

**Speaking Note by**  
**Mr. Eddie Ng Hak-kim, SBS, JP,**  
**Secretary for Education**  
**at the Special Meeting of the Legislative Council's Finance Committee**  
**to examine the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-16**  
**on 1 April 2015**

Mr. Chairman,

The Government is determined to invest in education. The estimated total expenditure on education for 2015-16 amounts to \$79.3 billion, which is \$5.2 billion or 7% higher than the 2014-15 revised estimate. Of this total, 90% or \$71.4 billion is recurrent expenditure, accounting for more than one-fifth of the total recurrent government expenditure and taking up the largest share among all policy areas. It represents an increase of \$3.2 billion or 4.7% over the 2014-15 revised estimate of recurrent expenditure.

2. Since the inauguration of the current-term Government, the recurrent expenditure on education has increased from \$60.4 billion in 2012-13 to \$71.4 billion in 2015-16, representing a cumulative increase of 18%. As regards the resources on students, the student unit cost of aided primary schools has increased by about 20% from \$44,451 to \$52,850 in 2015-16, while the corresponding figure for aided secondary schools has increased by about 35% from \$49,246 to \$66,440.

3. Since the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, the overall student population has dropped by over 20%. This notwithstanding, the resources that the Government puts into education increase rather than decrease over the years, with a cumulative increase of over 90% in recurrent education expenditure. We will continue to implement various measures conducive to the development of schools, teachers and students.

4. More than ten initiatives had been introduced in the Policy Address of last year. This year, the Policy Address also announced several new measures on education. In the 2015-16 Budget, resources are provided to take forward the new measures announced in this year's Policy Address and continue with the implementation of the programmes set out in last year's Policy Address.

5. These measures and programmes include:

- enhancing the voucher value under the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme;
- progressively increasing the ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary schools;
- further strengthening the Mainland exchange programmes for primary and secondary students;
- progressively increasing senior year undergraduate places of University Grants Committee-funded institutions;
- implementing the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme;

- subsidising students to pursue designated self-financing undergraduate programmes on a pilot basis;
- launching the Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education;
- implementing the pilot programme on promoting Hong Kong-Mainland sister school exchanges; and
- strengthening support for needy students, students with special educational needs and non-Chinese speaking students, augmenting life planning and vocational education, and promoting the Qualifications Framework.

6. Mr. Chairman, we have already provided detailed information and explanations on the above and other measures when giving our written replies to over 600 questions asked by Members during the exercise of the Special Meeting of the Finance Committee. I must convey my special thanks here to all my colleagues for their relentless arduous work over the past few weeks. Today, my colleagues and I will be happy to answer further questions from Members.

**Education Bureau**

**1 April 2015**