

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 15 June 2017

The Council continued to meet at Nine 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 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 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 STEVEN HO CHUN-YIN, B.B.S.

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

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 CHAN HAN-PAN, J.P.

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

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

DR THE HONOURABLE HELENA WONG PIK-WAN

THE HONOURABLE IP KIN-YUEN

[#] 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.

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 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.

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[#]

MEMBERS ABSENT:

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE WU CHI-WAI, M.H.

DR THE HONOURABLE FERNANDO CHEUNG CHIU-HUNG

THE HONOURABLE CHU HOI-DICK

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

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PUBLIC OFFICERS ATTENDING:

PROF THE HONOURABLE ANTHONY CHEUNG BING-LEUNG, G.B.S.,
J.P.

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING

THE HONOURABLE WONG KAM-SING, G.B.S., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN SUI WAI-KEUNG, J.P.

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE

MR YAU SHING-MU, J.P.

UNDER SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING

CLERKS IN ATTENDANCE:

MS ANITA SIT, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

MISS FLORA TAI YIN-PING, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

MS DORA WAI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

MR MATTHEW LOO, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

MEMBERS' MOTIONS

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Good morning. Ms Starry LEE will move a motion under Rule 49E(2) of the Rules of Procedure to take note of the Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 (Commencement) Notice 2017, which is included in Report No. 20/16-17 of the House Committee laid on the Table of this Council.

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

I will first call upon Ms Starry LEE to speak and move the motion, and then call upon the chairman of the subcommittee formed to scrutinize the relevant subsidiary legislation, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, to speak, to be followed by other Members.

Each Member (including the mover of the motion) may only speak once and may speak for up to 15 minutes.

Finally, I will call upon the public officer to speak. Thereafter, the debate will come to a close, and the motion will not be put to vote.

I now call upon Ms Starry LEE to speak and move the motion.

MOTION UNDER RULE 49E(2) OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

MS STARRY LEE (in Cantonese): President, in my capacity as Chairman of the House Committee, I move the motion as printed on the Agenda under Rule 49E(2) of the Rules of Procedure to enable Members to debate the Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 (Commencement) Notice 2017 included in Report No. 20/16-17 of the House Committee on Consideration of Subsidiary Legislation and Other Instruments.

President, I so submit.

Ms Starry LEE moved the following motion:

"That this Council takes note of Report No. 20/16-17 of the House Committee laid on the Table of the Council on 14 June 2017 in relation to the subsidiary legislation and instrument(s) as listed below:

<u>Item Number</u>	<u>Title of Subsidiary Legislation or Instrument</u>
(8)	Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 (Commencement) Notice 2017 (L.N. 73/2017)."

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

IR DR LO WAI-KWOK (in Cantonese): President, in my capacity as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 (Commencement) Notice 2017 and Product Eco-Responsibility (Regulated Electrical Equipment) Regulation ("the Subcommittee"), I now report on the deliberations of the Subcommittee on the Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 (Commencement) Notice 2017 ("the Commencement Notice").

The purpose of the Commencement Notice is to bring some provisions of the Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 ("Amendment Ordinance") into operation, in order to prepare for the implementation of a producer responsibility scheme ("PRS") for waste electrical and electronic equipment ("WEEE")("WPRS" in short). The Subcommittee has held three meetings to discuss the Commencement Notice with the Government and receive views from deputations.

Members of the Subcommittee noted that the Administration planned to accept applications for waste disposal licence in respect of e-waste from 19 June 2017, or the date of commencement of the relevant provisions. The original

goal of the Administration was to issue another Commencement Notice in the beginning of the next Legislative Session, with a view to commencing licensing control by end 2017.

The Subcommittee was concerned that some recyclers indicated that they did not have adequate time to prepare for meeting the conditions for waste disposal licence in respect of e-waste. To this end, the Subcommittee studied with the Administration the feasibility of deferring the implementation of the licencing control or introducing transitional or short-term exemption.

The Administration advised that the recycling trade had been briefed on the licensing requirements in respect of e-waste since the enactment of the Amendment Ordinance. The present arrangement for accepting applications for the relevant licence at an earlier date is made to allow adequate time for the trade to make applications for the licence. Nevertheless, having regard to the trade's concern and members' views, the Administration has indicated that it will actively consider deferring the implementation of the licensing control to early 2019 to allow more time for relevant operators to complete the necessary procedures. The Administration will set out the dates of commencement of the relevant licensing control in a further Commencement Notice to be gazetted later.

The WEEE treatment and recycling facility ("WEEETRF") funded by the Government is expected to commence operation in the second half of 2017. Some members were concerned that the WEEETRF operator may have an advantage over other recyclers when it comes to obtaining the licence or even monopolizing the business of recycling e-waste. The Administration emphasized that the WEEETRF operator and other business operators are required to obtain the waste disposal licence in respect of e-waste and meet the same set of licensing requirements and vetting and approval standards. Given that some 70 000 tonnes of WEEE are generated in Hong Kong per annum, whereas the design capacity of WEEETRF is about 30 000 tonnes per annum, there should be room for other recyclers to develop their business of recycling e-waste.

No amendments will be made to the Commencement Notice by the Subcommittee and the Administration.

President, the following are my personal views.

Actually, the Subcommittee is responsible for the scrutiny of the Commencement Notice and the Product Eco-Responsibility (Regulated Electrical Equipment) Regulation ("REE Regulation") concurrently, and the two are related to the implementation of WPRS. Given the completion of scrutiny of the REE Regulation by the Subcommittee at its meeting on 9 June, the proposed resolution is expected to be moved in the Legislative Council on 5 July for the relevant amendments to be introduced. Hence, today I will focus on discussing issues related to the Commencement Notice.

The passage of the Product Eco-responsibility Bill in July 2008 has led to the enactment of the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance ("the Ordinance") (Cap. 603) that seeks to introduce PRSs to minimize the impact of a variety of products on the environment. The outcome of a public consultation conducted by the Special Administrative Region ("SAR") Government in 2010 on the implementation of WPRS revealed that all sectors of the community, including the recycling trade, generally supported the implementation of WPRS. In the Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022 published in May 2013, the authorities undertook that mandatory PRSs would be implemented progressively in accordance with the "polluter pays" principle. Following the expansion of the Environmental Levy Scheme on Plastic Shopping Bags, the Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Bill 2015 ("the Bill") was tabled by the Government before this Council in March 2015. A Bills Committee chaired by me was subsequently set up by this Council to be responsible for the scrutiny of the Bill.

The main purpose of the Bill was to formulate a regulatory framework to implement a new mandatory PRS for the proper management of WEEE generated in Hong Kong. The initial phase of this PRS covered five types of electrical equipment, namely air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, television sets and computer products, also commonly known as "four categories of electrical equipment and one category of computer products". Anyone who, in the course of his business, manufactures regulated electrical equipment ("REE") in Hong Kong or imports REE into Hong Kong for distribution is required to register as a "registered supplier". A registered supplier must provide a recycling label for each item of REE for consumers. A seller of REE must also provide removal services, which means that after distributing an item of REE to a consumer, the seller is required to, upon the request of the consumer, arrange for the removal of an item of REE of the same class from a premises designated by the consumer for proper disposal free of charge. A registered supplier will then

be required to pay recycling levies for full cost recovery. Concurrently, the Waste Disposal Ordinance ("WDO") was amended by the Bill to extend the waste disposal licensing control to the disposal of regulated e-waste. If the specified conditions are met, simple and small-scale dismantling procedures may be exempted.

After one year of scrutiny, and thanks to efforts by all parties, the Bill finally received its Second Reading and passed through Committee at the Legislative Council meeting on 17 March 2016 and was enacted as the Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 ("primary legislation"). I have told the full story in great detail because I wish to illustrate to Members of this Council and society that, insofar as the implementation of PRSs and WPRS is concerned, the Bill had been scrutinized by people from all walks of life after years of discussion and consultation before it was passed by the Legislative Council for enactment into primary legislation and the establishment of a regulatory framework. Hence, there are basically no major disputes.

Meanwhile, for the smooth implementation of WPRS, the Government decided to finance the construction of relevant facilities. On 27 February 2015, a \$550 million funding application was approved by the Finance Committee for the further development of a local WEEETRF on a 3-hectare site at the EcoPark in Tuen Mun. The Environmental Protection Department has also awarded through open tender to a joint venture enterprise a contract to design, build and operate the aforesaid WEEETRF, and the operating cost involved is approximately \$200 million per annum. Following its ground-breaking ceremony early last year, WEEETRF is expected to come into operation in the latter half of this year. By then, it may dispose of and recycle 30 000 tonnes of WEEE, which account for approximately 43% of the related waste produced in Hong Kong. This can provide effective support for the implementation of relevant PRSs and enhance the territory's capacity of turning WEEE into reusable materials.

President, I have repeatedly emphasized that, in the implementation of PRSs and WPRS, the Administration should strengthen its communication with the relevant trades and formulate pragmatic and practicable proposals, including drafting and preparing the required subsidiary legislation expeditiously. Apparently, the Commencement Notice and the REE Regulation are a key component of the entire implementation scheme.

The Commencement Notice, which was published in the Gazette on 21 April 2017 and tabled before the Legislative Council on 26 April 2017 for negative vetting, seeks to provide the basis for further preparatory work for WPRS, including empowering the Secretary for the Environment to make regulations concerning the registration applications made by suppliers of REE and the cancellation of the relevant registration; amending the list of REE set out in the related schedules to the Ordinance; and introducing amendments to WDO regarding the fees for permits, authorization or licences to be granted by the Secretary for the Environment in respect of waste disposal. These provisions have commenced operation on the gazettal date of the Commencement Notice. Meanwhile, the Commencement Notice also seeks to amend WDO by adding the definitions of "e-waste" and its "disposal", as well as providing for the circumstances under which the Secretary for the Environment can grant a waste disposal licence to an applicant, with the related provisions coming into operation on 19 June 2017. The Government originally planned to prohibit the disposal of e-waste without a licence starting from the end of this year.

President, I have urged the Administration to pay attention to the fact that all matters ranging from the drafting of plans for downstream operations, the scrutiny by the Legislative Council of subsidiary legislation and its commencement to the implementation of various ancillary measures involve issues on many fronts. Is half a year a pragmatic and feasible goal and, in particular, is the adaptation period given to the recycling trade adequate? I have personally met with some trade practitioners and listen to their aspirations and views. Last Sunday, nearly 1 000 recyclers made a petition outside the Central Government Offices. Criticizing mainly the exceedingly high licensing threshold, they requested that the commencement of the legislation be deferred. Subsequently, Secretary for the Environment WONG Kam-sing indicated that he would actively consider the views of the trade with the intention of deferring the commencement of the new licensing regime to the end of next year to allow more time for preparation by the trade.

Nevertheless, as I pointed out at a Subcommittee meeting chaired by me, although the entire supply chain of the recycling trade is covered by the primary legislation, the Commencement Notice and the REE Regulation pinpoint mainly the upstream supply chain, namely matters related to the registration applications made by suppliers of REE and requirements for removal service proposals, and so on, the views relayed by some trade deputations came from the downstream supply chain, which are beyond the remit of the Subcommittee.

President, the sincerity of and efforts by the SAR Government in promoting waste reduction are evident to all. However, in the course of implementation, consideration must be given to the entire upstream and downstream supply chains of the recycling trade. Given that quite a number of recyclers are small and medium enterprises, the Administration should give the trade an appropriate transitional period and, what is more, pay attention to the implementation of various ancillary measures and the coordination of related government departments in order to yield twice the result with half the effort.

President, I so submit.

MR SHIU KA-FAI (in Cantonese): President, the "upstream" covered by this motion is the electronic and electrical equipment industry which belongs to my sector. After the paper was issued, I advised the Secretary on different occasions that I had consulted the industry who generally supported the motion. Overall, we do not hold any strong objection as discussions have been conducted between the Bureau, Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services Frank CHAN, and the industry for two years, after which the Administration has made corresponding amendments with respect to some major issues.

When examining the clauses at the last Subcommittee meeting, certain members of the electrical equipment trade indicated their hope that the number of "downstream" recyclers can be increased from three to five, and that, after a consumer has purchased a new electrical equipment (such as a refrigerator), the request for removal service can be made to the seller within three days after the purchase, instead of within three days after the delivery of the equipment. I thank the Bureau for accepting these two suggestions, which I believe will greatly facilitate the actual operation.

President, the "downstream" recyclers do not belong to my sector, so I have not been able to contact them or understand their situation after the paper was issued until the Hong Kong Recycling Chamber of Commerce relayed to me that they would face great difficulties after the Administration published in the Gazette in April, appointing 19 June as the day on which the Ordinance would come into operation. At this point they became aware of the licensing conditions, and the fact that they must obtain the license by the end of this year, or else they may not continue carrying on their recycling business.

The problem is that, although they are aware of the licensing conditions, their recycling yards may be situated on a muddy site in the New Territories, in which case a concrete floor must be laid, a roof must be built and drainage installed. They may have to apply for permits from a number of government departments, such as the Fire Services Department and the Architectural Services Department. As we can imagine, building such a structure and laying the floor require the service of an architect and at least one engineer. An application for a waste disposal license can be made only after permits are properly obtained from various government departments. Hence, I believe the original half-year period (by the end of this year) was not feasible.

Hong Kong people surely support environmental protection in Hong Kong in general, but how can a balance be struck between that and the interests of the business sector? As I have told government departments every time I spoke in the Legislative Council, if the measures introduced by the Government are not practicable to the industry, the whole industry has to close down. I know that a company named ALBA undertakes the recovery and treatment of WEEE, but one company is not enough to handle so many tonnes of waste in Hong Kong. The rest of the waste will then be scattered around. Hence, many recyclers, who I believe are watching us before the television now, are very anxious about the introduction of this legislation as they will be forced to close down.

The Government should give reasonably sufficient time to those who are interested in carrying on this business. Some people said 18 months are needed to meet the licensing conditions, some said 36 months. I am only expressing their views on their behalf here. I believe the Administration will not make any promise immediately, but I think the Government has an important role to play in this issue. Environmental protection is what every country in the world hopes to do, but there is a price to pay. What is the price? Hong Kong people may not know now, but they will realize it when the waste levy is imposed. Waste levy is the general trend, which is fine as long as there is a consensus and people are willing to pay.

We have to understand that, once the legislation is introduced, members of the industry who wish to meet the relevant requirements will not be able to do so within half a year. Asking them to go apply for a license now and obtain it by the end of the year is no different from obligating them to fold up. Therefore, I must urge the Bureau to give them reasonably sufficient time. Although they do

not belong to my sector, I must help them follow up on this matter. Thank you, President.

MR CHAN HAK-KAN (in Cantonese): President, the Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 (Commencement) Notice 2017 ("Commencement Notice") proposed by the Secretary today is part of the effort relating to disposal of electric and electronic waste ("e-waste") in Hong Kong. Certainly, as the Chairman of the Subcommittee, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, and Mr SHIU Ka-fai said earlier, in the course of consultation, the consultation conducted by the Government in the upstream is very much adequate. However, the consultation work up stream has been really unsatisfactory. For instance, some operators engaging in e-waste recycling have reflected to us that they were not consulted. Hence, when they learnt about the enactment of this piece of legislation by the Government, they were extremely shocked. They were dismayed to find that the passage of the legislation would seriously affect their means of living. Some trade associations have told me that the arrangement would render around 100 000 employees jobless, including practitioners in the logistics industry. I think Members must have noticed that last Sunday, 1 000 practitioners engaging in e-waste dismantling and four container trucks came to the Legislative Council to protest and express their dissatisfaction with this policy from the Government.

To me, I fully support the proper handling of e-waste, for failure to ensure proper disposal will certainly affect the environment in Hong Kong. I have contacted representatives of the industry, and they have also contacted Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, Mr Charles Peter MOK, Mr SHIU Ka-fai, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung and Mr WONG Ting-kwong. I think they have the intent to enhance the performance of the industry, particularly in environmental protection, for they are prepared to accept certain basic requirements proposed by the Government. However, as the several Members mentioned earlier, the requirements now proposed by the Government are putting these recyclers in a difficult position.

First, I will talk about the licenses the Government requires them to obtain. In gist, there are three licences of great importance to them. First, it is the waste disposal licence which will soon take effect. Second, upon the passage of this piece of legislation, all e-waste recyclers must obtain licences for the export and import of e-waste. These are the three licences concerned. For the waste disposal licence, as the two Members mentioned earlier, the Government requires

e-waste recyclers to meet all the environmental requirements at the beginning, which means they have to apply for change of land use and construct covers and other structures, and so on. It is really difficult for certain recyclers. The industry has asked us to convey to the Government their wish for the Government to consider deferring the application period of the waste disposal licence. After the march staged by the industry, the Secretary proposed to defer it by 18 months from today. I think the deferral has answered the voice of some industry practitioners. However, as Members mentioned earlier, is it possible for the industry to obtain the various licences and meet all the requirements set out by the Government in 18 months?

I would like to discuss this with Members. First, the plants of many existing recyclers engaging in simple e-waste dismantling are located on brownfield sites or storage sites, and if the Government requires them to apply for change of land use within 18 months, I wonder if the Town Planning Board ("TPB") can make a matching effort to process these applications swiftly. We all know that TPB is undertaking a lot of tasks now. It has been very busy rezoning sites for the construction of public rental housing and private residential developments. Will they have time to handle these minor cases? This is the first point.

Second, the Government requires recyclers to meet extremely high standards. Certainly, no one will object setting a good standard to protect the environment. Yet if the Government requires these small recyclers to ensure their plants meet the high standard mandated by the Government now for the e-waste recycling facility to be constructed, it is putting recyclers in a difficult position as I said earlier. President, we all know that \$550 million was allocated for the construction of this e-waste recycling facility in the previous term, so that the requirements now set out by the Government can be met. However, if these small recyclers are required to build plants of this type, not to say whether \$500 million ... they can hardly do so. On the day of the public hearing, some operators said that if the Government gave them \$550 million, they would be able to meet the requirements set by the Government too. Is this a proper approach? I am not asking the Government to give up its standard to accommodate the demands of recyclers, yet the application threshold proposed by the Government should be set at a reasonable level.

Third, the e-waste recycling facility to be built by the Government will not be able to handle all e-waste in the territory. In future, if the many e-waste

recyclers in Hong Kong have closed down, the immediate result will be the unemployment of practitioners. If the e-waste recycling facility of the Government cannot handle all e-waste but other recyclers are not allowed to handle the remaining e-waste, there comes another problem: How can we dispose of the remaining e-waste? Will the e-waste be disposed of at landfills eventually? The Government says that the e-waste can be stored in warehouses or the community waste recovery points in the 18 districts temporarily. Can the community waste recovery points accommodate loads of e-waste? At present, plastic waste, aluminium cans and waste paper are stored in these recovery points. If the Government places additional loads of e-waste in these recovery points, will members of the community and members of District Councils allow the Government to do so?

Since the Government will not be able to handle all e-waste, it may as well allow others to handle some e-waste. Why does it have to wipe out the industry as a whole in one go? Moreover, this approach of the Government smacks of monopolization. Some conspiracy theorists doubt if the Government fears the e-waste recycling facility will not have enough e-waste to handle or there will be inadequate e-waste for recycling, and so it has to wipe out all the existing recyclers in order to "feed" this e-waste recycling facility. This is conspiracy theory for sure. I will not comment on this. However, if there is only one company handling all the e-waste in Hong Kong in future, I think it is undesirable.

I have talked about the waste disposal licence just now. Now, if recyclers have to handle e-waste, they basically have to obtain an import licence and an export licence. Since the two licences are issued based on the possession of a waste disposal licence, if an operator fails to obtain the waste disposal licence, it can neither obtain an import licence nor an export licence. In other words, the operator cannot carry on its business any longer. Hence, despite deferring the application period for waste disposal license by 18 months, the Government is still pushing recyclers to a dead end by requiring them to apply for import and export licences at the same time, which will not be issued to recyclers without waste disposal facilities.

Therefore, I hope the Secretary will think twice and not to stifle the industry. Otherwise, in the face of the imminent threat of losing their means of living, I note that some members of the industry may resort to certain extremely radical actions. But I do not wish to see this happen. I hope that the authorities, in doing a good job of environmental protection, should give regard to

the livelihood of the industry at the same time to achieve a win-win situation. I know many of the remaining parts of the legislation will be discussed and examined in this Council. President, concerning this aspect, I shall stop here. Thank you, President

MR LEUNG CHE-CHEUNG (in Cantonese): Originally I did not wish to speak on this motion but having listened to the remarks of Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, Mr CHAN Hak-kan and Mr SHIU Ka-fai, I must get this off my chest because in the course of scrutinizing this piece of subsidiary legislation, members of the recycling industry had made explanations to Members of various political parties and expressed some of their views on this motion.

Regarding this motion which concerns the scheme for the disposal of regulated electrical equipment ("REE") or commonly known as "four categories of electrical equipment and one category of computer products", I support its spirit because it is necessary for us to regulate the methods for disposal of e-waste, in order to abate environmental pollution and better still, the problems caused to human health. That said, in this process, the industry has conveyed to us their view that even though the Department has discussed and exchanged views with them, the Department has, after the discussion, remained oblivious to the key views expressed by the industry. In fact, this subsidiary legislation on the disposal of REE is desirable as it can identify better options for disposal of these types of e-waste to bring about a cleaner environment. But in the process, the Secretary may not have understood clearly the impact on the industry.

According to the information provided to us by the industry, as many as 100 000 workers are currently engaged in this industry, including workers employed for waste recycling and dismantling, transport workers, as well as relevant providers of other matching services. Besides, with regard to the import and export business in this industry, which refers to the import of e-waste into Hong Kong for dismantling and re-export by the industry, the traffic volume involved accounts for 40% of the freight industry in Hong Kong, and I wonder if the Secretary is aware of this figure. If their business accounts for as much as 40% of the freight industry and if the Government's proposed control will result in closure of such business, the impact to be caused on Hong Kong is imaginable. In this connection, I also heard Mr Frankie YICK and Mr SHIU Ka-fai mention that the impact would be serious, and given a share of as much as 40% taken up by this industry, does it not mean that the transport industry would be tumbled? Does it not mean that all the container terminals would have to cease operation at once? The Secretary may think that LEUNG Che-cheung's remarks are

exaggerated but he can discuss it with the industry again or seek information from Mr Frankie YICK and he will see the picture clearly.

