even better (*The buzzer sounded*) ... that this Chamber will be turned into the National People's Congress, the voting machine.

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Dr KWOK Ka-ki, please stop.

I now call upon the Secretary for Labour and Welfare to speak.

(A Member indicated in his seat that he had made an indication of speaking)

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): I told Members earlier at 5:15 pm that this debate will end around 7:15 pm. No debate on the Chairman's ruling is allowed. I now call upon the public officer to speak.

Secretary for Labour and Welfare, please.

(Mr CHAN Chi-chuen stood up)

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): Chairman, I request a headcount.

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Will the Clerk please ring the bell to summon Members back to the Chamber.

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

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Secretary for Labour and Welfare, please speak.

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): Chairman, the question that the 26 heads of expenditure with no amendments stand part of the Schedule is currently under consideration by the Legislative Council. I implore Members to support these heads standing part of the Schedule so as to provide funding to the departments for the next financial year and ensure that the provision of various necessary public services can be maintained in the public interest. If the 26 heads of expenditure currently under consideration cannot stand part of the Schedule for examination and passage, the departments and organizations in question will be unable to provide the necessary services to the public in a timely manner, causing a negative impact on the overall economy, various sectors as well as individual members of the public. Therefore, we believe the objection to the appropriations to these departments is completely groundless, which will even undermine the integrity of the Appropriation Bill 2017 ("the Bill") and hinder the operation of the Government. In order to pre-empt any impact on the provision of public services and normal operation of

the Government and to facilitate early implementation of the proposals in the Budget, I call on Members to support these heads of expenditure standing part of the Schedule and the early passage of the Bill in the interest of the general public.

Chairman, I so submit.

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): Does any other public officer wish to speak?

(No public officer indicated a wish to speak)

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the sums for the heads read out by the Clerk stand part of the Schedule. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

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

SUSPENSION OF MEETING

CHAIRMAN (in Cantonese): I now suspend the meeting until 9:00 am tomorrow.

Suspended accordingly at 7:32 pm.