Recently, we have heard some industry practitioners relay that before the passage of the subsidiary legislation on the disposal of REE, which is tabled for examination by this Council only today, the Department has prosecuted some recyclers, seized their goods and stored them in the Government's warehouse, while serving penalty summons on the recyclers in a bid to take them to court. Why did the Government do this? It transpires that the Government has categorized waste computers as hazardous electronic waste. I very much wish to ask the Department this question. If the computer motherboard is considered hazardous electronic waste, it means that the new computers used by us are also hazardous electronic waste because computers have the same components, just that they may not be dismantled, but they become hazardous electronic waste once they are dismantled. Will Hong Kong citizens not feel worried? Now that the Government has stipulated some computer components as hazardous electronic waste and toxic substances, telling us that it is alright if they are not dismantled and vice versa, is there not something very wrong about it? Is it really alright if they are not dismantled? I believe the Government, being the law enforcer, should make things very clear, and it must put the people's mind at ease. I myself am worried too on learning this information about the computer motherboard being considered hazardous electronic waste. The Government has required the industry to carry out the dismantling process in accordance with proper procedures. This is a correct way of waste disposal and yet, the Government should communicate more with the industry on this process, so that the industry can know what they should do and how they can meet the requirements.

According to the industry, it is safe if a waste motherboard is placed inside a carton box. Failure to place it in a carton box will be a breach of the regulations and is liable to prosecution. Therefore, many computer motherboards pending dismantling at recycling workshops have been taken by the Government and put in the Government's warehouse, but it is unknown as to whether the Government's warehouse can meet the safety standards actually. Secretary, I think the Government must conduct discussions with the industry properly and comprehensively. I also wish to say to Mr Frankie YICK that it is our duty as Members of the Legislative Council to enact legislation but if, after the legislation is enacted, the industry would be hard hit, that would be a big problem. If 40% of the freight industry in Hong Kong would have to cease operation right away, dealing such a severe blow to Hong Kong, should not all parties really sit down and discuss this seriously? Particularly when it comes to

the Government's work guidelines or regulatory guidelines, should they not be most accurate and explicit? I hope that the Secretary can give them some time and listen to the views of the recycling industry.

At present, the contribution made by this industry to Hong Kong needs no further elaboration by me given the considerable number of computers, and this motion under our examination today aims to impose better regulation, so that improvement can be made in the disposal of waste computers. As to how this objective can be achieved, the Government must provide a clear explanation. Therefore, I share the view of the Chairman of the Subcommittee, Ir Dr LO Wai-kiwok, and the other two Honourable colleagues that in the process, apart from the need to foster communication, it is also necessary to defer the commencement date, so that the operators can meet the relevant requirements and the industry can clearly understand the mindset of the Government in taking forward initiatives of waste disposal and also in respect of enforcement and regulation.

I so submit. Thank you, President.

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

DR JUNIUS HO (in Cantonese): President, I am extremely concerned about environmental protection. The measures introduced by the Government to regulate the reuse of "four categories of electrical equipment and one category of computer products" and also the relevant e-waste basically command my strong support. However, the Government must take into account the interests of the industry when implementing the relevant policies and their impacts on the long-term development of Hong Kong economy overall.

In this regard, I absolutely agree with the speeches of two Members earlier. I will not repeat their arguments. But I wish to stress that the Government should avoid any hasty actions in the course of introducing the relevant policies. Particularly, when we hear the Government say that one measure to be launched is to engage a single company to process all WEE, we are concerned about whether the company in question has the ability and capacity to process all WEE in Hong Kong all at once. In this circumstance, I hope the Government can set a transition period to give the industry leeway.

Certainly, in this process, the Government has indicated a necessity to set up a licensing regime. Nevertheless, the relevant conditions under this licensing

regime very often sound very pleasing. But they will cause difficulties to the industry. In particular, WEE processing plants must fulfil lease conditions and must not be set up on agricultural sites. The requirement of obtaining a licence prescribed by the authorities will merely enable them to shirk the difficult issues to other departments. For example, an industry operator who needs to apply for a licence may be required to apply to the Lands Department ("LandsD") for a temporary waiver. The Environmental Protection Department should effect coordination with other government departments involved, so as to reduce the difficulty caused by red tape. The reason is that first, industry practitioners engaging in the relevant work merely wish to make a living; and second, their level of education may not be high, so they may be unable to handle the relevant application and clerical matters. In that case, even if the Government implements the policy based on the good intention of supporting environmental protection, it may arouse many grievances and much confusion in the industry. As I said just now, even if the Government requires the industry to apply for a licence, they may be unable to do so. The reason is that if they cannot meet the lease conditions, they will never be able to fulfil the requirement of obtaining a licence.

So, what should the Government do? The Government should make coordination, one example being the arrangement of a three-year transition period for operators to conduct alteration works. But in the process, the Government should also slightly relax land use restrictions. The industry is actually willing to liaise with LandsD. The Government should give a more unequivocal undertaking to assure the industry that as long as it can meet the minimum requirements for fire safety and WEE processing (such as reinforcing floor slabs as a means of preventing effluent leakage and soil infiltration by heavy metals, and installing proper sewage disposal and fire safety facilities), it will require LandsD to grant a temporary waiver. If the Government can give the industry a few years as leeway to enable its upgrading and restructuring, it may achieve environmental protection while also avoiding breaking the "rice bowls" of industry practitioners.

Certainly, I have come to learn that there are many practitioners in the industry, and the number of workers is close to 100 000. Even I myself was not aware before that the number was that high. So, the Government should pay more heed to the views of the industry. The industry has likewise complained that in the process, the Government has not consulted them as frequently as before. For this reason, the Government should consider enhancing communication in this regard.

I support in principle the passage of the relevant subsidiary legislation. But I hope the Secretary can pay special attention to three points. As I said a moment ago, when implementing the relevant policies, the Government should coordinate the efforts of various departments in actively assisting the industry in restructuring and meeting the licensing conditions prescribed by the Government. The Government should not shirk its responsibility after setting the requirements and stand aloof.

Second, the industry needs a rather long time for overall restructuring. I once had the intention of proposing an amendment to postpone the commencement date by three years. But I subsequently heard that the department concerned had promised to enhance communication with the industry and pay heed to the latter's views. It also pointed out that the most important task now was to put in place the licensing regime, and ongoing discussions might be conducted on any follow-up issues. I believe the department and the Policy Bureau concerned will honour their undertakings, so I think the present approach is acceptable.

Third, entrusting WEE processing to a single company for environmental purposes is the beginning of a well-intentioned initiative. But I do wish to see it turn into a disservice. The Government intends to commission a single company to dispose of WEE. But it may be unable to meet the need of the entire Hong Kong market due to its limited capacity. Will this give people the feeling that the Government wants to sacrifice the room of survival of other companies in the industry for this single company? In this regard, the Government must be careful. The reason is that people often emphasize fairness and impartiality and oppose profiteering or the dominance of one single processing plant. This involves the question of competition, and the Government must also pay attention to it. During the transition period, the Government should avoid giving people an impression of sacrificing the livelihood of the whole industry for one single company. The Government must pay attention to this aspect.

Certainly, I do not hope to see the Government end up doing a disservice out of good intentions. I support the Government's move towards the target of environmental protection. But at the same time, it must cater for the interests of various parties.

Thank you.

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

MR CHARLES PETER MOK (in Cantonese): President, I originally did not intend to speak on this motion, but since some views raised by a number of Members just now seemed to one-sidedly express the requests of the industry to the Secretary, here I would like to bring up some arguments which no Member has mentioned.

As mentioned by Mr CHAN Hak-kan just now, actually we have met with the industry, that means the recovery and recycling industry. Seeing the Government indicate to Members its intention to make a concession in respect of the deadline for licence application in order to relieve the pressure faced by the industry in business operation, I think the Government has already made a considerable response. Yet I am rather interested in the views of the industry. For example, the transportation industry indicated that 40% of the transportation trade would be affected. I then wondered actually what things were transported. Were they goods shipped by Hong Kong as a trans-shipment centre, or various types of goods imported into Hong Kong? Or were they large quantities of goods exported by Hong Kong's manufacturing industry? As a matter of fact, did the goods shipped include imported waste which we often talk about and do not wish to see?

In my view, when we study this issue, we need to consider two principles. Just now various Members mentioned the need of environmental protection here. If Hong Kong has indeed become a processing centre of imported waste, we have got to think, irrespective of the previous causes for such a predicament, whether we wish to let Hong Kong maintain such a positioning. If that is the case, the Government should directly state in the next policy address that Hong Kong needs to develop this industry. Additional support will also be provided to allow more waste to be imported into Hong Kong and then shipped away after a certain process is completed. Do we wish to see Hong Kong become that?

I do not think this was the original intent of the Ordinance when it was formulated. I met with the industries because I wanted to know if they wished to have more opportunities of processing the waste produced in Hong Kong from the "four categories of electrical equipment and one category of computer products" now, that means recovering them after we finish using them. Do they wish to seek more business in this area? As they have been doing this business in the past, they do not wish to be unable to do it in the future. If this is their request, I consider it relatively reasonable. However, if the industry is going to

deal with large quantities of imported waste, we have got to think about it carefully. In principle, do we wish Hong Kong to be positioned for such business? From my personal standpoint, I hold great reservations.

The other principle involves the fact that the industry has actually occupied a considerable area of brownfield sites, especially those in the New Territories. It is often said that there is a shortage of land in Hong Kong. There is not enough land for residential use. Nor is there enough land for commercial use. There is a shortage of everything. There are not even enough green belt areas in country parks which we desire to keep. Now the Government wishes to touch the country park land. Many Members and the public do not approve of it. We have stated that it should deal with brownfield sites before green belt areas, or it should even first deal with the former and never touch the latter. In this circumstance, the industry has now occupied so many brownfield sites. If we consider in principle that these brownfield sites can serve better purposes, should we not take this opportunity to address this problem? I think we should also take this principle into account because these land lots are very important to us.

Why did such a large industry emerge in the past? When we read the news report about the large quantities of imported waste, we immediately criticized the Government for its lack of regulation in the past and the existence of various loopholes resulting in such a situation. When the Government starts to impose regulation, if we adopt the "what is done cannot be undone" attitude and say that it is infeasible because some people are already engaged in this work, then Hong Kong will never be able to move forward. I understand that transformation is difficult, but we cannot stall society from moving forward on this ground. Otherwise it will never end. I agree that the Government should provide the industry with more relief measures, but a deadline should be set for these relief measures after all. It should be reasonable and cannot be too long. Otherwise it will really go on without end.

President, I so submit.

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

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Members have already spoken. I now call upon the Secretary for the Environment to speak. This debate will come to a close after the Secretary has spoken.

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (in Cantonese): President, I am going to speak and respond to the comments made by various Members earlier.

To begin with, I would like to thank the Subcommittee on Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 (Commencement) Notice 2017 and Product Eco-Responsibility (Regulated Electrical Equipment) Regulation for carrying out intensive scrutiny work under the chairmanship of Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok in the past few weeks, with the scrutiny of the Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 (Commencement) Notice 2017 ("Commencement Notice") being completed first. At the Subcommittee meeting held last Friday, the scrutiny of the Product Eco-responsibility (Regulated Electrical Equipment) Regulation ("REE Regulation") was basically completed as well. We will further introduce the Regulation and the Government's amendments to the Legislative Council for passage and I will then further explain the relevant policies of the Government and respond to Members' comments.

An overview of the producer responsibility scheme

The Government made the Commencement Notice and the REE Regulation in April this year, reflecting that the preparatory work for the producer responsibility scheme ("PRS") on waste electrical and electronic equipment ("WEEE") ("WPRS") has reached the final stage. The purpose of PRS is putting in place a closed-loop recycling system by which we may turn abandoned regulated electrical equipment ("REE") ("e-waste") into resources through proper treatment processes. At the initial stage of WPRS, the scope of REE will cover "four categories of electrical equipment and one category of computer products", that is, air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, computers, printers, scanners and monitors. The Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Electrical Equipment and Electronic Equipment) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016 was enacted by the Legislative Council in March last year which

served as a piece of enabling legislation for PRS and introduced, among others, various key measures, including:

- (a) Upstream arrangements: amending the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance and stipulating that manufacturers and importers of REE are required to register as registered suppliers with the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") and pay a recycling levy for REE distributed in Hong Kong in the course of their doing business. After distribution of REE and upon request, an REE seller must arrange free services for consumers to deliver the old REE to a licensed recycler in accordance with a removal service plan endorsed by EPD;
- (b) Downstream arrangements: amending the Waste Disposal Ordinance ("WDO") and stipulating that any person who is engaged in the storage, treatment, reprocessing or recycling of e-waste must obtain a waste disposal licence, save for certain exclusions. There are certain exclusions under the licensing regime. For instance, disposal of e-waste (not being chemical waste) on land or on premises with an area of not more than 100 sq m will be eligible for exclusion. A recycler will be licensed only if his/her treatment facility and its operation satisfy the relevant terms and conditions. A permit will be required for the import and export of e-waste. Besides, regulated e-waste will no longer be accepted for disposal at landfills.

Discussions on the Commencement Notice

The Commencement Notice seeks to bring some of the necessary provisions into operation in advance so that EPD can accept applications for the waste disposal licence in respect of e-waste from 19 June 2017. This will allow us time to prepare for the new licensing regime in respect of e-waste and provide sufficient time for us to process applications for the licence concerned before the new licensing control under WDO becomes effective, with a view to facilitating the continuation of lawful operations of the industry by then.

One of the major subjects of discussion during the scrutiny of the Commencement Notice by the Subcommittee was the licensing conditions under the new licensing control, the time required for applying for a licence and the timetable for implementing the aforesaid control. Some members and members of the industry considered that more time should be allowed for the industry to prepare for the commencement of the licensing control.

In light of the discussions of the Subcommittee, we have further reviewed the preliminary information provided by some prospective applicants and envisaged that some existing operators might have to obtain prior approval from other departments in order to meet the licensing requirements imposed by EPD. Therefore, we agreed to examine whether the commencement date of waste disposal licence for e-waste will be deferred to a later date, such as deferring the commencement date of the new licensing regime to 18 months after the date that starts accepting applications (that is, approximately at the end of next year) as suggested by some members of the Subcommittee, so as to provide sufficient time for some operators to meet the requirements for applying for a licence. We will issue a waste disposal licence for e-waste only after the applicant has fully satisfied the licensing requirements.

On the other hand, we will commence the import/export permit control for e-waste at the end of this year according to the original plan. Applications for a permit in respect of the import or export of e-waste will be accepted after the commencement of the new permit control. We will set out the specific dates in a further commencement notice to be gazetted later.

Impact on the industry

Next, I would like to take this opportunity to further respond to two major points. First of all, certain types of WEEE are classified as chemical waste and examples include flat panel displays, computer monitors and waste printed circuit boards disassembled from electrical and electronic equipment or those in a broken state. Before the implementation of WPRS by the Government, the Chemical Waste Control Scheme has been enforced since 1992 to impose regulation on various aspects such as the generation, storage, collection, transport and disposal of chemical waste. A person shall not use any land or premises for the disposal (including treatment, reprocessing or recycling) of chemical waste unless he/she has obtained a chemical waste disposal licence, and chemical waste producers are required to register with EPD.

We have noticed that some members of the recycling industry wish that the Government will cease the enforcement of the existing chemical waste disposal legislation in relation to the control on hazardous electronic waste—particularly waste printed circuit board ("PCB")—so as to facilitate the industry in conducting trade in the import and export of PCB and/or provide services such as storage, collection, transportation and disposal outside the statutory regulatory framework for chemical waste. As mentioned just now, the disposal and import/export of PCB are subject to the regulation of existing legislation. Chemical waste is highly hazardous by nature which will not only create severe environmental pollution but also cause hazards to practitioners in the relevant trades and the public. Hence, the Government must enforce stringent control of all types of chemical waste (including PCB) in accordance with the law and carry out law enforcement actions. In fact, the same approach is basically adopted by the international community to enforce stringent control of PCB and the Government must not relax the existing control measures on PCB.

Furthermore, there are views that the Government's approach of commissioning a company through open tender to engage in the collection and treatment of e-waste will smother the room for survival of the existing recyclers. Nonetheless, the fact is that around 70 000 tonnes of WEEE are generated in Hong Kong annually and most of them are exported. As discussed in a previous public consultation exercise, international experience indicated that it is necessary to ensure that the treatment facilities have adequate capacity and apply appropriate technology before implementing the WPRS. At present, there are a few private WEEE recyclers whose businesses mainly focus on the treatment of computer products or "off-specification"¹ equipment from commercial or industrial sources. However, their overall treatment capacity cannot meet the demand for the treatment of WEEE generated in Hong Kong. According to the outcome of the public consultation completed in 2010 and a review of the current market situation, we consider that the Government should invest in the construction of a WEEE treatment facility such that the mandatory WPRS can be implemented successfully. The stakeholders and the public generally support such idea. We have also secured funding approval from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in February 2015 for the construction of the relevant facilities.

¹ Off-specification equipment refers to equipment that cannot meet the specifications or standards as may be required by law or regulations or other requirements of the manufacturer.

We envisage that subsequent to the implementation of WPRS, there will be a significant increase in the local demand for proper treatment of e-waste, which will generate new business opportunities. The design treatment capacity of WEEE treatment and recycling facility is around 30 000 tonnes per annum and, therefore, other operators will not be excluded from the market. Private recyclers are welcome to consider entering the market and we will strive to maintain a fair and open competition environment so as to promote the sustainable development of the local recycling industry. The requirements for a waste disposal licence are applicable to all applicants, including the operator of the government facility; we will process applications in an impartial manner without favouring any applicant.

REE Regulation

Here I would like to thank the Chairman and members of the Subcommittee once again for their active efforts in scrutinizing the two pieces of subsidiary legislation related to WPRS. As I have mentioned earlier, upon completion of the scrutiny of REE Regulation by the Subcommittee, we will submit the Regulation to the Legislative Council for passage at a later time.

I so submit. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): In accordance with Rule 49E(9) of the Rules of Procedure, I will not put any question on the motion.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Debate on motion with no legislative effect.

The motion debate on "Formulating a bicycle-friendly policy and designating bicycles as a mode of transport".

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

I call upon Mr HUI Chi-fung to speak and move the motion.

FORMULATING A BICYCLE-FRIENDLY POLICY AND DESIGNATING BICYCLES AS A MODE OF TRANSPORT

MR HUI CHI-FUNG (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, I move that the motion, as printed on the Agenda, be passed.

The motion on "Formulating a bicycle-friendly policy and designating bicycles as a mode of transport" proposed by me on this occasion actually carries several objectives. The first one is certainly to help cyclists and speak out for bicycle lovers who often ride bicycles, with a view to improving the existing bicycle-related ancillary facilities. Secondly, I wish to induce changes to the prevailing customs and habits and change the mindset of members of the public and the Government. We should stop regarding bicycles simply as a means for leisure, entertainment or sporting purposes. Bicycles are a mode of transport greatly beneficial to the environment and people's health. And thirdly—regrettably, it always happens that only officials of the Transport and Housing Bureau are present—one of the important purposes of this motion is to improve roadside air quality and achieve the objective of promoting low-carbon transport after designating bicycles as a mode of transport. Regrettably, it seems the Environment Bureau has not done much work in this aspect.

The main sources of air pollution in Hong Kong are public electricity generation, road transport and marine transport. Among them, road transport is the main emitter of nitrogen oxide, volatile organic compounds and carbon monoxide. These air pollutants will not only cause climate change, and their impact on people's health cannot be neglected either. According to the Hedley Environmental Index of the University of Hong Kong, in 2016 the number of premature deaths due to air pollution was over 1 600, greater than that due to inhalation of second-hand smoke, and the economic loss caused by air pollution reached \$21.6 billion. However, all along, the method adopted by the authorities in transport for emission reduction—at least at the level of public engagement—is merely to encourage the public to use green public transport kept abreast of the times and advocate the so-called option of low-carbon or zero-carbon emission. What is it? It is encouraging the public to walk more, which is actually impractical. How can members of the public go to work or go to school on foot? Many of them have to work or attend school cross-district. This is in fact rather unrealistic. The Government has never stepped up publicity or promoted bicycles as an option of transport.

The Government has put forward its objective on various occasions. It is to prevent the overall number of vehicles on road from increasing and prevent deterioration of the traffic congestion problem from offsetting the effectiveness of the roadside air quality improvement measures. Bicycles produce not only zero carbon but also zero emission. Except for walking, no mode of transport produces zero carbon and zero emission, be it the railway, buses, minibuses, taxis or ferries. Only bicycles can do so as a mode of transport. The space occupied by bicycles is small. Obviously, they will not take up a lot of space on roads and will not cause traffic congestion. Actually, now the Administration often encourages the public to develop a good habit of exercising for 30 minutes every day. A point worth mentioning is that the amount of calories burnt by cycling is at least five times higher than that by taking the bus or driving. Hence, if members of the public travel to and from their workplaces by cycling, they can easily achieve this target and even exceed the recommended amount of physical exercise.

Research conducted in overseas countries shows that cycling is faster than taking a car in the urban areas. The average speed of cycling is about 10 kph, which is about the same as the vehicular speed during traffic congestion in the European cities. On Hong Kong Island, the average vehicular speed is close to 20 kph, but in traffic congestion, it will drop to lower than 20 kph, about the same as that of cycling. As we all know, traffic is congested during peak hours. When other vehicles are still stuck on the roads, bicycles have long reached their destinations. Regrettably, even if the Government has promoted the culture of cycling, so to speak, it seems to be confined to the New Territories and new towns. It is far from adequate and seems to be of no help to encouraging people living outside the New Territories and new towns to commute by bicycles. I understand that if the Government really wishes to construct cycle tracks or designate "bicycles only" lanes in the urban areas as proposed by me in the motion, there will certainly be practical difficulties. The Government will certainly say that given the limited road space in the urban areas, there are safety concerns which deter it from going ahead. However, today I have proposed this motion in the hope of suggesting a vision and requesting the Government to formulate a bicycle-friendly policy. These specific suggestions made by me just serve as objectives. I am not asking the Government to implement my suggestions full scale right away. Some of the suggestions, as stated in items (1) and (2) of my motion, are reserving lands for the construction of cycle tracks when undertaking urban renewal, and adding cycle tracks to new harbourfront

development projects. These will take more time for consideration and planning, and their actual feasibility will also be affected by different factors.

Nevertheless, I think the major principle is that the Government should move in this overall direction. I also emphasize that although this is a vision which may take a long time to achieve, some of the suggestions made by me are very detailed and can be carried out step by step. Some can even be immediately put into practice now. They can start as soon as possible. For example, item (5) of my motion proposes improving the design of roadside gutter covers to prevent bicycles from overturning because of the gutter covers when members of the public are cycling on the road. Also, item (10) proposes relaxing the restrictions on travelling on public transport with bicycles. Many members of the public wish to ride bicycles to connect to other modes of transport such as the railway, but now they are subject to great restrictions. These problems can be addressed immediately. Another example is reviewing the existing signage design on cycle tracks. It can also be done immediately.

Public transport has imposed numerous restrictions on bicycles. Although some ferry routes allow bicycles to be brought on board, not all the routes do so. For example, if a member of the public wishes to take the Star Ferry from Central to Tsim Sha Tsui with a bicycle, he cannot do so. The staff will advise him to first cycle to Wan Chai and then cross the harbour from Wan Chai. Another example is that although passengers are now allowed to board Mass Transit Railway ("MTR") or buses with bicycles, they have to remove the front wheels. I think all these have room for relaxation. For example, can passengers be spared the requirement to remove the wheels during non-peak hours, and can the restrictions be relaxed to allow passengers to carry bicycles of smaller sizes, folding bikes or different types of bicycles with them on public transport, such as buses and MTR?

As I have also mentioned in the motion, many people are very concerned about one question, that is, whether "bicycles only" lanes or "inclusive traffic" lanes can be designated on the roads to allow cycling on the roads. I need to emphasize that I am not asking the Government to immediately designate "bicycles only" lanes on all the roads in the urban areas. I know this is not practical because some roads are narrow with a lot of traffic. In that case, can non-major trunk roads be used as pilot points? That is to say, lanes for exclusive use by bicycles can be designated on roads which are wide enough. These pilot points can be non-major roads rather than those with heavy traffic in the urban

areas. Having regard to public safety, can the "bicycles only" lanes designated on a pilot basis be connected to pavements which can be used by bicycles? Can these pilot points be connected to the public transport system such as railway stations or bus interchanges so that members of the public can indeed use bicycles to travel to and from their workplaces and engage in other activities? I am not asking the Government to take forward cycle lanes across the board. I am just asking it to provide some pilot points so that members of the public can really experience the feasibility of commuting by bicycles in the urban areas and using bicycles as their daily mode of transport.

I have also proposed allowing cycling on pavements. It sounds unrealistic, but actually it is not. Neighbouring cities which have implemented a bicycle-friendly policy have also adopted such a practice. For example, in Tokyo and Taipei, cyclists may cycle on pavements subject to restrictions. In Tokyo, the Government requires cyclists to ride their bikes at a slow speed and give way to pedestrians, whereas the Taipei Government allows bicycles to travel on pavements on the principle of not obstructing the pedestrians and traffic. Both cities have erected signs to remind the public of the relevant situations. These practices have made up for the shortcomings of the cycle track networks. These shortcomings are not unique to these cities. Many cycle tracks in Hong Kong are broken up for different reasons, thus lacking continuity. For this reason, we hope that when the Administration launches the pilot scheme proposed by me, it can at the same time appreciate the concerns and ideology involved, allow bicycles to travel on pavements subject to restrictions and link up the cycle tracks which are currently disconnected, thereby greatly enhancing the appeal of cycling.

I know that if more people cycle in the urban areas, the authorities will certainly worry about the safety of cyclists. I myself was once knocked down by a bus when I was cycling. However, this is precisely the reason why we need to urge the Government to step up publicity about the right of way of cyclists. For this reason, I have raised item (9) in the motion to propose including the content of sharing roads with cyclists in the syllabus of driving tests, so as to enhance motorists' awareness of the information in this aspect.

In closing, please allow me to talk about "bicycle-sharing". Like Uber, Gobeer.bike has aroused a great controversy in society earlier. One of the main reasons for the opposition is illegal parking. Opponents alleged that the users parked the bicycles anywhere and occupied the existing public bicycle parking

spaces. In my view, the Government needs to impose an appropriate degree of regulation on bicycle-sharing, but at the same time it should also formulate a clear policy and ancillary measures for bicycle-sharing or self-service bicycle hiring industries. It is very simple. If we are worried that the shared bicycles will occupy the bicycle parking spaces for public use, additional bicycle parking spaces can be provided. As mentioned by some Members, some countries have provided underground or double-deck bicycle parking spaces for exclusive use by the bicycle-sharing industry. The Government can also designate specific space on pavements for placing shared bicycles to prevent people from parking the bicycles anywhere.

An appropriate degree of regulation can actually encourage the development of the industries. It will definitely be conducive to encouraging the public to commute by bicycles. At present, there are more than 850 systems of bicycle-sharing and self-service bicycle hiring around the world. Many overseas cities, including London, Paris and Copenhagen, have seen mature development of bicycle-sharing. As shown in a survey in Washington DC, the United States, 55% of the respondents indicated that they had commuted less by car after the self-service bicycle hiring service was introduced. Since the launch of the self-service bicycle hiring service in Washington DC, the situation of traffic congestion has recorded an improvement of 2% to 3%.

The research institute of Tsinghua University in Beijing has released the White Paper on Bike-sharing and the City this year. Will the Government please read it after the meeting. It shows that since shared bicycles entered the city, among the modes of travelling by local residents, the percentage of trips by cars (including private cars and taxis) in the city traffic has dropped to 26.6% within a year. Bicycle usage has risen by one-fold to 11.6%. The total accumulated distance travelled by users of the shared bicycles of Mobike in the whole country has reached some 2.5 billion km. The carbon emission has been reduced by 540 000 tonnes, equivalent to the amount of carbon emitted by 170 000 cars in a year.

In conclusion, if the Government can provide appropriate facilities and expand the existing ancillary facilities, members of the public will see that commuting by bicycles is more convenient than using the existing modes of transport and thus choose this mode of transport which produces zero carbon. This will not only help improve roadside air quality but also alleviate the traffic congestion problem in the urban areas. It is also definitely beneficial to the

cyclists' physical and mental health development, thus achieving multiple ends in one go.

Climate change is an indisputable fact. The rise in the global temperature year on year is closely related to the behaviour of mankind. Hong Kong is just a tiny city in the world and its total carbon emission may be insignificant when compared with the big countries. But it is a member of the world. For the sake of our health and that of our posterity, and for numerous members of the public living in districts deeply affected by climate change but unable to move away, I hope Hong Kong will do its best. I hope the Government will implement the changes, transforming the prevailing customs and habits and promoting bicycles as the people's daily mode of transport.

With these remarks, Mr LEUNG, I hope Members will support this motion.

Mr HUI Chi-fung moved the following motion: (Translation)

"That this Council urges the Government to designate bicycles as a mode of transport and expeditiously formulate a bicycle-friendly policy for Hong Kong to encourage the public to commute by bicycles in urban and rural areas, so as to achieve the objectives of improving roadside air quality and promoting low-carbon transport; specific measures under the policy include:

- (1) reserving lands for the construction of cycle tracks when undertaking urban renewal, so as to perfect the urban cycle track networks;
- (2) adding cycle tracks with integrated usage of transport, leisure and sports to new harbourfront development projects;
- (3) providing additional bicycle parking spaces in the whole of Hong Kong, and in particular, adding public bicycle parking spaces and relevant ancillary facilities to government buildings and premises of public organizations;
- (4) exploring the addition of a provision to the terms of Government leases and conditions of sale, requiring the inclusion of bicycle-related ancillary facilities in new development projects;

- (5) revising the content of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines concerning bicycle facilities, and altering the design of roadside gutter covers, so as to foster a bicycle-friendly environment;
- (6) launching a pilot scheme of providing 'bicycles only' lanes or 'inclusive traffic' lanes on the non-major trunk roads of urban areas;
- (7) having regard to the premise of pedestrian safety, permitting the use of bicycles on designated pavements with spacious area;
- (8) exploring the legalization of motor-driven bicycles;
- (9) stepping up publicity and education to instill in the public the knowledge about sharing roads with cyclists and include the content of sharing roads with cyclists in the syllabus of driving tests, so as to enhance motorists' awareness of the related information;
- (10) further relaxing the existing restrictions on people travelling on public transport with bicycles;
- (11) encouraging and assisting the development of the bicycle-sharing and self-service bicycle hiring industries; and
- (12) reviewing cycle track management and signage design in the territory to ensure their compliance with international standards."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mr HUI Chi-fung be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Four Members will move amendments to this motion. Council will conduct a joint debate on the motion and the amendments.

I will call upon Members who move the amendments to speak in the following order: Mr LUK Chung-hung, Mr CHAN Han-pan, Dr YIU Chung-yim and Mr Charles Peter MOK; but they may not move amendments at this stage.

MR LUK CHUNG-HUNG (in Cantonese): President, the motion under discussion today is "Formulating a bicycle-friendly policy and designating bicycles as a mode of transport". I have been asked by some people who have been paying attention to what is going on in this Council this question: Are bicycles not a mode of transport? In my response, I pointed out that bicycles are actually not regarded as a mode of transport by the Government. In the "Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030" ("the Study") submitted recently by the Government to this Council, it is mentioned that "Railways will continue to be the backbone of the public transport system, complemented by other public transport modes, walking, cycling and other low-carbon transport modes". In other words, bicycles are excluded by the Government from other public transport modes. Bicycles are still regarded as a supplementary transport mode, or even positioned for recreational purposes. No wonder the Government has yet to introduce a formal and comprehensive bicycle-friendly policy. Not only have the provisions regulating the use of bicycles become obsolete, but the design of hardware is detached from reality. All this stifles the public's incentive to commute by bicycles.

In an activity held in Yuen Long a couple of years ago to promote cycling safety, I was joined by a former member of the Hong Kong national cycling team to experience safe cycling. On that day, all the participants, who were in full uniform and protective gear such as helmets, were told to ride along the cycle track in full compliance with traffic rules. Eventually, the cycling athlete, who used to compete at lightning speed, described the ride as probably the slowest and most back-breaking biking experience in his life. Why? It was because the cycle track was terribly fragmented. How terrible was it? President, instead of an interval of 400 m or 500 m, we had to stop at an interval of less than 100 m, or even several dozen metres. We had to pause and wait whenever we came to a pedestrian crossing or a road. Such a design will inevitably encourage violations, will it not? Furthermore, the road is so problematic that traffic accidents can occur easily. Since cyclists are compelled to use the pavements reluctantly and unlawfully, both vehicles and pedestrians are in great danger due to the frequent occurrence of conflicts between them. There is indeed a need for the community to seriously explore such issues as whether cycle tracks can be designed in a more seamless manner, whether road sharing is possible between pedestrians and bicycles, and so on.

Hence, I have made a number of suggestions in my amendment. At the district level, I request that the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines be revised expeditiously and adequate bicycle parking spaces be provided in various districts. What is more, I hope that bicycle parking spaces can be designed according to the "vehicle-oriented" principle. For instance, additional shelters and anti-burglary installations may be provided at bicycle parking spaces. Bicycles owners love their bicycles very much because the quality of bicycles is very good nowadays. They will find it heartrending to subject their beloved bicycles parked outside to the elements. Moreover, the bicycles can be stolen easily. This is why consideration should be made from the angle of upgrading management quality and protecting the public's assets. Furthermore, I have requested the authorities to make reference to the experience of overseas countries in providing parking facilities for bicycles, such as the underground bicycle parking venues in Japan, with a view to better utilizing the space near the urban areas and railways, as well as further upgrading the effective management of bicycle parking spaces. I believe these measures can facilitate the use of bicycles by the public as a means of feeder transport.

In my amendment, I have requested the authorities to implement the recommendations on improving the design of cycle tracks made in the relevant report, including the erection of appropriate traffic signs, widening of cycle tracks at curved sections, fully replacing traditional steel bollards by collapsible plastic bollards, as well as properly optimizing the design of gutter covers, and so on, with a view to reducing the incidence of accidents. In making these recommendations, I hope the cycling environment can be improved in every detail from the angle of users.

I have also repeatedly mentioned the inverted U-shaped speed reducers which are still being used on quite a number of old-style cycle tracks. Very often, such speed reducers are damaged or, for some reasons, have been removed. As a result, people can easily be tripped by the pole which is only a few inches tall and slightly protruding above ground, thereby causing accidents involving people suffering from different degrees of injuries ranging from minor abrasions to serious head injuries and heavy bleeding. This type of old design must be replaced to protect public safety.

Meanwhile, I have also proposed in my amendment that the Road Traffic Ordinance ("the Ordinance") be amended to enhance the regulations governing the use of pavements by cyclists. From these examples as well as my personal

experience, under what circumstances can pavements be used by bicycles when something unusual happens to cycle tracks, such as when road repairs are being carried out or when the road surface is found to be uneven? Actually, the existing Ordinance is so outdated that cyclists often encounter practical problems. Sometimes, members of the public feel like being compelled to break the law. For instance, cyclists in general will directly cross a short stretch of pavement between two sections of the cycle track when they find that there are no pedestrians on the pavement. However, law enforcement action will be taken by police officers when they see this happen. So, the chances of unnecessary conflicts between police officers and members of the public will undoubtedly increase. Members of the public also find themselves very innocent because it is natural for normal people to cross the pavement on bicycle when they see that there are no pedestrians on the pavement. Hence, there is indeed a need for these obsolete laws to be reviewed. Should the authorities fail to deal with my amendment expeditiously, bicycles can hardly become a mode of transport. The development of green modes of transport in Hong Kong will be stifled by the relevant policy, too.

In fact, bicycles have all along been regarded by the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions ("FTU") as a mainstream green mode of transport. As early as 2002, we already put forward concrete proposals for developing the bicycle industry and, through industrial policies, assisting the development of local bicycle manufacturing and related industries. The bicycle industry referred to by us covers all industries related to cycling activities, such as one-stop services ranging from bicycle trading, maintenance, storage and rental to bicycle wear, accessories, beauty, cleansing, and so on. We expect the development of these services to provide more job opportunities and business opportunities for small and medium enterprises. This is also the "industrial" concept cited by us frequently in recent years for the development of industry-driven economy and employment.

In recent years, we have also proposed the development of cycling tourism to promote and drive the concept of community economy development, as well as taking forward local in-depth tourism. We have also requested the Government to expedite the construction of cycle tracks to link up the whole territory, complemented by the development of holiday bazaars, featured tourism routes in various districts, and so on, to enable local and overseas tourists to experience the scenery of Hong Kong slowly on bicycles in a seamless manner.

Having regard to the development of the bicycle industry advocated by FTU, I have proposed in my amendment organizing more large-scale cycling races and cycling-related activities, and this is precisely one of the ways to promote bicycle development and give it due weight. The construction of a green cycle track around the entire country of Singapore in earlier years was meant to encourage members of the public and tourists to make bicycles a supplementary mode of transport for the purpose of in-depth tourism.

President, quite a number of cities will study the introduction of a licensing regime for effective management of the number of bicycles and solving problems related to parking spaces, though I have not mentioned this in my amendment. Licensing issues are controversial. In Toronto, Canada, for instance, a related proposal was put forward on three occasions on adopting the "user pays" principle in issuing licenses to improve certain bicycle facilities, ancillary facilities, safety awareness, and so on, in Toronto. Nevertheless, the proposal was not endorsed, despite three attempts, due to the failure of reaching a consensus by the general public there. Furthermore, the bicycle licensing regime set up in Guangzhou is fraught with problems due to lax law enforcement. Although the introduction of a licensing regime for bicycles merits study, it must be discussed at length.

I have cited the aforesaid examples in the hope that the Government can perfect its bicycle policy from various angles to enable bicycles to become a green, healthy and convenient mode of transport (*The buzzer sounded*) ... to attain better development.

I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LUK Chung-hung, please stop.

MR CHAN HAN-PAN (in Cantonese): President, cycling has created many legends and brought international fame to Hong Kong. Be it HUNG Chung-yam, WONG Kam-po, Jamie WONG or Sarah LEE, these familiar names have ushered Hong Kong's cycling sport onto the international stage. The Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB") has

always actively supported the development of the cycling sport in Hong Kong. However, apart from being an equipment of elite sport and a tool for recreation, bicycles are also a zero-emission mode of transport bringing health benefits, contributing to the environment and also to the people's health.

Much to our regret, compared with other places in Asia, such as Taiwan, Macao, Japan and Singapore, the ancillary facilities and route design of cycle tracks in Hong Kong have always been a cause for criticism. Although the Government often vows to make ongoing efforts to develop a bicycle-friendly environment, the policy on the development of cycling in Hong Kong has all along been criticized for being far from friendly in terms of the matching support and design.

In this connection, DAB has proposed the following amendments to the motion: First, take the cycle tracks connecting eastern and western New Territories as an example. The cycle tracks are fragmented in a way that when a cyclist reaches a road junction, he has to get off his bike, push it across the road and then get on his bike again. Such fragmented design is likely to cause confusion and accidents. To many residents in the New Territories, bicycles are not only for recreation purposes but also a major tool used daily for connecting with public transport. To residents who wish to go to the Tuen Mun or Yuen Long Station of the West Rail Line, bicycles are a very important means of feeder transport. However, the fragmented design has caused great inconvenience to the residents when they ride on bicycles. Apart from vehicle-pedestrian conflicts, dangers are easily resulted.

DAB organized a bicycle procession last year to call on the Government to expeditiously improve the facilities of cycle tracks and link up the cycle tracks in the New Territories to form a circular super cycle track for the convenience of the public. I hope the Government can make consideration from the angle of the public and expeditiously complete the connection works on linking up the cycle tracks in eastern and western New Territories. I believe this initiative can considerably improve the design of cycle tracks in Hong Kong, making it convenient for the public to use the cycle tracks for commuting. I understand that the process would involve many difficulties for it would be necessary to make compromises with the residents, carry out coordination, and so on, but the difficulties are no reason for inaction by the Government. I hope the

Government can put forward more proposals for consultation with the residents. It should rise to the challenges ahead and make the utmost effort to forge a consensus.

On the other hand, speaking of bicycles, the problem of parking spaces will naturally come into the picture. Parking spaces are insufficient not only for motor cars but also for bicycles. The Government has said before that the provision of parking spaces is a means to control vehicular growth and this is certainly a measure targeting ordinary vehicles. But regrettably, we have also seen inadequate parking spaces for bicycles. Does the Government also plan to use the number of bicycle parking spaces to control the growth of bicycles? While bicycle parking spaces are provided at many public transport interchanges, we can see that these parking spaces are always fully occupied.

The New Territories aside, the outlying islands also face a persistent shortage of bicycle parking spaces. I have a picture with me here—the Secretary may have to take a look at it—it shows the bicycle parking spaces at the Cheung Chau pier. These places with white lines painted around them are reserved for bicycle parking but we can already see double parking or even triple parking at these places. Members who have been to the Cheung Chau pier will know. The road surface there is just this wide, and more than half of the place is taken up by bicycles parked there. This phenomenon constitutes a serious problem for this road is used by fire engines and ambulances.

Over the years, I have always hoped that the Government can develop various types of bicycle parking spaces, such as double-decked bicycle parking spaces, or even adopting the design of underground bicycle park in foreign countries (such as Japan). But the Government seems to have given no response over the years. I remember that I made this request four years ago but four years down the line, today's Cheung Chau is the same Cheung Chau in the old days as bicycle parking spaces remain inadequate. I wonder if the Government has not given due weight to bicycle parking spaces, or does it think that residents on Cheung Chau can travel by car? As we all know, there is no car running on Cheung Chau as a means of transport for the residents and the residents can only rely on bicycles. This phenomenon is not unique to Cheung Chau, for this is also the case of other places in the Islands District.

The problem of bicycle parking spaces on the outlying islands has pointed to the Government's consistent dismissal of bicycles as a mode of transport. Apart from parking spaces for private cars, I also hope that the Government will include bicycle parking spaces as a necessary feature in the design of new housing estates in future. To this end, I hope the Government can prescribe in the conditions of land sale and the Deed of Mutual Covenant ("DMC") the supply of bicycle parking spaces, so that bicycle users can have a place to park their bicycles. In my case, for instance, I have a bicycle but I have to keep it at home because there is no parking space downstairs of my home. Even if I place the bicycle at the back of the parking space, it would have to be removed for breach of the DMC because a parking space is for parking cars only, not for parking bicycles. Given a gradual increase in the use of bicycles by the public, I hope the Government can ameliorate this problem.

There is no denying that space is quite cramped in Hong Kong and there will be certain difficulties in riding a bicycle on urban roads. The Government often says that it does not encourage the use of bicycles as a mode of transport by the public on the ground of road safety. It is dangerous to ride a bicycle in the urban areas, but is this the reason for the Government's refusal to develop cycle track networks or the result of the Government's refusal to develop cycle track networks?

(THE PRESIDENT' DEPUTY, MS STARRY LEE, took the Chair)

In recent years, since more and more people are using bicycles as a mode of transport and given a shortage of cycle tracks in the urban areas, members of the public often have to cycle on busy roads and therefore, accidents involving bicycles have increased year after year. The public are exposed to dangers not because the cars passing by are running at high speed but because the Government has basically turned a blind eye to this phenomenon. In respect of urban planning, the Government has only carried out publicity with slogans being chanted, vowing to take forward the development of cycling. But is there a chance to really review the adequacy of the matching support and facilities for cycle track networks? Given such narrow road surface in the urban areas, is there a chance to provide in some districts, on a pilot basis, "bicycles only" lanes

for the public on roads, so as to ensure safety while enabling tests to be conducted? I have not seen any similar pilot scheme carried out by the Government so far, and I hope the Government can explore this issue in future to see if it can identify some roads suitable for implementing such a scheme.

Meanwhile, in such new development areas as Hung Shui Kiu and Yuen Long South, and also in the new harbourfront development projects, I hope the Government can earmark suitable places for the development of cycle track networks and provision of comprehensive ancillary facilities for cycling. But in providing these facilities, bicycles should not be taken as serving recreational purposes. Rather, they should be considered as a mode of transport.

Moreover, we hope that the Government will protect not only the safety of cyclists but also the safety of other modes of transport. To this end, we hope that the Government can iron out the conflicts between them. Besides, regarding the various requirements in the urban areas, can the Government do a little bit more? For instance, in respect of public transport, is it possible to allow the public to bring along a bicycle without having to remove the wheels when travelling on MTR? Or is it possible to allow the public to alight a bus without having to fold up a bicycle? In other places there are facilities for passengers to place their bicycles. In Taiwan, for example, racks are provided in the front cabin of some buses for passengers to place their bicycles. Although these facilities seem to be just trivial, they appear to be quite heart-warming to the people.

In recent years, bicycle-sharing services have faced many difficulties and much controversy has also been aroused in society. The Government is duty-bound to encourage and assist bicycle hiring services in different operation modes in order for these services to develop in an environment with a level playing field while keeping abreast of the times. In the meantime, as motor-driven bicycles or scooters are gaining popularity, we hope that the Government can consider in a timely manner bringing them into the ambit of regulation.

Today, we support a bicycle-friendly environment and therefore, we hope that the Government can progress with the times. Deputy President, I so submit.

DR YIU CHUNG-YIM (in Cantonese): Deputy President, first of all, I rise to speak in support of the motion proposed by Mr HUI Chi-fung today relating to the bicycle-friendly policy. My amendment is very simple. It mainly adds the request for providing cycle lanes in the urban areas in order to effectively promote bicycles as a mode of transport, since there is little mention in the original motion as well as the amendments of other Honourable colleagues about providing cycle lanes in the urban areas so that bicycles can serve as a means of travelling more safely and effectively.

In retrospect, we find that all along, the Government has merely defined bicycles as a means of leisure rather than a mode of transport in accordance with the consultancy report in 2009. In general, it will only consider building cycle tracks in new development areas and will not consider building them in the urban areas under the existing planning standards of the Government. As we can see, the core reason is that the Government has formulated standards for cycle tracks and then applied these standards to the urban areas, saying that the existing road space in the urban areas is not sufficient, and for this reason, it is unable to provide cycle tracks in the urban areas.

However, let us take a look at the world. Actually no big cities around the world will use this kind of cycle tracks as facilities for commuting by bicycles in the urban areas. Take the width of a cycle track as an example. We all understand that if we request the provision of cycle tracks which are wide enough, there will certainly be insufficient space especially in the old downtown areas. Today I just wish to emphasize the difference between cycle tracks and cycle lanes. All the major cities in the world generally adopt the standards for cycle lanes rather than those adopted by the Hong Kong Government for cycle tracks in promoting the bicycle-friendly policy and the policy of using bicycles as a mode of transport downtown.

As a matter of fact, I have personal experience. In the past six months, we have held the "Dawn Ride" and tried 10-odd times to commute by bicycles in the early morning in Island North, be it from East to West or from West to East. The event received very good responses. Going to work by bicycle is both feasible and safe. It will not cause any nuisance to other drivers on road. Neither is there the question of insufficient road space which has all along been used by the Government as an excuse. More importantly, we have seen a high degree of public participation which precisely reflects that there is an actual demand for the provision of cycle lanes in the urban areas, and it is also practicable.

A group of young professionals are preparing a proposal for cycle lanes on Island North based on the routes of the "Dawn Ride". It contains empirical data as well as outcomes of analyses. It will be openly submitted to the government departments later. I hope the Government will give our proposal thorough consideration.

Here I would like to talk about the difference between cycle tracks and cycle lanes. This point is very important. Regarding the cycle tracks currently provided by the Government in the new development areas, the requirement on their width is very stringent and the construction cost is also very high, frequently amounting to tens of millions of dollars. The reason is that all the tracks have to be paved with plastic mats, and plastic bollards have to be erected at every entrance or exit to force cyclists to lower their speed. Just now various Members already raised the problem with the design of such fragmented cycle tracks. I am not going to repeat it here. As we can see, the design of this kind of cycle tracks, given the problem of standards, has resulted in exorbitant costs. It is neither safe nor convenient for use. It even offers the excuse that there is a lack of space for the provision of cycle tracks in the urban areas because such standards have been set for cycle tracks.

As a matter of fact, the big cities around the world will only designate cycle lanes downtown by drawing white lines on the roads and then adding a symbol for bicycles. Be it on the pavements or on the roads, actually we only need to adopt such a simple method to designate lanes for exclusive use by bicycles with almost no cost. It is safe and can make bicycles more popular, thereby implementing a bicycle-friendly policy.

In the remaining time, I would like to introduce to Members the situations in various parts of the world, including the following places which we have visited: Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Berlin, Germany; Taipei, Taiwan; and London, the United Kingdom. I believe that if Members should care to casually browse the Internet, they will see that unlike the Hong Kong Government which uses cycle tracks, the bicycle-friendly policy in major European and American cities uses cycle lanes as designated sections for use by bicycles. Hence, the Hong Kong Government should really not confine itself and stick to the rut. Instead, it should follow the world trend and proactively promote the design of a bicycle-friendly city in the urban areas rather than limiting it to the New Territories or new development areas.

The provision of cycle lanes in the urban areas is more cost-effective than designating cycle tracks in the rural areas or new development areas. We all agree that serving as a mode of transport, bicycles can both reduce carbon emission and ameliorate such problems as roadside air pollution, traffic congestion, shortage of parking spaces, etc. which urgently need improvement. These problems are most serious in the city centre. The city centre is the place with the most pressing need for improvement in air pollution, traffic congestion and shortage of parking spaces. It is also the place where most people go to work and attend school. For this reason, if we wish to promote a bicycle-friendly policy and use bicycles as a mode of transport, there is no reason to evade providing bicycle-friendly facilities in the city centre.

In the past, the Government kept saying that it was impossible to do so. It is because the specifications of cycle tracks have caused a lack of space. If we take a look at the big cities around the world, we will find that this is actually not a problem. It can be solved simply by using cycle lanes.

Here let me cite a few important reports, including the report written by the European Cyclists' Federation in 2016 and "Cycling Strategy for Berlin" submitted by the Berlin Government. Amsterdam and London, the United Kingdom have also respectively pointed out the cost-effectiveness of providing cycle lanes in the city centre. I suggest that the Government draw reference from them.

In closing, I would like to tell Members that last month, the Legislative Council passed the motion proposed by me on requesting the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") to allow passengers to travel on MTR with bicycles without removing the wheels. In the meanwhile, I am also arranging for a meeting with MTRCL and the Government. I hope MTRCL can provide more friendly measures for interchange. *(The buzzer sounded)* Thank you.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Dr YIU Chung-yim, your speaking time is up.

MR CHARLES PETER MOK (in Cantonese): Deputy President, many years have passed since the proposal to develop Hong Kong into a smart city was mooted. The authorities have done many consultancy study reports one after another, but they have not commenced any concrete work. While the progress

has been very slow, various aspects have also been criticized for lagging behind. Of course, what lags the farthest behind are many obsolete ordinances and systems as they have not been kept abreast of the times.

One major objective of the Government's transport policy is to reduce the number of cars and vehicles on roads, as always emphasized by the Transport Department ("TD") and the Transport and Housing Bureau. But apart from enhancing the development and promotion of public transport, cycling is actually another integral element. But the Government has all along failed to take serious actions to promote cycling. For example, the Government already proposed in 2008 to construct a super cycle track cutting through Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun, Sheung Shui, Tai Wai and Sai Kung. But people will ask today, "Where is this super cycle track?" After the passage of nine years, LEUNG Chun-ying raked over the ashes when delivering the Policy Address in January this year, saying that the Government would connect the existing cycle tracks scattering in the New Territories and build an 82 km-long super cycle track connecting New Territories East and New Territories West. Actually, it will be impossible to complete this super cycle track within his tenure. He mentioned this project again which was raised 10 years ago out of the mere intention of claiming credit in the future. In any case, the problem is that all such works projects have turned into empty talk. In the case of the cycle track from Tsuen Wan to Tuen Mun, for example, its construction should have commenced in 2011 and completed in 2014. But the works project has been delayed, without any signs of works commencement whatsoever at present. I have even heard of the possible shelving of the project.

In February this year, I held a seminar with the topic "Towards a smart city and a green transport system" and invited speakers from various industries to share their views on green transport. When we talk about green transport, we must mention bicycles. One of the speakers was Prof Sylvia HE, Assistant Professor from the Department of Geography and Resource Management at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Specialized in the relationship between data and transport systems, she told me that she could obtain many data on the Mainland, but in Hong Kong, she could not get anything. Besides, she said that Hong Kong had done a good job in drawing up planning for many transport facilities, but in the case of cycling facilities, the relevant planning was most unsatisfactory. In her view, the Government should include modes of transport other than motor vehicles as a factor for consideration when drawing up planning.

The Government's pace of opening up data is slow. The industry certainly hopes that the Government can provide more open data on transport and transportation, whether such data are owned by the Government itself or private organizations. But during our discussion on this matter at a previous Council meeting, the public officer concerned said that the relevant data were private property, adding that if the data were owned by private organizations such as bus companies—I had not even mentioned to them the data owned by the MTR Corporation Limited—they would refuse to open up any such data. Actually, the Government has in its possession voluminous data, only that it has not put them to proper use. For example, data on vehicular flows of harbour crossings and even tunnels between Kowloon and the New Territories are actually valuable reference. Of course, this is not relevant to a cycling policy now under discussion. So, I have proposed in item (13) of my amendment, "designing suitable cycling routes based on the planning of a smart city through the effective use of data, so as to enhance traffic benefits". Certainly, this should not be confined to cycling only. But since we are discussing a cycling policy today, I wish to mention particularly how cycling-related data can help us.

Let me talk about the experience of Chicago, a city in Middle America, as an example. Its local transportation department has opened up the non-personal information of users collected from a bicycle rental system (including such data as pick-up and return locations, and the time of rental) to the public and program developers for use. People in Chicago use such open data relating to cycling to develop over 100 applications equipped with such functions as comparing the point-to-point travelling time by cycling and the travelling time by public transport, so as to enable people to choose a more expedient mode of transport based on real time information and know the mode of transport which best suits their needs at that particular juncture. This helps its government to improve the traffic condition overall.

Deputy President, I support item (8) in the original motion, which reads, "exploring the legalization of motor-driven bicycles". Actually, apart from motor-driven bicycles, other alternative transportation devices of small sizes should also be included, such as motor-driven unicycles and motor-driven skateboards. In some places, such alternative transportation devices are given a name—personal mobile devices. Of course, it does not refer to our mobile phones. Rather ... Sorry, the name should be "personal mobility devices" ("PMDs"). People may use such motor-driven transportation devices for feeder transport to connect to various public transport interchanges.

In December 2015, I asked a question about how the authorities would deal with those alternative transportation devices emerging on the market (such as mini-motorcycles, motor-driven bicycles, motor-driven skateboards, electric unicycles, and so on). I have found that all vehicles must be registered with TD and given a licence in accordance with the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374). But how should these transportation devices be categorized?

I got to know a youngster called YIM Shing-yik at the Hong Kong Science Park ("the Science Park"). He developed a motor-driven skateboard, and his idea was founded on his analysis of enormous data. He found that if the use of similar motor-driven transportation devices was to be included in a public transport system, the last leg of a whole journey could be extended, and this in effect could obviate the need for setting up so many midway stops or railway stations and encourage more people to travel by public transport. He held many meetings with TD, and each meeting spanned as long as several hours. Nevertheless, no conclusion could be reached. TD asserted that his product was unlawful. Subsequently, Mr YIM asked TD about the types of licences he should obtain from TD, given the latter's assertion that his product was unlawful. But TD replied that at present, no relevant licence was available. In that case, what should he do? This is another example showing that the Government is unwilling rather than unable to take any action.

While the Government claims that it supports the research and development ("R&D") initiatives at the Science Park, I have nonetheless realized that developers can only market their products overseas, such as the Mainland and overseas countries. They cannot do so in Hong Kong. That being the case, why should the Government encourage them to embark on their R&D projects? These are the problems faced by Hong Kong in innovation and technology development, ones which have led to stagnancy in Hong Kong and saddened many people and entrepreneurs in the industry.

In reply to my written question at the time, the Government stated that since the use of PMDs on pavements might pose high risks to other users and pedestrians, such devices were not suitable for use on pavements. This reply from the Government shows that it does not want to do anything, enact legislation or impose regulation. As a result, it can spare tremendous efforts. This already goes beyond the popular perception that the Government wants to avoid mistakes

by doing less. Rather, it does not want to do anything at all. This is certainly most desirable to the Government.

But what is the reality? Why can other places achieve success? Why does Hong Kong fail to achieve anything? Today, I wish to cite Singapore as an example. In Singapore, the use of PMDs is allowed. Not only has Singapore enacted legislation for carpooling—I wonder why Singapore's transportation department can do so many things and permit the use of various types of PMDs, in contrast to Hong Kong where the use of all such devices is forbidden and unlawful—but they have also laid down the definitions of "bicycles" and "PMDs" (meaning mobility devices whereby users may go to different places), including personal mobility aids such as motor-driven wheelchairs. All these are transportation devices which needy people will actually use. Another example is motor-driven bicycles, the use of which will be permitted after the user is granted a licence. Such PMDs are already clearly categorized with guidelines to enable people to know what PMDs are permitted on pavements, what PMDs are permitted on cycle tracks and shared-use tracks, and what PMDs are permitted on carriageways. True, the use of motor-driven wheelchairs and motor-driven skateboards is forbidden on carriageways; but then bicycles and motor-driven bicycles are permitted. Singapore has even formulated clear user guidelines and proposed the Active Mobility Act in early 2017 to regulate various types of PMDs and their speed limits on various carriageways and tracks and even set out the penalties for non-compliance.

Deputy President, all the various examples in Singapore can serve as reference for the authorities and reflect that the relevant practices can be implemented. The point is only that the Hong Kong Government refuses to implement them. Speaking of regulating small-sized PMDs, the Government is unwilling rather than unable to do anything. We hope that the Government can impose regulation on PMDs. But the Government should not say that the use of PMDs is unlawful due to an absence of regulation and some people are using them illegally. Actually, the point is a mere refusal by the Government to carry out the legitimate task of imposing regulation within its ambit.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I hope Members can support the amendment proposed by me and the original motion.

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I thank Mr HUI Chi-fung for proposing the motion on bicycle-friendly policy and Mr LUK Chung-hung, Mr CHAN Han-pan, Dr YIU Chung-yim and Mr Charles Peter MOK for proposing the amendments.

In these opening remarks, I will give a brief account of the Government's bicycle-friendly policy.

The transport policy in Hong Kong has all along been underpinned by public transport and over 90% of the passenger trips (that is, around 12 million passenger trips) are made through public transport services each day, which is the highest rate among the major cities in the world. Apart from encouraging the public to use public transport, the Government strives to promote "green commuting" to further reduce the carbon emissions produced by transport and traffic and to combat climate change. Both cycling and walking are ideal for short-distance and low-carbon commuting which provide "first mile" and "last mile" connections and reduce the need for members of the public to take mechanized transport where conditions permit, and these commuting methods are more beneficial to health too. Therefore, we agree with the need to foster a walkable and bicycle-friendly environment.

The incumbent Government has clearly positioned cycling as a short-distance transport mode. On several previous occasions (including the briefing on Policy Address at the meeting of the Panel on Transport in January 2014 and the written reply to the question of a Legislative Council Member in January last year), I have clearly explained that bicycles have long since been regarded as a green mode of transport by the Government rather than for recreational purposes only. In this regard, we share the same goal with a number of Members who spoke earlier.

At present, the Government endeavours to foster a bicycle-friendly environment in new towns and new development areas given that the cycle track networks in these areas are more comprehensive, and therefore the use of bicycles as a transport mode will be more suitable there. In the urban areas, the situation is more complicated as road traffic is usually very heavy with narrow and crowded roads, and there are numerous bus and minibus routes with frequent on-street loading and unloading activities of goods and passengers that many vehicles pass by and need to stop by the roadside temporarily. Taking Shanghai Street in Kowloon as an example, there are seven bus stops and 11 bus routes in

total travelling along this road section with 690 bus trips passing by every day, which serve around 40 000 passengers. There are also the needs for other public transport (such as taxis and minibuses) and commercial vehicles to load and unload goods and passengers.

On the premise of ensuring road safety, the Government has all along adopted a prudent approach and it is true that we currently do not encourage the public to use bicycles as a mode of commuting on busy roads in the urban areas. As for the question of whether there is any potential for widening some of the roads in the urban areas, we need to examine the actual situation in a practical manner instead of merely relying on our feelings.

(THE PRESIDENT resumed the Chair)

Statistics show that most of the fatal or serious traffic accidents involving bicycles occurred on carriageways. In the past five years, the average number of fatal or serious traffic accidents involving bicycles which occurred on carriageways across the territory was 255 each year.

Under the aforementioned bicycle-friendly policy, various Policy Bureaux and departments are implementing complementary measures within their respective purviews. For example, the Development Bureau carries out comprehensive planning on cycle track networks in new development areas and takes forward the works projects for cycle track networks in the New Territories; and the Transport and Housing Bureau has been actively promoting cycling for short-distance commuting in new towns. At present, the total length of cycle tracks in Hong Kong is 223 km, connecting the major areas of new towns in the New Territories such as Sha Tin, Tai Po, Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun.

To further expand cycle track networks, the Development Bureau and its Civil Engineering and Development Department are carrying out the works of the cycle track network in the New Territories in phases, the main sections of which measure over 80 km, and it includes the Ma On Shan to Tuen Mun section and the Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan section. Among them, the Ma On Shan to Sheung Shui section and the Tuen Mun to Yuen Long section have been completed.

Furthermore, cycle track networks with comprehensive facilities will be provided in the new development areas in the New Territories (such as Hung Shui Kiu and Yuen Long South which are under planning) to facilitate commuting by bicycles within the districts and foster a green community. In the urban areas, the Government will also consider introducing cycle track networks during the planning of some projects with potential. For instance, the Government has planned to construct a cycle track of about 13 km in the new development area at the former Kai Tak Airport, and will study the extension of the cycle track to the MTR station of the Shatin to Central Link which is now under construction. Moreover, as for the proposed boardwalk of about 2 km underneath the Island Eastern Corridor from Oil Street in North Point to Hoi Yu Street in Quarry Bay, there are suggestions that a cycle track, cycle renting kiosks, bicycle parking facilities, etc. should be provided on the boardwalk. The Government is currently consulting the relevant stakeholders in this regard.

Some Members suggested that as it is difficult to identify sites for constructing cycle tracks in the urban areas, will the Government consider providing "bicycles only" lanes or "inclusive traffic" lanes on non-major trunk roads of the urban areas; and it is also suggested that cycling on pavements with spacious area should be permitted. Yet, it should be noted that the maximum speed of bicycles can reach 20 kph to 30 kph, which is much faster than the walking speed of pedestrians (that is, 3 kph to 4 kph). If cyclists are allowed to use pavements together with pedestrians, it will definitely pose safety risks, especially to the elderly and children on the pavements. From the perspective of road safety, as the speeds of bicycles, pedestrians and motor vehicles differ, it is neither ideal nor proper for them to share the use of roads. The Government considers it safer to provide cycle tracks for the use of bicycles which are segregated from pavements and carriageways. Therefore, road safety should also be taken into consideration when we promote cycling for short-distance commute and foster a bicycle-friendly environment.

Apart from developing cycle track networks, the Government also endeavoured to enhance the ancillary facilities for cycling in recent years. With regard to the bicycle facilities in the existing nine new towns (that is, Sha Tin/Ma On Shan, Tai Po, Sheung Shui/Fanling, Yuen Long, Tin Shui Wai, Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan, Tung Chung and Tseung Kwan O), the Transport Department ("TD") commissioned a consultant in 2013 to study improvement measures and the study concerned was basically completed. The consultant identified and proposed improvement to around 900 locations and the improvement measures concerned

include providing more public bicycle parking spaces and providing additional safety facilities at some sharp bends, steep ramps and pedestrian crossings (including the installation of collapsible plastic bollards for segregating two-way cycle track as mentioned by some Members earlier) in order to ensure the safety of cyclists and pedestrians. The first round of improvement works involving around 100 locations commenced in phases last year and it is hoped that the works will be completed within two years. As for the remaining 800-odd locations which are identified as requiring improvement, the relevant measures will also be implemented in light of the availability of resources and works procedures which may be more complicated.

Regarding the management of cycle tracks and bicycle facilities, the Highways Department ("HyD") conducts regular inspections and carries out maintenance works of various scales. Such inspections are conducted approximately once every one to three months, depending on the location and traffic flow of cycle tracks. Moreover, HyD conducts detailed inspections of cycle tracks once every six months to check the surface and structural conditions of the cycle tracks so as to facilitate the planning for maintenance works. In terms of the design of bicycle facilities, the Government has also taken into account the needs of cyclists. For example, the use of longitudinal bars as openings is avoided in the existing design of gully gratings so as to prevent the bicycles of cyclists from getting stuck between the bars of gully gratings when passing by and causing injuries as a result. In strict accordance with the requirements of the legislation, TD has erected the relevant traffic signs on cycle tracks and will review the design of these signs from time to time so as to ensure that cyclists are provided with clear instruction.

President, as pointed out by some Members earlier, providing an appropriate amount of bicycle parking spaces is an important ancillary measure for fostering a bicycle-friendly environment. According to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines ("HKPSG"), in general, cycle parking shall be provided in major residential developments, public transport interchanges, rail stations, Government, Institution and Community facilities, etc. With regard to residential developments, bicycle parking spaces shall be provided in the residential developments where cycle tracks with direct connection to rail stations are accessible. The number of parking spaces provided depends on the distance between the residential developments and rail stations: if the distance is less than 2 km, one bicycle parking space should be provided for every 15 flats; if the

distance is longer than 2 km, one bicycle parking space should be provided for every 30 flats in this category.

Furthermore, depending on the actual needs of individual districts, TD will recommend a level of provision of bicycle parking spaces higher than the standard specified in HKPSG. For instance, individual residential developments in Pak Shek Kok and Ma On Shan have adopted the standard of providing one bicycle parking space for every 10 flats. If the rail stations are connected to cycle tracks, a designated cycle parking area shall be provided at the rail stations at a rate of at least 30 bicycle parking spaces per 10 000 population within a distance of 2 km from the rail station.

At present, there are over 57 000 free public bicycle parking spaces across the territory. Among the 900 locations which require improvement as recommended in the consultancy study on cycle track networks in new towns conducted by TD, 290 of them are new locations for providing bicycle parking spaces which will provide around 7 000 extra bicycle parking spaces in total.

In addition to providing conventional bicycle parking spaces, TD is also updating the Transport Planning and Design Manual to include new bicycle racks (such as the designs of "double-deck parking system" and "1-up-1-down parking rack") as standard designs. TD will also, having regard to the actual circumstances of individual districts, consider the installation of these new bicycle parking racks at suitable locations so as to provide more bicycle parking spaces.

While enhancing the hardware facilities of cycling, the Government has been implementing other bicycle-friendly ancillary measures. With regard to the carriage of bicycles when travelling on public transport, the Government encourages public transport operators to allow the carriage of bicycles on board on the condition that safety and passenger convenience would not be compromised. At present, passengers of franchised buses are allowed to bring bicycles which are properly folded and placed in bags as long as the placing of bicycles will not cause danger to other passengers or occupy any seat; the MTR Corporation Limited also allows passengers to bring a folded bicycle or a bicycle with a wheel removed. In response to the views of stakeholders, it is also reviewing the relevant arrangements on the premise that the safe and smooth operation of railways will not be affected, with a view to giving full consideration to their opinions.

President, it is also important to raise the safety awareness of cyclists and other road users with regard to using bicycles as a mode of transport. The Government has all along joined hands with the Road Safety Council in strengthening publicity and education as well as organizing different activities to enhance the safety awareness of the public in respect of cycling and to remind motorists and cyclists that they should give way to one another so as to avoid traffic accidents. Moreover, TD provides the public with information related to cycling on the one-stop information platform, Cycling Information Centre, such as the location of major cycling facilities and the relevant legislation.

As a result of technological development, there are some new categories of bicycles in society in recent years, such as pedelecs as mentioned by some Members earlier. According to the existing Road Traffic Ordinance, pedelecs fall within the category of "motor vehicle" which must be registered with and licensed by TD. Yet, as the design of the existing pedelecs often fails to meet the safety and performance standards of "motor vehicle", they cannot be registered or licensed. Nonetheless, we understand that cyclists find it more convenient to use pedelecs and, therefore, TD is actively exploring the possibility of legalization of pedelecs. However, it may be necessary to restrict the maximum speed of the auxiliary power of pedelecs in order to ensure the safety of road users.

The various types of automated bicycle rental service which are available in the Mainland and other cities are another popular approach of cycling in recent years. As pointed out by the Chief Executive in this year's Policy Address, the Government is studying how to assist organizations in operating self-financing community bicycle rental services on a non-profit-making basis for providing first- and last-mile short-distance connection. At present, it is not necessary to obtain a licence for operating bicycle rental services. In recent months, a private company launched an automated bicycle rental service but it has caused controversies over the occupation of public bicycle parking spaces, using public resources for profit-making activities, etc. in certain districts. The Government takes the view that the aforementioned services must comply with the legislation, including the ordinances concerning illegal parking of bicycles. Government departments will tackle the problem of illegal bicycle parking in accordance with the established practice, irrespective of whether the illegally parked bicycles are conventional and non-automated rental bicycles, automated rental bicycles or privately owned bicycles. The Government will keep a close eye on the relevant situation and will consider imposing regulation and implementing other corresponding measures as and when necessary.

President, the Government agrees that it is necessary to foster a bicycle-friendly environment but its implementation should be conducted in a steady and gradual manner with regard to the conditions of the actual environment. Hong Kong is a small city with a dense population, heavy traffic and substantial commercial and economic activities. It is an important challenge for the Government to cater for the needs of over 7 million people for their daily commute to work and school, entertainment, etc. while also meeting the needs of the logistic and economic activities of the freight industry, and we need to seek a reasonable and diversified layout. The Government will, having regard to the actual situations including social and geographical factors, road conditions and safety concerns as well as looking after the needs of different road users, continue our endeavours to foster a bicycle-friendly environment. Our existing strategies may still have room for improvement and our efforts may require further enhancement. We are prepared to listen to the views of various sectors in society. Inducing changes in social customs not only involves a change in mindset but also a steady and gradual improvement in the conditions of the actual environment.

President, with regard to the proposals set out in the Member's motion and amendments, we consider that they merit consideration and follow-up. I will further respond to the suggestions and concerns of Members in my concluding remarks later on.

President, I so submit.

MR CHAN CHUN-YING (in Cantonese): President, a recent article titled "Cycling: green and efficient transport for the future" by the European Commission pointed out that cycling is not only a healthy exercise, but can also reduce carbon emissions. It is indeed a green and efficient means of transport for the future. However, in my opinion, before promoting bicycles extensively as a mode of transport, comprehensive measures such as urban planning, road design, legislative amendments and drivers education are necessary. Educating drivers on the proper driving attitude is of particular importance. Building a bicycle-friendly city relies not solely on hardware construction, it also depends on adjusting people's attitude towards cycling. Hence, my speech will focus mainly on two aspects: a proper cycling attitude and stringent enforcement.

When we mention cycling, we will immediately think of Sarah LEE, who grew up in the Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate, wearing her rainbow jersey as a world champion. Or we will think of WONG Kam Po, also known as "Asia's god of cycling" and "the prince of cycling". They have both fully demonstrated the spirit of Hong Kong. Apart from that, cycling is also an outing activity for people to do in groups on holidays. But have we considered the need of a cycling licence for using bicycles as a mode of transport? Currently, there are driving licences for private cars, goods vehicles, taxis, minibuses, buses and motor tricycles and such in Hong Kong, but a driving licence for bicycles does not exist. Similarly, there are driving instructors and driving schools in Hong Kong, but there is no cycling school giving cycling training because people generally do not consider bicycles as a formal mode of transport.

President, I would like to share the example of a country where a bicycle-friendly policy was successfully implemented—Germany. It is quite popular to use cycling as a mode of transport in Germany, and the government there imposes stringent regulations on cycling and bicycle lanes. Children under the age of 10 are required to ride on the pavements. A road test specific for children is arranged in primary schools, and only those who have passed the test are allowed to cycle on roads. Children over the age of 10 must comply with traffic rules just like adults. They will need to get a cycling licence to learn various traffic knowledge and etiquette, such as giving way to pedestrians, when they grow up. The example of Germany shows that, in order to develop a bicycle-friendly city, it is necessary to allow the public to familiarize with the idea that bicycles are a green and formal mode of transport, to turn bicycles into a safe mode of transport and to instill a proper driving attitude in the public.

President, apart from a proper driving attitude, I believe stringent enforcement is also very important. Under the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 347), reckless or careless cycling is liable to a fine of \$500; repeated conviction is liable to a fine of \$1,000 and to imprisonment for three months. However, as far as I understand it, the Police need to witness the violation by the cyclist in order to issue a penalty summons, hence, the number of prosecution against cycling offenders has been small. On the contrary, the relevant legislation in Germany is rather rigorous. For example, red light-jumping cyclists are liable to a fine of more than €100; drink cycling in Germany is liable to a fine of €6,000 and to imprisonment for one to five years; offenders must also pass a psychological test and a road test in order to become cyclists again.

President, I like cycling too, so I will definitely support formulating a bicycle-friendly policy. However, as I have just said, making reference to the overseas experience where bicycles are successfully used as a mode of transport, the predetermined objective cannot be achieved by simply increasing bicycle lanes and relevant ancillary measures from the angle of cycling enthusiasts or users as proposed in this motion. Rather, possible concerns of the public on a change in the policy on cycling should be taken into account and a consensus on road use and penalties for non-compliance should be reached, in order to really promote Hong Kong as a bicycle-friendly city.

I so submit. Thank you, President.

MR SHIU KA-CHUN (in Cantonese): President, first of all, I wish to make a reverse declaration of interest. I do not know how to cycle. Even though I do not know how to cycle, I still support this motion of "Formulating a bicycle-friendly policy and designating bicycles as a mode of transport" proposed by Mr HUI Chi-fung today, because cities all around the world have been scrambling to develop bicycles as a mode of commute and make improvement to roads. Public bicycle rental has become a new tourism trend. Therefore, even though I do not know how to cycle, I support it. I consider this most convincing support. I will elaborate my views in two parts as follows. The first part is about the concepts of slow living and bicycles. The second part is some views I collected from cyclists that I would like to take this opportunity to share with all Honourable colleagues.

Does it require changes in customs and habits for a bicycle-friendly policy to be established, or bicycles will bring changes in customs and habits? Bicycles make me think of downshifting. The late British singer John LENNON who always asked people to "Imagine" once said, "Life is what happens to you while you are busy making other plans". It is undoubtedly, under an ideology of speed, a portrayal of our life that "we live with speed and the speedier it is the more we live". In our rapid living, we have given up the slow pace, and then diseases, worries, panic, anxiety, irritation and pain come; it is not until they pose a threat to the well-being of our body, mind and soul that we will ask, "Does it really have to be so fast? Can life be a bit slower?"

In Hong Kong where competition is so fierce, we may be "challenged" that how can Hongkongers afford slowing down? The Hong Kong Government

always asks Hongkongers to add value, develop and innovate. Undoubtedly the Government is the greatest constructor of the ideology that promotes development for the sake of development. To counter the ideology of speed, fortunately we have the slow movement. Whether it is called the "slow down now)" advocacy or the "slow planet" advocated by the World Institute of Slowness, they are offshoots of the slow movement. Slow living does not refer to conducting our life in a slow pace, but teaches us to let the pace of our life slow down and approach life with a correct attitude. Slow living does not ask us to give up ourselves, sit idle or be unproductive, nor does it support slacking or procrastination. It encourages us to embrace a reasonably flexible philosophy of living so that we live in a balance.

Many European countries and the United States started promoting the slow movement 20 years ago and set up Cittaslow International. As at 2014, 29 countries and 189 cities all over the world have joined the organization, including the United Kingdom, Australia, China and Korea. The so-called "slow cities" promote a concept of slow pace in various aspects, such as culture, conservation, transport, environment, education, food, tourism and hospitality, sports and daily routine. In fact, in Chinese culture, we often hear similar expressions, such as "walk slowly", "eat slowly", "enjoy slowly", "try slowly", "do slowly", "speak slowly", etc.

Slow living does not completely overthrow the convenience and efficiency brought by high technology but reminds us to think if living can be different. And cycling is the best example of slow living. Unfortunately, the Hong Kong Government has a problematic idea about bicycles. The reason for Hong Kong's inability to converge with the international community in terms of becoming a bicycle city has a lot to do with how the Hong Kong Government looks at bicycles. Bicycles have created Hong Kong legends one after another: from HUNG Chung-yam, WONG Kam-po, Jamie WONG to Sarah LEE, Hong Kong cycling athletes of one generation after another have escalated the status of cycling in Hong Kong as a sport to the international stage. However, such honours still cannot help popularize a cycling culture in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Government has the mindset that cycling is still a matter divorced from daily life and something to look at with fear and trepidation. People have to cycle in designated areas along promenades or bicycle parks to safely enjoy the fun of cycling, let alone using bicycles as a means of commute and treating cycling as part of life.

Bicycles seem far away from us yet quite close to us. The bicycles that we see the most perhaps are those used for delivery by Hong Kong-style cafes. Even if cyclists are willing to manhandle their bicycles to designated areas on modes of public transport, non-foldable bicycles are still not welcome on board. The relevant policy is still not bicycle-friendly. For example, the Kowloon Motor Bus Co. (1933) requires cyclists to fold and properly pack their bicycles to make sure no parts stick out or are exposed before boarding; and the bicycles cannot occupy seats or obstruct passageways. The need to remove the front wheel before riding on MTR and the size of the bicycle has to meet the MTR Corporation Limited's requirements. As regards minibuses, it is out of the question.

To the Government, bicycles are not for riding, but piggybacking. Bicycles are piggybacked on after some medals are won in the sports arena, but in daily life, they are "secondary citizens". The urban planning of Hong Kong has not taken bicycles into account. While the Government only chants slogans such as a bicycle-friendly policy, no consideration has been given to corresponding measures and ancillary facilities. It is the unfriendly truth.

As regards bicycle-sharing, it is badly needed by residents to commute between stations and housing estates. The charge of shared bicycles should be paid with Octopus Cards, so as to give convenience to residents, instead of inconveniently on credit cards as what Gobe.ebike currently requires. At present, the charge of shared bicycles is \$5 per hour, but it costs only \$4.8 to travel 12 stations on the Light Rail. Currently there are no regular parking spaces for shared bicycles, giving rise to indiscriminate parking of shared bicycles and occupation of space. The shortage of parking spaces is the same in Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories. The problem is twofold: first, there is no planning; second, parking spaces are occupied by bicycles; note that they are occupied but not parked by bicycles, because many bicycles have parts removed (*The buzzer sounded*) ...

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr SHIU Ka-chun, please stop speaking immediately.

MR POON SIU-PING (in Cantonese): President, it is indisputable that the Government offers little to write home about in terms of its policy on bicycles. Measures on bicycles implemented by the Government can hardly cater for the practical needs of the public. Besides, the implementation of these measures is fraught with problems.

As early as 2008, the Development Bureau already announced the construction of a bicycle network connecting New Territories East and New Territories West. Yet, to date, the works project has not yet completed. Worse still, the completed sections are subject to criticisms. The maladministration of the authorities in planning cycle track networks reflects a more serious problem of the Government never regarding bicycles as a mode of transport.

According to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines of the Planning Department, cycling is a recreational activity. The overall transport policy of the Government is confined by this antiquated mindset. Last year, the Government published a series of documents under the title "Hong Kong 2030+" to provide directions on strategic planning beyond 2030. The topical report on transport infrastructure and traffic includes a few major points, which include the continued use of railways as the backbone of mass transit, the curbing of private vehicles' growth and the alleviation of traffic network overload by continued expansion of railways and road networks in the territory. These proposals simply follow the established policies adopted in the past few decades, failing to provide a forward-looking vision on transport policy for Hong Kong.

I agree that load diversion is required for the traffic networks in Hong Kong. In the past 20 years, the Government has advocated railways as the backbone of transport services and suppressed the growth of private vehicles. Yet the effectiveness of this policy direction is limited. It has not only aggravated traffic congestion but also caused the railway network to run beyond its passenger capacity. According to the figures announced by the MTR Corporation Limited last year, with four persons standing per square metre, the West Rail Line and Tsuen Wan Line were overcrowded during morning peak hours at over 100% loading rate, whereas the loading rate of certain lines also exceeded 90%. The transport strategy of relying on railways as the backbone of transport services is overloaded. Hence, apart from attaching importance to railways, the Government must rethink its overall transport strategy and include a policy on cycling in considering the overall transport policy.

Government officials from the Transport and Housing Bureau have all along adopted a passive attitude towards cyclists. They have pointed out repeatedly on various occasions that road traffic in Hong Kong is busy and thus it is inappropriate to designate bicycle-only lanes in the urban areas, and that encouraging the public to ride bicycles will increase the risk of accidents. Their remarks are trying to present drivers and cyclists as two opposing groups.

Evidence has long since been available that a bicycle-friendly policy will bring positive impact to road traffic. Last year, academics in Europe assessed the bicycle policies in 20 cities in Europe and the United States. Findings show that suitable matching measures for bicycles, including bicycle-only lanes with protection facilities and bicycle-sharing may encourage the public to change their mode of transport, achieving the objective of alleviating traffic congestion. In Manhattan of New York City, the building of bicycle-only lanes started in 2010 and it has shortened the journey time for nearby road sections by one third. In Cambridge of the United Kingdom, the redevelopment of similar facilities in 2014 has lowered the traffic flow in the vicinity. According to other similar studies, the designation of bicycle-only lanes, whether or not protection facilities are installed, will make it easier for drivers to notice cyclists on the roads and thus ensure the safety of cyclists.

In fact, as traffic in the urban areas is reaching full capacity, it seems necessary for the Government to put forth alternatives for the public to commute in the urban areas. According to the results of the 2016 Population By-census of the Census and Statistics Department, working across districts is less prominent among residents of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon district than those in the New Territories. With suitable matching policies, bicycles are a low-cost mode of transport for short-haul journeys, which can be developed into an ideal alternative to railways and other road transport for urban residents. In the motion debate today, many Members have proposed cyclist-friendly initiatives. I suggest the Government to consider designating bicycle-only lanes on roads in the urban areas during holidays, as it does currently for pedestrian zones, as a pilot scheme to encourage the public to use bicycles.

President, apart from hardware development like cycle tracks, there is rapid advancement in bicycle-related technology amid overall technology development. Take civil bicycles as an example. The emergence of pedelecs is a typical example. The power of the battery is not large, yet it can lower the physical strength requirement on cyclists, which is greatly favourable to the development

of cycling. This is another blind spot of the transport policies of the Government. I hope the Government will adopt a positive attitude towards cycling in the future and include bicycles in its overall transport planning.

President, I so submit.

MR MA FUNG-KWOK (in Cantonese): President, the motion today seeks to urge the Government to designate bicycles as a mode of transport and formulate related complementary policies. Nowadays, it is already a new trend for many major cities in the world, such as Beijing and Taiwan, to make great efforts in promoting the replacement of private vehicles and other public modes of transport with bicycles as a means of connection transport. To encourage the public to commute by bicycles is not only environmentally-friendly, but it can also reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality while reducing the flow of private vehicles to ease traffic congestion. It can be said that this idea is very worthwhile to promote.

The original motion and the several amendments seek to express views from different angles on formulating a bicycle-friendly policy and designating bicycles as a mode of transport. These proposals, if implemented, are certainly most ideal. The question is: Does Hong Kong have the objective conditions to promote designating bicycles as a mode of transport? In considering this question, we should understand the objective restraints of implementing this policy before examining how the problems can be resolved.

Firstly, Hong Kong is small but densely populated, with very narrow streets. If "bicycles only" lanes were to be provided, the existing carriageways and pavements would have to be narrowed, which appears to be infeasible. If ordinary vehicles and bicycles are allowed to share a traffic lane, it means that ordinary vehicles will have to slow down and speed limit measures will have to be implemented as well, or else dangerous situations will arise. It is also unrealistic to expect the existing roads to make way for road-widening.

Secondly, insofar as the bicycle parking problem is concerned, there are approximately 57 700 public bicycle parking spaces in Hong Kong, but they are mainly concentrated in the New Territories, with less than 400 parking spaces situated on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon. Moreover, less than 20 of these parking spaces are situated in the Southern, Wan Chai and Kwai Tsing Districts,

and none in the Kwun Tong and Wong Tai Sin Districts. The situation is most unsatisfactory. If bicycles are to be designated as a mode of transport, the number of bicycle parking spaces must be increased significantly to cope with the needs, especially on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon. Nevertheless, owing to limited land supply, there are inadequate parking spaces, including those for private vehicles, in the urban areas. Can we make some members of the public quit their habit of commuting by car and make way for bicycle parking instead? This problem cannot be resolved easily. It is not at all easy to identify a large vacant land lot or provide additional bicycle parking spaces on narrow streets, is it?

Thirdly, both the original motion and the amendments mention enhancing the urban cycle networks. In fact, after completing the final report on cycling study and analysing the development of local cycle track networks, the Government has made it clear that, due to the safety conditions and unsatisfactory foundation, it does not have plans to designate priority lanes for bicycles in the urban areas. In reply to a question raised in the Legislative Council early this year, the Administration reiterated that members of the public were discouraged to regard bicycles as a mode of transport in the urban areas and indicated that the Government's policy was to promote the use of bicycles as a mode for short-distance commute in the Kai Tak Development Area, for instance. As for the urban areas, consideration will only be given to the feasibility of designating cycle tracks at the waterfront promenade and in Central, Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Area.

In fact, President, under the current urban planning, it is extremely difficult to develop cycle track networks. Judging from the redevelopment projects undertaken by the Urban Renewal Authority in the past, even if redevelopment projects are carried out, high costs will be incurred with little profits made. Moreover, not many large-scale programmes will be carried out. The possibility of relying on urban redevelopment to reserve room for the construction of cycle track networks and relevant ancillary facilities is not high.

President, I have no intention to throw a cold blanket in raising the aforesaid concerns. I only wish to make consideration from a practical angle, resolve the simple issues before the difficult ones and adopt a progressive approach by partially improving existing cycling networks before studying ways to take forward the urban networks. For instance, insofar as the super cycle tracks proposed by the Government years ago to link up Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun,

Sheung Shui, Tai Wai and Sai Kung are concerned, only some sections have their connecting works completed. The designs of the Tsuen Wan to Tuen Mun backbone section and the four branching off sections, namely the Nam Sang Wai, Sai Kung, Lung Kwu Tan and Tai Wo sections, are still under review. I very much hope that the authorities can speed up and implement the construction of cycle tracks in the waterfront promenades on both sides of the Victoria Harbour.

Furthermore, appropriate policies should be proposed to assist the popularization of bicycle-sharing in Hong Kong. For instance, the Sha Tin District Council already planned to undertake bicycle-sharing projects at the University Mass Transit Railway Station and Science Park as early as four years ago. Nevertheless, since the plan involves different government departments, such as the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Housing Department and the Lands Department, with no government department being responsible for taking the lead though, the plan has yet to be vetted and approved by all the departments concerned. Such being the case, the Administration should consider designating a government department to lead other relevant departments in implementing the plan expeditiously. Moreover, bicycle-sharing service networks can be provided for the proposed Kai Tak cycle tracks and additional bicycle parking spaces be provided in the parks in the vicinity of Kowloon City, with a view to encouraging members of the public to use bicycles as a mode for short-distance commute.

In fact, the idea of commuting by bicycles has been successfully promoted in many big cities, such as New York and Singapore, which have just as many people and vehicles as in Hong Kong. Not only are these cities greatly envied by quite many bicycle enthusiasts, but I also believe it is worthwhile for us to refer to some of their experience. Insofar as some newly planned districts are concerned, the Government should include cycle tracks in its transport planning. As for the busy urban areas, I believe we still have a very long road to go. What is more, it also hinges on whether the authorities can drum up the resolve.

President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Since Mr LAU Kwok-fan is not present, I now call upon Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung to speak.

MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): President, I support the motion on "Formulating a bicycle-friendly policy and designating bicycles as a mode of transport" proposed by Mr HUI Chi-fung.

All along, many cyclists have reflected from time to time that the policies in Hong Kong are unfavourable to bicycles because, as we can see, firstly, there are not enough cycle tracks, and secondly, it is difficult to find bicycle parking spaces. At some places, there is even no parking space. If a passenger wishes to board a bus or an MTR train with a bicycle, it is almost impossible to do so. The passenger may have to remove a wheel. He may even not be allowed to take the bicycle into the compartment.

We say that Hong Kong is an international metropolis, but compared with other countries or regions, we are really most backward. The main reason is that the Government has all along regarded bicycles as a tool of leisure rather than a mode of transport. For this reason, in designing roads and conducting community planning, it did not—I do not think it did anything at all—reserve any space for cyclists.

In fact, if we take a look, we will find that the cycle tracks in Hong Kong are mostly located in the New Territories or on the outlying islands. Even if they are available, they cannot connect to the other districts. They are mainly used for leisure or recreational purposes only. In fact, there is not any policy which facilitates members of the public in cycling to other districts. Apart from the lack of cycle tracks, there is also the problem of bicycle parking spaces. One can barely find public bicycle parking spaces in the urban areas. They are available only in the New Territories, some remote areas or the newly built housing estates in rural areas. Moreover, the number is not sufficient.

Recently, we have talked about the Tung Chung district where there are 3 300-odd housing units. Yet regrettably, with more than 10 000 residents, there are at most only 220 bicycle parking spaces. Come to think about it. Such a design is in fact unable to achieve the objective of promoting bicycles as a mode of transport. During our discussion in the Legislative Council, the Government said, to our surprise, that it had determined this number based on the existing planning standards. As we can see, the determination of the number of bicycle parking spaces based on the existing planning standards is so out-of-date. The Government has not updated these standards at all. Neither has it considered

that we should actually revise these standards now. It has not done any work in this aspect at all. Hence, as we can see, the Government actually does not entertain the idea of promoting bicycles as a mode of transport for short-distance travel in the districts.

We have requested the Government to pursue development in this aspect, but regrettably, what did the Government do? Leaving cycle tracks or parking spaces aside, it merely stated that given the busy roads in Hong Kong, it could not construct a large number of additional cycle tracks. Otherwise the usage by pedestrians and vehicles would be affected. It said that it did not wish to see people and vehicles competing for road space, and since Hong Kong was small but densely populated, these fundamental problems could not be resolved. Hence, it did not attach great importance to the need of providing cycle tracks or bicycle parking spaces.

President, we certainly understand these problems because we can see the actual situation currently. We appreciate the difficulties involved. But the question is why such a phenomenon has arisen. As I mentioned just now, the Government is not enthusiastic. It does not have any policy that gives consideration to how to stimulate, promote and even push forward the use of bicycles as a means of travelling or a substitute for certain modes of public transport in the urban areas. The Government has not considered adopting this kind of direction or objective.

However, let us look at other regions or cities. Take London as an example. London is also densely populated and the roads are narrow, but the local government has tried as far as possible to design cycle tracks or cycle lanes for cyclists. This is the case not only with London but also Vancouver and other places. Another example is Japan. The work done in Japan is even better. They have linked up cycle tracks with shopping malls or large train stations. There are absolutely ways of dealing with this matter. Yet regrettably, Hong Kong has really not adopted any. Apart from these places, there is also the Netherlands. I have visited the Netherlands before. The practice there is even more brilliant. What I saw at the train station was marvellous. The parking lot there—not the kind of car park we usually talk about, but a bicycle yard—was a few storeys high and fully parked with bicycles. That is a truly bicycle-friendly policy.

Moreover, I have seen some places designated for parking bicycles in private car parks in some regions and cities. It is not that Hong Kong cannot do so. Yet regrettably, the Hong Kong Government does not have such a mindset. It does not have this kind of ideas or way of thinking. Not only do we have insufficient bicycle parking spaces. Motorcycle parking spaces are also inadequate. The number of motorcycle parking spaces currently available in the car parks of all the housing estates is very small. Hence, as we can see, the Government has not considered these issues at all. The promotion of the use of bicycles and improvement of outdated policies, in my opinion, is not something the Government cannot do. Only that it does not do so.

Over the years, we have seen the Government's lack of enthusiasm in doing this. We may forget about the old areas which are difficult to change, but we did not see this kind of development in the new areas either. If there is no such development in the new areas, how can there be any improvement? For this reason, I think the focus of this motion proposed today is not on making any major changes in the facilities. What matters most is actually the Government's attitude, mentality and policy objective. If these remain unchanged, nothing can be achieved at all. For example, in our discussion with the Government about matters of the new towns, if it maintains the old rules and criteria, we will be unable to do anything. If the Government does not change the old standards and rules, the situation just cannot be changed.

However, how can the old standards and rules be changed? The only premise is that the Government needs to set its mind on doing so. (*The buzzer sounded*) ... If the Government is unenthusiastic ...

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, please stop speaking.

MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): ... nothing can be achieved.

MR LAU KWOK-FAN (in Cantonese): President, I rise to speak in support of the amendment proposed by Mr CHAN Han-pan on the formulation of a bicycle-friendly policy.

People often go cycling. But Members know that throughout all these years, the Government has merely positioned bicycles as a recreational or leisure tool. However, do Hong Kong people simply regard bicycles as a recreational tool? In the New Territories, for example, many people live in rural areas or new towns. Not everybody lives in buildings on top of train stations or places near train stations. Very often, they need to take a certain mode of feeder transport in order to reach train stations. And, more and more grass-roots people or people who are concerned about environmental protection and green living will opt for cycling as a form of feeder transport. They cycle from their homes to public transport interchanges, such as railway stations and bus termini. Actually, this has become their habit and increasingly popular.

Over all these years, I have been striving for the designation of bicycles as an alternative mode of transport by formulating a bicycle-friendly policy at meetings of the relevant District Council ("DC"). If the authorities think that the urban areas still lack ripe conditions, will this be feasible in the New Territories? But unfortunately, the Administration has failed to give a positive reply all along. If Members look at various places of the world, such as Singapore, London and New York, they will notice how bicycles are given room of survival even in those bustling metropolises. With the transformation of bike-sharing from a mere concept into an actual practice, we can notice further promotion of bicycles as an alternative mode of transport in many cities. Whether as a direct travelling aid for people or as a form of feeder transport for connection to major modes of transport, bicycles bring huge convenience. Let me put aside those places which are farther away from Hong Kong and talk about Shenzhen, a city closer to us. It has already implemented a bicycle-friendly policy for quite many years. The development of the first-generation bike-sharing scheme called "ShenZhen Tong" with government planning for certain designated bicycle pick-up locations for the public as the beginning, the Bike-sharing Plan operated by Ofo these days, and other various bike-sharing schemes on the Mainland have grown very sophisticated. Hong Kong already lags far behind.

Just now, Members also asked about the actions that should be taken by the Government. Actually, the Government should enhance the interconnection of cycle tracks. People often criticize our existing cycle tracks for being fragmented, in the sense that certain road sections are equipped with cycle tracks whereas other road sections are not. This has caused huge inconvenience, and

such inconvenience can actually be ascribed to a policy of the Government. According to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, a two-way cycle track and a one-way cycle track should be at least 3.5 m and 2 m wide respectively. Certainly, some pre-existing cycle tracks are not required to meet these standards. But all new cycle tracks must meet these standards. May I ask how many road sections in Hong Kong can carry a pavement along with a two-way cycle track of as wide as 3.5 m? Honestly, this is not possible on many road sections. Due to limited land and space in Hong Kong, I honestly do not think this is possible in many districts.

But such rigid standards have nonetheless led to stagnant development of a bicycle-friendly policy in Hong Kong. The Government should consider adjusting these planning standards for cycle tracks having regard to different places or districts. In some regions (such as Taiwan), the design of cycle tracks is simple. They are simply outlined in red alongside vehicle lanes, with a bicycle logo painted on them. Hong Kong can actually adopt the same practice.

Apart from cycle tracks, I also wish to discuss the issue of bicycle parking spaces. In this regard, the Government likewise lags behind other places. During my leisure trip to Taiwan sometime around 2004 or 2005, I noticed that they seemed to have made good use of their space as comprehensive double decker bicycle racks were installed in there. Of course, whether they are applicable to Hong Kong is another matter. Having returned to Hong Kong, I asked the relevant DC whether it was possible to develop such double decker bicycle racks in Hong Kong. After I had proposed a motion, the public officers said that they would actively consider the idea. But what was the result? The result was that six or seven years after I had proposed the motion, the Government said that it was a very good concept and could be implemented on a trial basis. How? The Government introduced several types of double decker bicycle racks from overseas countries and installed them in a place near Wo Hop Shek. But the Government said that it needed to examine which type of racks could fit the physique of Asians. So, it spent one or two years on conducting the studies. I raised the proposal of installing double decker bicycle racks with the relevant DC. Eventually, the Government designated a site in North District for trial installation of such racks a couple of years ago. But can the Government promote the installation of this facility to all districts of Hong Kong? Are double decker bicycle racks a desirable facility? There has been no follow-up

on all such matters. I have no idea as to whether the Government will continue to promote their installation.

Obviously, the question of whether a bicycle-friendly policy can be implemented hinges on the Government's mindset. At present, the Government positions bicycles as a mere recreational tool. And even speaking of the large-scale cycle tracks in New Territories East and New Territories West—the section of cycle tracks connecting North District and Sha Tin is actually quite good—Members can see that they are not closely related to people's daily living (such as going to work or school). They only serve as a means of leisure for people during Saturdays or Sundays. So, I hope the Government can assume a more significant role.

Frankly, with a speaking time limit of merely seven minutes, it is honestly impossible for me to discuss all the existing problems with cycling or how they can be ameliorated. I can only cite the two simple examples for Members' reference. As the first step, the Government needs to formulate a bicycle-friendly policy which positions bicycles as an alternative mode of transport.

President, I so submit. Thank you.

MS TANYA CHAN (in Cantonese): President, I thank Mr HUI Chi-fung for proposing this motion which confirms that there is actually a "bicycle-unfriendly policy" in Hong Kong.

President, an Honourable colleague has made a declaration of interest. It is not really a declaration of interest: I do not know how to ride a bicycle. I grew up living on Hong Kong Island. To learn how to ride a bicycle, first it depends on whether one's family will buy a bicycle for such a learning purpose. One may also rent a bicycle, but the places on Hong Kong Island where people can learn cycling are rather dangerous. When I was small, pedestrians and vehicles competed for road surface in Hong Kong, while now we have some cycle tracks at least. However, from the angle of transport, bicycles are still not a common mode of transport. The Government still considers bicycles as only a tool for recreation.

Bicycles occupy less space, can go from point to point and can be personalized. Promoting cycling, which can be considered as pollution-free, should effectively improve the air quality in Hong Kong. However, for some reasons unknown, the Government does not think cycling can solve transport problems, but will instead create more transport problems. We seem to lag far behind other international cities in this regard.

Many major cities in the world have developed personalized point-to-point modes of transport. Bicycles are one of them. The Hong Kong Government, however, runs counter to this trend. The Public Transport Strategy Study was tabled by the Government last week. Although we understand that it is about public transport, there seems to be no overall planning or concrete recommendations on bicycle-sharing. The study was disappointing as it seemed to focus only on patching up existing or future policies.

Hong Kong is a small place. People travel probably within a radius of 1 km daily. There is one more public transport option on Hong Kong Island, that is, the tram. But in more distant places, cycling is an ideal form of transport, an argument which the Government seems to disagree. Of course, walking can be a form of transport too, but it is not easy as pedestrian pavements are made increasingly narrow due to various developments and the sun is often strong. Hence, another issue to be considered by the Government is the design of pedestrian pavements which can be significantly improved.

The interest between the Government and public transport operators has long been entangled. If everyone rides a bicycle and makes his own decision, who will patronize the Mass Transit Railway which imposes fare increases every year for deteriorating services and bus companies with frequent lost trips as discussed yesterday?

President, as a number of Honourable colleagues have pointed out, there is a serious lack of bicycle parking spaces in Hong Kong. According to government papers, as of end-December 2016, there were less than 1 000 bicycle parking spaces in all districts except Sha Tin, Yuen Long, North District, Tuen Mun, Sai Kung and the outlying islands. That means the total number of bicycle parking spaces in all other districts were less than 1 000, while there was no bicycle parking spaces at all in the Wong Tai Sin and Kwun Tong Districts. The Government considers cycling just a leisure activity, so cyclists can only go to

Sha Tin or Tai Po. But which came first—the chicken or the egg? It is difficult for the public to use bicycles as a mode of transport if there is insufficient bicycle parking spaces.

The public is forced to travel by car, but the Government argues that there is too much traffic in the city that makes cycling unsuitable, thus, there is no need for bicycle parking spaces, making it even more difficult to use bicycles as a mode of transport. The Government believes that Hong Kong is not suitable for cycling as roads are few and crowded, but is it not the case in other major cities in the world? Certainly they are similarly crowded. The public sees clearly the Government's inaction.

Looking at neighbouring countries or even around the world, we can see that the Netherlands vigorously built bicycle-only lanes as early as 20 years ago. People can travel all around the Netherlands by bike. The United Kingdom also does not have enough space for bicycle-only lanes, but bike stopping zones are placed before traffic lights so that bicycles and cars can share the right to use the road. The Japanese Government has built numerous bicycle parking lots across the country and established a sound bicycle registration system to eradicate bike-stealing, so that people can go to school and work by bike worry-free. Slow lanes are designated in Taiwan for both bicycles and motorcycles' use. Self-service bike rental service, namely YouBike, is available, with which people can rent a bicycle in the city at any time by locating the nearest pick-up point on the mobile apps and return the bicycle at another location. Many other countries and cities also have bike rental services available, so why can it be done in other places but not in Hong Kong?

In 2008, the Government announced the construction of a cycle track linking New Territories East and New Territories West, from Ma On Shan to Tsuen Wan, with a total length of 112 km, of which 70 km would be new cycle tracks. The construction has yet to be completed now in 2017. Needless to mention Hong Kong Island where roads are disjointed due to development in the early years, and it is very difficult to build a harbourfront promenade. Public facilities are all situated near the waterfront as it was preferred that they be built distanced from residential areas, making it difficult to build a cycle track now. Take the Eastern Harbourfront Promenade as an example. An earlier study report pointed out that, if a cycle track is to be built in the Eastern District, cyclists will have to push their bikes for many kilometres during the ride.

Therefore, I am afraid a continuous cycle track and waterfront promenade on Hong Kong Island is nothing but an endless wait.

(THE PRESIDENT'S DEPUTY, MS STARRY LEE, took the Chair)

It is so difficult to build a 70-km cycle track in Hong Kong, but Taiwan has already built a 1 200-km island-wide cycling route that takes 11 days to complete. Even only for leisure purpose, Hong Kong is still lagging far behind. I hope the Government can really do something for the public and promote the development of cycling.

I so submit.

MR JEREMY TAM (in Cantonese): Ms Tanya CHAN has just said she has not been able to ride a bicycle since childhood. I am the opposite; I have been able to ride a bicycle since childhood. My father scavenged my first bicycle in the refuse room and repaired it for me. At the time I still lived in a resettlement housing area. After growing up, I still like to cycle. Ten years ago, I went to cycle at a place where I thought cycling was allowed—Tung Chung. And the cycling track there was one of the reasons for my involvement in politics. Why? Initially I thought it should be quite easy to build a cycle track in a new town in North Lantau 10 years ago, because there was nothing there. But the cycle track was ridiculous, completely disjointed like a "segmented worm". To cross the road, cyclists had to push their bicycles up and down the footbridge. They thought they could ride farther on the cycle track to Sunny Bay. But it was just a false hope back then. The situation has improved now. However, it shows that more than 10 years ago, government-built cycle tracks in new towns could be described as "ludicrous". More often than not, people are forced to cycle on the road, leading only to two results: first, it is unsafe; second, for safety's sake and to ensure that cyclists will not hit anything, they have to, just as I have said, keep pushing their bicycles up and down footbridges or through tunnels.

At present, what plans has the Government made for bicycles? Ms Tanya CHAN has just mentioned a little bit about the 112-km super cycle track connecting New Territories East and New Territories West, which the

Development Bureau announced in 2008. I will not repeat what Ms Tanya CHAN has just mentioned. However, the Director of Audit's Report published in 2014 criticized the extremely slow progress of the project and its cost overrun and delay. Moreover, in the past many years, I believed the chance of riding a bicycle on Hong Kong Island was quite slim. However, when planning the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and its related reclamation works earlier, did the authorities consider building a harbourfront cycle track running through the north shore of Hong Kong Island, meaning possibly from Sheung Wan to Chai Wan? I think it is definitely possible.

Nevertheless, I wish to spend some time responding to a few points made by Secretary Prof Anthony CHEUNG in his speech earlier. First, pedelecs are nothing new. Coming into existence in foreign countries 10 years ago, they allow riders to save their energy when riding, especially going uphill. But as he has stated, Hong Kong remains at the study stage regarding pedelecs. Moreover, do cycle tracks have to be completely separated from pavements? Not necessarily. In Korea, for example, on relatively wide and unbusy pavements dividing lines are painted and pedestrians, on their own initiative, walk on one side and cyclists ride on the other. Can it be likewise done in Hong Kong? I do not see why it is not feasible.

The Government stated that the MTR Corporation Limited will study if passengers can board trains without removing the front wheels of bicycles. MTR was really unreasonable. We have discussed in other meetings that it is, on the contrary, more dangerous to have the front wheels removed. I wish to point out that it indicates the problem of the Government not having put in place any policy to combine the use of bicycles with other modes of transport. I have just talked about how to connect the first and last legs of people's commutes with bicycles, but how to connect bicycles with other modes of transport? Apart from MTR stations in the New Territories or newly-built stations where bicycle parking spaces are a must, such facilities are not available at other MTR stations.

In addition, I must talk about bike sharing. Last Sunday, I went to Korea to attend a competition of unmanned aerial vehicles, and I made it a point to observe how Koreans put bike sharing to application. It is indeed very convenient. First, there are 591 spots for bicycle rentals in Seoul, which were built with funding from the municipal government. And the associated mobile phone application indicates the locations of the rental spots and, most importantly, also whether a particular spot is fully parked or offers no bicycle, so

as to facilitate people in renting and returning bicycles. We saw their determination to accomplish the task. It is expected that by the end of 2017, 20 000 shared bikes will run around Seoul.

Let us look at whether Seoul is vastly different from Hong Kong. Both are large and metropolitan cities. Yet, unlike Hong Kong, Seoul does not only consider setting up bike sharing in new towns; the system of bike sharing covers some major business districts, such as Dongdaemun, Myeongdong, Hongdae, the City Hall and even Yeouido where the National Assembly Building is located. Moreover, in terms of security, Hong Kong faces a problem. The Government does not provide any ancillary facilities and only lets whoever wants to do business in Hong Kong come; or as the Secretary has just suggested that as stated in the Policy Address, non-profit-making organizations are welcome to undertake such projects. What role does the Government play in it? None. I have not seen the Government playing any role.

Without parking spaces provided by the Government, it is difficult to achieve success. In this respect, how is the security system in Korea? Apart from a device affixed to each bicycle which monitors the duration of idling and parking, an automatic system will make a report to the police if the bicycle is not returned four hours after being loaned. Does Hong Kong have anything like this? Also no. But if there is a will, there is a way. In addition to increasing the number of bicycles to 20 000 by the end of this year as I have just mentioned, Korea wishes to increase the number of rental spots from the current 591 to 1 300 shortly. Therefore, it is not a matter of ability, but willingness, as well as whether the Government will spare no efforts to implement it. It is the same case with Taiwan but it cooperates with some sizable bicycle manufacturers. These are approaches that Hong Kong can consider.

The greatest problem of Hong Kong is that our public transport policy, no matter how you phrase it, focuses on railway as the backbone but there has long been a problem of strong core and weak branches in the planning. For this reason, the future direction should be to study how to combine the use of other modes of public transport with bicycles, rather than just building cycle tracks. To achieve this, we do not need a number, i.e. how many kilometres of cycle tracks are built.

I so submit.

MR NATHAN LAW (in Cantonese): Ms LEE, the Secretary mentioned bicycle rental services in his opening speech. When he talked about Gobe.ebike, I guess Members will think of its bicycles thrown into Shing Mun River. Yet, have Members ever pondered why bicycle-sharing services for short-distance commutes will be introduced by profit-making organizations in the community but not the Government as in regions in the vicinity like Taiwan and Seoul?

It is nothing new to me to commute by bicycle, for I went to school on a bicycle since I was in secondary school. Yet, not everyone can enjoy this convenience like me. According to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, the Government describes cycling in the following way: "cycling is essentially a recreational sport. In certain new development areas, it is also a supplementary transport mode that facilitates short-distance travel ... Care should be taken to avoid over-provision, as under-utilized cycle tracks/facilities may lead to undesirable uses". The Government looks at cycling as a recreational sport only suitable to serve as a supplementary transport mode for short-distance travel in new development areas on a limited scale, but it is not suitable for the urban areas.

Last year, as many as 2 159 people were injured in bicycle-related accidents. Accidents seem to be a synonym for cycling. Since no matching measures and policies are introduced, cycling seems to be very dangerous, and the public realize that "bicycle-friendly policy" is increasingly out of reach.

Cycling is environmentally friendly and healthy, whereas a green and low-carbon lifestyle is the prevailing development trend of cities around the world. Why would Hong Kong be so resistant to the inclusion of cycling into our life? In my view, the management mentality adopted by the Government all along is a hurdle to developing bicycles as a mode of transport, holding back the development of a bicycle policy. This mentality prompts the Government to focus on the busy traffic in the urban areas and thus considers cycling should not be encouraged. There are 218.5 km of cycle tracks in Hong Kong located in Sha Tin, Yuen Long, Tai Po, Northern District, Sai Kung, Tuen Mun and Lantau Island. There is basically no cycle track on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon, which means bicycles are excluded from busy downtown areas.

In fact, many overseas cities with busy traffic can be developed into bicycle-friendly cities. Take New York as an example. Its population density is 1.7 times that of Hong Kong, yet it has over 300 km of cycle tracks in the city and every place is accessible by bicycles. As for Berlin, the largest city with the

greatest population in Germany, it has 630 km of cycle tracks and 15% of the population commute to work on bicycles. Hence, busy traffic definitely should not be an excuse for impeding the development of cycle tracks. On the contrary, we have learnt from the experience of many different countries that bicycles may solve the many problems relating to air pollution and traffic congestion.

All along, the Government has many grant development plans for bicycles, but they are all empty talk, for the Government always fails to honour its undertakings. In 2008, the Government confirmed the construction of a super cycle track of 112 km connecting New Territories East and New Territories West. Nine years down the line, the completion of the track remains nowhere in sight. Studies on the boardwalk underneath the Island Easter Corridor and the cycle track in the Wan Chai and North Point harbourfront areas have been in progress for many years, yet the projects have yet to be finalized to date. Many community organizations, like the Hong Kong Cycling Alliance, started staging cycling protests in 2007. However, despite the protests staged over the past 10 years, the Government has made no progress. I am most enraged that the Government has only mentioned a bicycle policy in a paragraph in the Policy Address by saying that it will enhance cycle track networks. However, the Public Transport Strategy Study does not include bicycles in its scope of study. Is the Government sincere in developing a bicycle-friendly policy? What is a bicycle-friendly policy to the Government?

There are 218.5 km of cycling tracks in Hong Kong. But given the perfunctory attitude of bureaucratic departments, the designs and ancillary facilities of cycle tracks are very much outdated. Cycling athletes of Hong Kong have made a name for themselves in the world. Yet, at the same time, Hong Kong is also world-famous for having "the shortest cycle track in the world" and "many plastic bollards blocking cycle track exits". In Hong Kong, road accidents caused by designs of cycle tracks, such as 5-cm wide cycle tracks and downhill roundabouts, occur time and again. Half of the accidents involving bicycles last year occurred on cycle tracks.

In addition to the design of cycle tracks, ancillary facilities are also very important. At present, cyclists are not welcome on most public transport. The Kowloon Motor Bus ("KMB") required cyclists to wrap their bicycles properly without any protrusion or exposure of any part before they can board a bus, and cyclists must ensure that their bicycles will not block the passages on buses. If

cyclists take MTR, they have to remove the front wheel of their bicycles, and the size of their bicycles must meet the regulation of MTR. All these requirements can be amended within the relevant policy areas, yet they are restricted by the fossilized management mentality of the Government. It is not a matter of ability but willingness.

In recent months, the bicycle-sharing incident has aroused territory-wide concern. The company was criticized for causing illegal parking and unlawful occupation of parking spaces. Yet, it was reported by the media that the company was introduced into Hong Kong by InvestHK. Nonetheless, after introducing the company to make investment in Hong Kong, the company was left to fend for itself, and it has made a mess in the end. Actually, it is the responsibility of the Government to promote community bicycle rental services. The Sha Tin District Council has conducted a number of consultation exercises. They hope the Government will provide subsidies in setting up self-service bicycle rental systems at MTR stations, school areas and shopping areas, so that inexpensive bicycle rental services may be provided to the public. However, the Government says that the demand of the market is well met by existing private bicycle rental services, so it is unnecessary to set up a separate public bicycle rental system. The Policy Address this year also stated that the authorities would "assist organizations in operating self-financing community bicycle rental services on a non-profit-making basis". This is self-contradictory. What an eye-opener? Why do organizations have to operate self-financing services on a non-profit-making basis while the Government can remain indifferent?

The authorities always claim that Hong Kong has to be developed into a high-end technology city, so we have to develop the Loop area and science parks, and so on. However, for technology applicable to our daily life, such as self-service bicycle rental systems and real time bus information and open data systems, and so on, the development is far from comprehensive. Given all this, how can the Government convince the public that it is sincere in developing technology to improve the life of the public and a bicycle-friendly city? Hence, I earnestly hope that the Government will take up its role in promoting a bicycle policy instead of shifting the responsibility to the community.

With these remarks, I support the motion.

MR HO KAI-MING (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I would like to thank Mr HUI Chi-fung for proposing the motion today and giving us the opportunity to examine our bicycle policy.

When I first became a Member of the Legislative Council, I applied to the "finance committee" at home, that is, my wife, for funds for the purchase of a bicycle, planning to ride to work at the Legislative Council on bicycle from Mong Kok every day. However, after I bought the bicycle, I noticed that I had fallen into a pitfall: cycling is prohibited in Tamar Park. The most crucial point is that the ferry service connecting Tsim Sha Tsui and Central is the only ferry route prohibiting the carriage of bicycles, even bicycles folded or with wheels removed are prohibited. As a result, I have no alternative but to take MTR to work every day.

To make cycling convenient for the public, we must create an inclusive environment for road users and bicycles, and one of the keys is to rationalize the synergy between public transport and bicycles. If the Government insists on positioning bicycles as a recreational tool but not a mode of public transport, government departments and public transport operators can hardly be prompted to provide matching measures for cyclists in the use of public transport.

To achieve inclusion of "road users and bicycles", it requires not only the provision of matching measures by public transport but also the provision of a favourable environment. Recently, we have had discussions with people in the districts and the departments concerned to examine the expansion of the cycle track network in Energising Kowloon East and Kai Tak Development. The Development Bureau proposed building a cycle track connecting Cha Kwo Ling, Kwun Tong Promenade, Kai Tak Sports Park and To Kwa Wan. We were so excited to hear that and looked forward to the provision of bicycle facilities in Kowloon.

However, problems emerged when it came to implementation. When we discussed with colleagues from the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") on the designation of cycle tracks in the harbourfront park, LCSD reminded us that several departments opposed the designation of cycle tracks in parks. First, it is the Police. Second, it is the Transport Department ("TD"). Third, it is obviously LCSD. We appreciate their concerns. They are usually concerned about management issues, say how to manage and ensure the safety of users other than cyclists. In fact, I learnt from TD and the Police at a meeting

that if a cyclist violated traffic laws, it would attract demerit points in his driving licence as in the case of a driver having driven past a red light, and once a certain number of demerit points were incurred, the cyclist had to attend a driving improvement course to gain back the points.

If the parties concerned cannot work in coordination on the rules involved, it will be hardly possible to designate cycle tracks in certain communities. We know that the Development Bureau is conducting studies on "inclusion of road users and bicycles". Since the implementation will involve a number of departments, there will be a lot of problems in actual operation. We hope that various departments will put forth issues of concern to them. For instance, LCSD may express concern about ensuring the safety of other park users, the Police may be concerned about arrangements on demerit points, and TD may be concerned about the handling of cases involving violation of laws by bicycles as a mode of transport. How should these issues be handled? I believe the "inclusion road users and bicycles" can be implemented as a policy instead of just a concept only if departments concerned can work together sincerely.

If these issues cannot be solved, I think the "Kowloon East cycle track" plan of the Development Bureau may have to be abandoned. As a number of Honourable colleagues pointed out earlier, the cycle tracks in many places in the territory are fragmented. According to the Report of the Director of Audit ("Audit Report") published in 2014, along a cycle track of 45 km in length, there were 105 points requiring cyclists to dismount. There is a usual driving practice for approaching main roads from smaller roads, why do the authorities not adopt this practice? Members may look at the picture I am holding to learn how overseas countries regard bicycles as a mode of transport. They adopt the general driving practices for approaching main roads from smaller roads at intersections, where the safety of cyclists is ensured even if they are not required to dismount. As in the case of driving a car, when cyclists enter the main roads from smaller roads, they must stop to check that both ways are clear before they can cross the road. May we suggest the authorities to consider adopting this practice when it reviews the cycle track network in Hong Kong? I think this is worthy of consideration on the part of the Government, for bicycles are after all a mode of transport. Cyclists are required to observe traffic rules and regulations and violations may attract demerit points ascribed by TD and the Police. If it has always been so, we should be able to take the idea forward further by positioning bicycles as a mode of transport and make it more convenient for the public to use bicycles in the urban areas.

Deputy President, the Government is now conducting a feasibility study on expanding the cycle track network in the Kai Tai Development Area, and we have heard that it would be completed in the middle of this year. We hope that the study will come up with some concrete proposals, particularly on the cooperation with other departments, like the Police, TD and LCSD as I mentioned earlier. In this connection, I think it is necessary to be followed up by the Bureau, involving inter-bureau coordination and proactive follow-up actions.

I also hope that the Government will address squarely the proposals put forth by Members from the various political parties and groupings in the Legislative Council and follow up the opinions expressed by other Honourable colleagues and me, so as to implement a truly bicycle-friendly policy to further encourage the public to commute by bicycles in both the urban and rural areas.

Deputy President, I so submit.

MR DENNIS KWOK (in Cantonese): Deputy President, it is not enough to merely talk about a bicycle-friendly policy. I recall that the Civic Party already put forward proposals on such a policy more than a year ago. Over the past year, the Civic Party and I also participated in some activities aimed at promoting cycling. In one of these activities, namely "Bike The Moment", Mr Alvin YEUNG, Mr Jeremy TAM and I embarked from Tai Koo Shing at 7:00 am to commute to our workplace, the Legislative Council, by three different modes of transport, with me riding a bicycle, Mr Jeremy TAM taking Mass Transit Railway, and Mr Alvin YEUNG, who enjoys the most comfortable ride, driving his own car. It takes me and cyclists commuting from Tai Koo Shing to the Legislative Council 45 minutes or so to complete the entire "Bike The Moment" journey. Members may browse our Facebook for a film made by us of the entire journey.

To my understanding, these cyclists are not bicycle enthusiasts. Before all else, I have to dispel the myth that people who like using bicycles as a mode of transport do not necessarily buy a beautiful bicycle or often take part in competitions or ride on Hong Kong's cycle tracks. Bicycles are simply used by them to commute between their homes and workplaces or schools, or for daily commuting purposes. Actually, they wish to make cycling part of the life of Hong Kong people.

Just now, many Members talked about how bicycles are turned into a mode of transport to achieve harmony between people and bicycles in such cities as London and New York. This is very important indeed. What we are talking about is not to turn bicycles into a mode of transport simply by building a few cycle tracks in the New Territories, as doing so is not helpful and adequate. Being road users, motor cars and bicycles must be able to co-exist in harmony in the urban areas.

Coming back to my personal experience of participating in "Bike The Moment", Deputy President, it is actually not very difficult to cycle on the roads. However, the attitude of other motorists towards cyclists is an issue, because cyclists are not treated by them as road users. In principle, bicycles are no different from motor cars, only that the speed of bicycles might be slower, and a bicycle has two wheels, but a car has four. If motorists do not treat cyclists as the same as other road users, great dangers will be posed to cyclists. This is the so-called mindset issue. If the Government's policy or legislation cannot affirm cyclists as road users, many motorists in Hong Kong will hold this sort of mindset which is unfair to cyclists and, what is more, will pose great dangers.

For these reasons, under the law to be enacted, cyclists must observe road safety as motorists do, wear safety helmets, and take safety measures to protect themselves and other road users. Motorists must also understand that they are not allowed to overtake bicycles ahead of them with no regard to safety just because the speed of the bicycles might be slower than that of their motor cars. Motorists must not hold such a mindset or treat cyclists as if they are not genuine road users.

Insofar as ancillary facilities are concerned, there is actually no need to designate certain road sections as "bicycles only" zones in a rigid manner before bicycles can be brought into our city. If Members visit New York and London, they will notice many people use bicycles in many places. Even though there are no "bicycles only" lanes in these cities, many people there use bicycles as a mode of daily transport. Why? This is all about their mindset, as other road users affirm and face squarely the fact that cyclists are road users as well.

Certainly, many cities have already developed many bicycle-related services, such as rental services. Bicycle rental services, such as Gobee.bike, are now available in Hong Kong, though concentrated mainly in the New Territories. Mobike is also available on the Mainland. Bicycle rental services have also been extended to London and Singapore. The Paris municipal government also provides popular bicycle rental services to allow members of the public to use

bicycles at any time to, for instance, commute from A to B and then return the bicycles at B. I believe I need not elaborate the benefits of this mode of transport to urban areas. The benefits include reducing air pollution, particularly roadside air pollution, making more people not to rely on driving or other modes of transport, easing the pressure on other public modes of transport, which is also a pretty obvious benefit, and encouraging members of the public to do more exercise, which is good for their physical health.

Actually, many young people, including the several assistants in my office, like cycling and go to work by cycling. They are very grateful as bicycle parking spaces are available inside the Legislative Council Complex. However, not all wage earners can enjoy such ancillary facilities. The Government must take the lead in providing such facilities. Should it really wish to turn bicycles into a daily mode of transport, it should promote and encourage the provision of facilities such as more bicycle parking spaces, before cycling can really become part of people's life. I so submit.

MR YIU SI-WING (in Cantonese): Deputy President, in the past, a place using bicycles as a major mode of transport would be regarded as backward, but in recent years, many cities have promoted commuting by bicycles and considered it a low-carbon and environmentally friendly means of travelling which can also achieve the effects of working out. In particular, in some Western and Northern European cities, the Governments have positioned bicycles as a kind of public mode of transport, resulting in a continuous rise in its popularity. For example, in the Netherlands, the population is 16-odd million, but the number of bicycles owned by the people is 19-odd million. Trips by bicycles account for a quarter of the passenger traffic in the whole country. In January 2013, the post of Cycling Commissioner was created for the first time in the City of London, the United Kingdom. The purpose was to promote travelling by bicycle to resolve the problems of traffic congestion, air pollution and the lack of physical exercise of members of the public.

The motion proposed by Mr HUI Chi-fung requests the Government to formulate a bicycle-friendly policy and position bicycles as part of the public transport. It is well-intentioned, but we have also got to be pragmatic. In my view, the conditions are still not ripe for designating bicycles as a mode of transport covering the whole territory. For this reason, I hold reservations about it. First of all, the public transport in Hong Kong is convenient. The effect of commuting by bicycles will turn out to defeat our original purpose. The people of Hong Kong mainly rely on the highly efficient public transport system. The

percentage taken up by private cars is lower than that in other regions, unlike the European, American and Mainland cities which are vast in area with spacious roads. As the degree of convenience of public transport is constrained by objective circumstances in those places, the people there need to commute by private cars. The promotion of commuting by bicycles can help abate their reliance on private cars, and the effects will be more obvious. Hong Kong is small but densely populated. Its per capita car ownership is the lowest among developed regions. Using bicycles as a mode of transport will have limited effects on abating the reliance on private cars. It may even encourage members of the public to switch from using public transport to commuting by bicycles. According to the Government's statistics, in 2015, the daily patronage of public transport service was 12.6 million passenger trips. Come to think about it. If 10% of the people choose to commute by bicycles, there will be hundreds of thousands or even millions of bicycles travelling on the major roads every day. It will certainly add to the burden on the existing heavy road traffic.

Secondly, given the complexity of the roads in Hong Kong, travelling by bicycle is subject to restrictions. If bicycles travel on the major roads at the same time with other modes of transport, it is necessary to set aside dedicated lanes for bicycles to ensure road safety and maintain the order of traffic. In light of the present transport facilities in the city centre in Hong Kong, not too many roads can offer such conditions. Moreover, in view of the complicated topography in Hong Kong, especially on Hong Kong Island with roads rising and falling in steep gradients, only the harbourfront and areas in Kowloon and the New Territories where the people are sparsely populated can offer the conditions for building cycle tracks.

Thirdly, there is still a substantial gap between the existing legislation and public awareness of safe use of bicycles. If we rashly position bicycles as a major mode of transport and even legalize pedelecs, it will bring unforeseeable consequences.

Deputy President, although bicycles are not quite suitable for use as a major mode of public transport, I consider that bicycles can continue to be positioned as a tool for recreational and leisure purposes and an important element in promoting green tourism. They can also serve as a mode of transport in some areas offering the conditions. In recent years, the Government has reserved a lot of land for constructing cycle tracks in conducting planning on the new development areas. They include a super cycle track which is 82 km long, joining up New Territories East and New Territories West. Additional cycle tracks have also been provided in the new town expanded in Tung Chung as well

as the new areas in different regions, such as the Kai Tak Development Area, West Kowloon Cultural District, Hung Shui Kiu and Yuen Long South. These practices are conducive to linking up the cycle tracks to form a large-scale cycle track network.

As regards Hong Kong Island, the area is small and the roads are narrow. It is almost impossible to construct cycle tracks on the conventional roads. Cycle tracks can only be constructed concurrently when renovation works are carried out at the harbourfront. At present, a large part of the harbourfront on Hong Kong Island is zoned as public open space. The land is even and the space occupied by cycle tracks is limited. I believe that so long as the Government tries with determination to link up various sections of the harbourfront to form a cycle track round the Island, it will definitely be welcomed by members of the public and tourists.

Deputy President, bicycle-sharing has recently become popular around the world. The Sha Tin District in Hong Kong has taken the lead in introducing this GPS (Global Positioning System). Users can use a mobile App to search for the bicycles nearby, scan the QR (Quick Response) code to open the smart lock of the bicycles and park the bicycles at places not affecting traffic after use. The merit of this system is that it is convenient to users. It can also learn about the users' habit of using the service through the positioning system and deploy the bikes in light of the demand at any time, thus avoiding mismatch of resources caused by blunders. Given the small and narrow living space in Hong Kong, it is not convenient to keep bicycles at home. Available at any time, shared bicycles are convenient and save time. They will be the future trend. Hence, in conducting planning, the Government should reserve parking spaces on suitable cycle tracks to create favourable conditions for bicycle-sharing, offer convenience to members of the public and tourists and enhance the role of bicycle tours in tourism. This can add an attractive new element to our tourist industry.

Deputy President, I so submit.

DR ELIZABETH QUAT (in Cantonese): Deputy President, over the past 10 years or so, many countries and cities (such as London and Berlin) in the world have developed into bicycle-friendly cities because encouraging people to use this more environmental mode of transport called cycling can actually bring many benefits, such as energy conservation, reducing emissions, alleviating air and environmental pollution caused by vehicular emission, and resolving traffic congestion and the noise problem. Besides, cycling enables people to train their

bodies and in turn improve their health, conducive to reducing the pressure on transport and public health care systems in the long run. Furthermore, more and more tourists like to engage cycling tours in overseas countries. A sound bicycle-friendly environment can even add impetus to the tourism industry.

But despite years of talk, Hong Kong is still not a bicycle-friendly city as such even today. All along, many Members have made various proposals at meetings of the Legislative Council and District Councils and requested the Government to implement a bicycle-friendly policy. But the Government often refuses to implement such a policy by citing the reasons or pretexts that old districts have already undergone development planning, roads are narrow in Hong Kong, and streets are crowded with people and vehicles.

I wish to talk about London as an example. As a city with a longer history which began its development much earlier than Hong Kong, London can also transform itself into a bicycle-friendly city. It is thus evident that the Hong Kong Government is actually unwilling rather than unable to do so, meaning that it does not want to do anything. Around 2000, the London Government began to transform London into a bicycle-friendly city. Back in that year, people driving into central London during morning peak hours in the London city outnumbered those who cycled, and the ratio was roughly 11:1. But in 2014, the ratio already dropped to 1.7:1. The target set by London is that by 2018, the number of people riding bicycles in central London should be greater than the number of people driving vehicles. How can they achieve this target? Actually, the London Government has made enormous efforts to turn London into a bicycle-friendly city. One example is the provision of dedicated road space by the London Government through designating the vehicle lanes adjoining pavements as cycling paths. Besides, bus lanes are opened to cyclists, along with planning for 12 Cycle Superhighways for use by commuters going to work on weekdays and for leisure purpose during weekends.

Actually, is it really impossible to promote cycling in a densely populated and highly urbanized city? From the examples of London and other major cities, we can see that this is actually not impossible, Deputy President, only that the Government lacks the determination to promote cycling.

Coming back to the present-day Hong Kong, we can still see inadequate planning for cycle track networks. In the case of Sha Tin, for example, the cycle tracks in the district are fragmented, and a cyclist must dismount and push his bike at zebra crossings after cycling for a very short distance. Another example

is Tseung Kwan O. The cycle tracks there are disconnected from other districts, and they can merely serve the leisure purpose. So, bicycles can hardly be promoted as an alternative mode of transport due to an utter lack of zealous planning. Actually, Hong Kong can succeed in developing into a bicycle-friendly city only by installing cycling-related infrastructure facilities as support, such as constructing more coherent cycle tracks, setting up self-service bicycle rental points, designating dedicated bicycle lanes, installing traffic lights specially for cyclists, and even reducing vehicle speed limits in certain districts, as in the case of other bicycle-friendly cities. As the first step, the Government can actually include bicycles in the transport system of the New Territories and promote bicycles as an alternative mode of transport for short-haul journeys in the New Territories. Besides, it must take practical actions and join hands with other parties to set up a self-service bicycle rental system. Only by so doing can it resolve such matters as bicycle theft and storage, and also user-friendliness.

Deputy President, the Secretary said in his earlier speech that the authorities would support the development of self-service bicycle rental systems by non-profit-making organizations on a self-financing basis. I was infuriated upon hearing that. As I always say, the Sha Tin District Council already commissioned The Chinese University of Hong Kong to conduct a feasibility study many years ago and also recently. The study reports already point out that Sha Tin is the district in the entire Hong Kong with the necessary conditions to implement bicycle rental self-services. But all along, the Government has refused to take on board this view or do anything. When we found after so much effort a non-profit-making organization which agreed to offer this service, the Government nonetheless required it to raise funding by itself. After we got an opportunity for funding support, we had to lobby government departments one after another in the several years which followed, including the Transport and Housing Bureau, the Home Affairs Department, the Lands Department, and so on. But so far, the project has yet to materialize. Its volunteers are already dispirited and their enthusiasm has cooled off gradually.

As Members said just now, Sha Tin sees the emergence of a bike-sharing scheme. The emergence of "bike-sharing" as we call it has led to many problems in the community, such as illegal parking of bicycles, occupation of public spaces and facilities, filling up bicycle parking spaces, arbitrary placement of broken bicycles, and dumping of stolen bicycles into the Shing Mun River. As a result, various government departments have to expend many resources to deal with these problems.

Deputy President, I have visited many countries and cities, such as Berlin, Japan and London. The bicycles under their self-service bicycle rental systems are user-friendly. Users can know where bicycles are available by simply scanning QR codes with their smartphones and unlock bicycles straight away after making payments. Afterwards, they may cycle to anywhere. These cities practise a public-private partnership model featuring joint promotion efforts from their governments, private organizations, the business sector and non-profit-making organizations. All these rental systems can be implemented only with the concrete efforts of these parties. Now, the Government requires the non-profit-making organization concerned to take forward the matter on its own. In the process, its volunteers must resolve on their own all problems which should be dealt with by various government departments. How can they cope? Without complementary efforts from the Government, all will be utterly impossible.

Deputy President, various Members have raised many good proposals today. Actually, all their proposals merit our support and serious consideration. I hope the Government can drum up the resolve and develop Hong Kong into a real bicycle-friendly city. The Secretary should refrain from saying anymore that bicycles are already categorized as a type of vehicle. The Government has actually failed to offer any policy support. Mere empty talk without concrete actions is no different from inaction.

Deputy President, I so submit.

MR HOLDEN CHOW (in Cantonese): Deputy President, after hearing the remarks made by a number of Members today, we all know that in many other regions around the world, bicycles have developed from a recreational tool into a mode of transport. Various regions and countries around the world have put in place corresponding policies, measures and ancillary facilities to cope with this prevailing style and trend. What about Hong Kong? According to the current position of the Government, bicycles are still a recreational tool but not a major mode of transport. If bicycles are to be turned into a mode of transport, I believe the Government has to drum up the resolve to initiate radical changes in road ancillary facilities.

Deputy President, Dr Elizabeth QUAT has just quoted the successful experience of London as an example. I used to study in the United Kingdom and had lived there for a relatively long time. Perhaps it is my turn to share my feelings about the development of London into a cycling city. Members may

browse the Internet if they are interested. In 2013, the then incumbent Mayor of London, Boris JOHNSON, published a vision statement on a bicycle policy, which was a relatively detailed report. In gist, the 2013 report indicated his determination to develop bicycles as a mode of transport and a means of commuting in London in future. Back then, he had put forth several points, and I think these are worthy of reference to Members.

To achieve his target, he proposed a number of measures. First, he set a target for the number of office workers commuting to work on bicycles in the next 10 years. According to his proposal, the number of cyclists would double in 10 years. This is the first point. The second target he set was to conduct a thorough and holistic examination of the safety of all roads and intersections in the City of London. Deputy President, we all know that if bicycles are allowed to become a mode of transport, as mentioned by Dr Elizabeth QUAT earlier, it is necessary to examine our roads. The approach adopted in London is to designate certain sections of major trunk roads as cycle lanes. Basically, the authorities have to examine all the roads and intersections in London from the safety perspective and in a holistic manner to support the policy. Certainly, one essential arrangement must be made, which works is still in progress, Deputy President, and that is, the so-called Cycle Superhighways in London. In brief, it is a super highway for cyclists to run through London from one place to another, and office workers may cycle to work on these highways.

In fact, the works projects of these Cycle Superhighways connecting East and West London are still in progress. Deputy President, as Boris JOHNSON said, this project is not a one-day project but a long-term project. When they determined to develop London into a bicycle-friendly city and increase the number of people cycling to work significantly by a double, they were certain that the works project must be implemented in an ongoing manner long term to improve all the roads and eventually change the outlook of the City of London as a whole. Deputy President, back then, when I was studying in London, I saw many of my friends, students and office workers ride bicycles. If Members have been to London in recent years, they would have noticed that dynastic changes have taken place in London.

Another point I consider worthy of mention is bicycle rental arrangements which many Members have mentioned today. Take London of the United Kingdom as an example. Bicycle rental services are extremely popular and common. Basically, one can rent a bicycle at £2 the cheapest. As Honourable colleagues said, one can rent a bicycle anytime and anywhere now. There is an

App informing hirers of the most convenient locations for them to return their bicycles. Hirers can check the App for the locations wherever they go. It is really convenient. I think this approach is convenient to people who use bicycles to commute to transport interchanges.

In Hong Kong, this is a feasible approach that can be considered. For instance, if a person lives in the New Territories, he may cycle to an MTR station and then go to work. In fact, this approach of connection transport is extremely popular in other regions or countries. I do not see why the Government has no clear intention to follow up this approach. According to the Secretary, the authorities will encourage some non-profit-making organizations to start the work in this aspect. I think this is a step forward, yet the authorities can be more proactive.

Deputy President, as a number of Members mentioned, in the urban areas in Hong Kong and Kowloon, it may be difficult to adopt this kind of bicycle-friendly policy in view of the established arrangements for roads and tight road surface. However, Deputy President, there is room for development in the New Territories, particularly in new town planning. The authorities should keep abreast of the times and implement bicycle-friendly measures and ancillary facilities.

Lastly, Deputy President, I would like to point out that even if the Government regards bicycles as a tool of recreation, there are areas it has failed to do a proper job. These include the cycle track from Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan. I have to remind the Government that the cycle track is still at its planning stage. Though the remaining works for the cycle track from Tuen Mun to Sheung Shui commenced in June 2016, they have not yet been completed. Many people have been waiting earnestly for the commissioning of the cycle track and hope that the Government will complete the relevant works as soon as possible.

Deputy President, I so submit.

DR JUNIUS HO (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I thank Mr HUI Chi-fung for proposing the motion on "Formulating a bicycle-friendly policy and designating bicycles as a mode of transport". In the long run, we should do more thinking in this direction. It would be best that such a policy can be rolled out as early as possible. Nevertheless, I understand that there is still a long way to go because limited by a host of fundamental physical constraints in Hong Kong at present, it

is often unlikely to effect substantial improvement in the urban areas so as to fit in with the principle of safe cycling, so that bicycles may become a means for commuting to work or a mode of transport. Moreover, I also strongly support the amendment proposed by Mr LUK Chung-hung. And as I consider five of its concrete measures are particularly objective, I am particularly supportive of such proposals. For this reason, I thank Mr HUI Chi-fung for proposing the motion and support Mr LUK Chung-hung's amendment.

Just now, I have mentioned that Hong Kong is basically small and densely populated, with a number of physical constraints. After all, the Government should come up with ways to address people's pressing needs. Before dwelling further on this, there are two things that I wish to share with Members in particular. The saying that "mighty oaks from little acorns grow" is universally true. If we intend to explore ways to formulate such a policy, we still have a long way to go and need to take a number of factors into consideration. Nevertheless, the two points that I am going to raise may be helpful in some measure. If the Secretary is "groping for stones to cross the river" in the course of exploration, I think these two approaches will probably offer him greater insights.

First of all, country parks are currently places for hiking and recreational activities, and they account for more than 40% of the area of countryside in Hong Kong. If we can open up country parks to visitors for cycling, conflicts with other modes of transport will be minimized because those inside the parks are mainly visitors. I consider it a good start if visitors are allowed to cycle in country parks, which can enhance the ancillary facilities of country parks while raising the safety coefficient. I consider it the best option that takes into account such factors as bends and road conditions, and enhancement of facilities for mutual care among visitors, without incurring considerable costs.

At present, we can see swarms of cycling enthusiasts cycle on roads during weekends, and these sportsmen are actually longing for fresh air and physical well-being through workouts. In my view, if they are allowed to cycle in the beautiful country parks, it will increase the safety coefficient on all fronts and reduce the chances of conflicts. This is the first approach that I wish to suggest. And a number of existing provisions of the Country Parks Ordinance which have become obsolete can be a trap for cycling enthusiasts as they have to cycle stealthily in country parks, but more often than not, they will be caught by the law. I believe if something can be done about this, immediate results will be seen.

Secondly, in 2011, when I personally drove along the Castle Peak Road, Tsuen Wan-bound from Tuen Mun or vice versa, I found that the view on the way was magnificent. In addition to a distant view of both sides of the Lantau Island, I could also see the airport, the Ting Kau Bridge and the Sham Tseng area, and together they formed a spectacular view. We may try providing a weekend cycle track first to see how things go. The Castle Peak Road is actually a dual-carriageway two-lane road consisting of four lanes. We may arrange for weekend trials, just like the designation of weekend pedestrian precincts at Sai Yeung Choi Street, Mong Kok in the past. Will it work out? Surely it will. We may draw on such experience, opening up two of the lanes of the 17 km-long, well-constructed Castle Peak Road stretching from Tsuen Wan to Tuen Mun for a total of 24 hours from midnight on Saturday to midnight on Sunday, so that members of the public or visitors in Hong Kong may cycle there. I do think that people will enjoy it very much.

Furthermore, such an approach may also serve to complement the existing bicycle policy. Having expressed its intention to construct cycle tracks in Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun, the Administration has experienced some bumps along the way, but the initiative has yet to take shape and no consensus has been reached with villagers. While the weekend cycle track is an interim measure, it will provide people in Hong Kong with a new recreational cycle track in New Territories West on top of the one in New Territories East. I think that this may, on the one hand, ensure safe cycling in the road environment while on the other, boost the economy of the districts and promote tourism, killing several birds with one stone, so to speak. And in fact, it will not take much time to get it rolled out.

Hence, I hope the Bureau will thoroughly consider these two proposals put forward by me now, which are constructive approaches in such a direction conducive to the formulation of a long-term bicycle policy. Today I have heard a number of Members speak in support of the formulation of a long-term bicycle policy, exploring whether bicycles may become a means for commuting to work. Remote though the goal may seem, we will not give up on our pursuit of it. Nevertheless, from point A to point B, how should we explore feasible options? To sort out the steps to be taken in the process, "groping for stones to cross the river" is the best way out.

Deputy President, I so submit. Thank you.

MR CHAN CHI-CHUEN (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I thank Mr HUI Chi-fung for proposing this Member's motion: "Formulating a bicycle-friendly policy and designating bicycles as a mode of transport".

Today I have listened to the speeches of many Members and the majority of them support the direction of the motion. The motion proposes "designating bicycles as a mode of transport", which stands in contrast to the Government's claim that they are only for leisure.

Compared with Mr SHIU Ka-chun and Ms Tanya CHAN, I am slightly better as I know a little how to cycle. However, with an innately poor sense of balance, I cycle not too stably; and also due to some childhood accidents, I am quite timid and would not cycle on roads. I would only cycle on cycle tracks. The last time I cycled was in Tai Po with "Long Hair" during the election last year. Honestly, I only cycled for a very short while to understand the defects of cycle tracks in Hong Kong.

As a matter of fact, when talking about a bicycle-friendly policy, other than the Government being friendly to bicycles, pedestrians, drivers and other users of public transport also need to adopt this attitude. Therefore, a policy reflects a way of life.

In recent years, many regions have used Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, as a benchmark to build bicycle-friendly cities. It all started in the 1970s when the oil crisis dealt a severe blow to the Danish economy, so much so that the Danish Government began to develop afresh its energy policy to minimize its reliance on fossil fuel. One of the many measures was to promote a bicycle-friendly policy as a substitute scheme. The Government took the lead to reduce the use of cars and promote a policy favourable to cycling. Today 40% of people in Copenhagen mainly commute by bicycles.

Of course, we are not so naïve as to think that the Hong Kong Government can achieve such a goal overnight and the Secretaries will ride a bicycle to work. Mr YIU Si-wing has expressed worries in his speech, that he does not support making bicycles a major mode of transport. He would be dreaming to think that bicycles can become a major mode of transport in Hong Kong! We just hope to formulate a bicycle-friendly policy so that, after various ancillary measures are implemented, people have one more choice of transport and we can expand our

imagination of the city. Whether out of environmental protection or "self-determination" of how we go to work, we can have one more choice.

The Government first needs to remove regulations and restrictions to create a social environment conducive to cycling. For example in Taipei City, the first and last cars of the Rapid Transit trains can be designated for bicycles during non-peak hours; at the same time, bicycle-only lanes can be delineated on both sides of the road; and parking spaces for bicycles can also be increased to facilitate people commuting by bicycles anytime anywhere. Indeed, many Honourable colleagues have been to Taiwan for exchange visits. As regards the issue of bicycles, there are a lot of aspects we can learn from Taipei. Taipei City has introduced the public bicycle rental scheme, YouBike, in recent years. Locals do not need to purchase their own bicycles but can rent them so as to lower the threshold of commuting by bicycles.

Unfortunately, to truly achieve bicycle-friendliness, Hong Kong still needs to expend a lot of efforts. Not long ago, netizens in Tseung Kwan O photographed a sign reading "no cycling" in the public space of the Hong Kong Velodrome Park. It was exceedingly ironic.

On invitation by InvestHK, the bicycle-sharing platform, Gobe.ebike, was launched in Hong Kong a few months ago. However, due to a lack of coordination among government departments, multiple complaints made by people, indiscriminate parking of bicycles and even occupation of many public parking spaces, it has made many blunders after more than a month of trial. Today I read a news story about a bicycle having had its lock removed and was parked outside the home of its user, meaning it was stolen. After all is said and done, the problem arises because the Government, when dealing with new things, only knows how to enforce the law and shirk responsibilities, rather than embracing them with an open attitude.

Indeed, irregularities concerning bicycle-sharing have similarly occurred in Singapore, Hualien and Taitung. Bicycles can be rented and dropped off anytime anywhere but are often found parked outside shops or even occupying parking spaces of motorcycles, much to people's chagrin. Consequently, the Mayor of Taipei, KO Wen-je, learnt the lessons before introducing the bicycle-sharing service to Taipei and emphasized that the government's stance on it was management but not prohibition. Both YouBike or bicycles that can be rented and dropped off anytime anywhere should be managed with such an attitude. For example, the authorities should discuss with the operators and establish a penalty regime for indiscriminate parking, stipulate areas for lawful

return of bicycles so that operators know the rules and consequences of non-compliance and allow them to do business while setting some reasonable bottom lines so as not to affect other people's daily life and discourage the innovative spirit in society.

Sometimes it is an onerous task to push the bicycle policy in Hong Kong forward so that bicycles can become a means of commute. For example, the Government has earlier announced the expansion of the existing cycle track networks. The works are expected to be completed in 2017, but have been delayed over and over again. The works for a section of the track from Tuen Mun to Sheung Shui only commenced after repeated consultations with the District Council and members of the local community, and will be completed in 2020 the earliest. As regards the section between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan, there is no works timetable and it may eventually be shelved. A cycle track expansion scheme proposed 10 years ago is still endlessly awaiting the completion date. Is it just an insurmountable task to urge the Government to make changes to the bicycle policy?

As a matter of fact, the bicycle policy should not be the sole responsibility of the Transport and Housing Bureau, for various government departments should effect better communication and cooperation indeed. Frankly, to become a bicycle-friendly city, Hong Kong has a long way to go. People who commute by bicycles have relayed that they are still given cold shoulders when they bring their bicycles onboard public transport. For example, bus drivers are reluctant to carry them and are afraid that bicycle handlebars will damage the glass windows. Cyclists need to remove the front wheels riding on MTR, which is quite inconvenient to them.

It shows that, to change the community's attitude towards bicycles, people should at least realize that commuting by bicycle is usual, but not that bicycle users are a different species or troublemakers.

I hope that today's motion can initiate some momentum to change the past Government's old attitude towards bicycles. Not everyone has to ride a bicycle but at least when people want to commute by bicycles, they have the choice. Of course, it would be even better if the Government can organize bicycle training courses for adults like us who do not know if they know how to cycle or not.

I so submit.

MR ALVIN YEUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I would like to thank Mr HUI Chi-fung for proposing this motion debate today. In the debate today, I notice that many people, including Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, are like me who can only cycle forward on a bicycle, yet I will bump into bollards.

Deputy President, today, many Members have expressed their views on a bicycle policy and shared the experience of many overseas countries. One of the arguments is about the overcautious attitude of the Government in promoting a bicycle policy. These include its concerns about the awareness of the public, such as safety alertness and consciousness of road usage of drivers and road users. Before we go on with the discussion, I would like to cite an example to illustrate the wisdom of the community in self-help.

I would like to share the story about two young people in starting their own business. They have invented a bicycle helmet with white lights in the front and red lights on the back, whereas left and right indicator lights are visible on the back. This smart bicycle helmet has been put into production in Hong Kong now. This product of two Hongkongers is handled by a Hong Kong manufacturer in Hong Kong. The two young people have beaten Tesla to win a design award granted in the United Kingdom. My point is that, despite the overcautious attitude and considerable worries of the Government, the community has done a lot and taken a few steps forward.

How determined and sincere is the Government in creating room and a favourable environment for cyclists to truly enjoy cycling? Let us put aside other issues and focus on cycle tracks, Deputy President. Before the Budget of this year was published, we had asked the Highways Department ("HyD") about repair works of cycle tracks completed by the Department in various districts in the past five years. In the four districts in New Territories East which I serve, a total length of 5.9 km were completed in the past five years. It sounds like a great length, Deputy President, yet this is the total length of all cycle tracks repaired in the past five years in New Territories East and it was only 5.9 km in total.

The situation of the Islands District is even more shocking. Outlying islands like Lantau Island, Ping Chau and Cheung Chau, which we often visit on holidays are included under the Islands District. In the past five years, from 2012 to 2016-2017, how many kilometres of cycle tracks were repaired? Deputy President, there were only 2 km. Only 2 km of repair works were completed in five years. Deputy President, Members can imagine how many

Hongkongers will go cycling on these outlying islands during holidays, yet the total length of cycle tracks repaired is only 2 km. It is not only ridiculous, it is appalling.

Are HyD and the Government truly sincere in improving cycle tracks? We are not demanding the Government to do much but to create some room for the public to enjoy cycling in a safe environment. When I asked HyD the same question and about its future plans on repairing cycle tracks continuously, HyD said that it did not have any detailed information in this connection at the present stage. A straw shows which way the wind blows. We can see that the attitude of the Government as a whole, Deputy President, is not particularly favourable.

Some Members mentioned the various restrictions encountered by cyclists earlier. I would like to point out the case in Berlin, Germany, in particular. Unlike Hong Kong, there are no restrictions on carrying bicycles on public modes of transport in Berlin, where cyclists are not required to remove the wheels of bicycles and place bicycles at specified positions when they take public transport. In fact, designated spaces are provided on public modes of transport for the convenience of the public carrying bicycles. When we look around the world, as in the case of Tokyo and Taiwan were mentioned earlier, the authorities concerned have adopted the approach of formulating kind of bicycle-friendly policies.

In Hong Kong, the carriage of bicycles on MTR trains is allowed only with the wheels removed. In fact, in the Panel on Transport, Members have proposed and passed a motion requesting MTRCL to review this policy to allow cyclists to carry bicycles with wheels on inside the cabins of MTR trains during non-peak hours. There is a practical reason for this proposal, that is, if the wheels of bicycles are removed, the cyclists have to hold the bicycle frame with one hand and the wheels with another, which is even more dangerous. Hence, Deputy President, this proposal is practically meaningful.

I now come to another point on ancillary facilities for bicycles, that is, bicycle parking spaces. Deputy President, nowadays, not only people are affected by the problems of land supply, bicycles are also affected. Take Tai Po which I serve as an example. In Po Heung Estate, the intake of which started in 2016, no bicycle parking space is provided in the vicinity of the train station in Tai Po which is proclaimed as a cycling town. This speaks volumes about the attitude adopted by the Government towards bicycles. It is worrying that not even one bicycle parking space is provided.

On bicycle parking spaces, I would like to list some figures. Between 2011 and 2015, around 1 100 additional bicycle parking spaces were provided in Sha Tin District. Adding to this the original 10 755 spaces, the total number of bicycle parking spaces seems to be quite desirable. Yet, Deputy President, in view of the 660 000 population of Sha Tin, is the number of bicycle parking spaces proportionate? However, we have not heard the Government stating whether it has laid down specific targets, and whether there is any specific strategy and rationale supporting its approach. Moreover, we are talking about Sha Tin, a district where the public will often go cycling, so the number of bicycle parking spaces is obviously insufficient.

Another issue is illegal parking. Deputy President, at present, many bicycle parking spaces set up by the Government near MTR stations use the U-shape design, for the Government considers this a solution to the problem. Yet more often than not, many people will park their bicycles along the U-shape parking racks. Sometimes, the security of bicycles parked is questionable. More often than not, parts of bicycles parked there will be stolen and these parking spaces have eventually deteriorated into graves for bicycles. Since no one will collect those broken bicycles, the Government has to clean up the mess. This vicious cycle continues. What does the Government want to do with bicycles? We hope the Government will do something in terms of policy to bring benefits to the public.

I so submit.

MR SHIU KA-FAI (in Cantonese): Deputy President, since cyclist athletes HUNG Chung-yam, WONG Kam-po and Sarah LEE, winning a great deal of international awards, have created legends for Hong Kong, more and more people in Hong Kong have become cycling enthusiasts.

Given that Hong Kong is a small but densely populated place, the Government has focused its transport policy on the development of a mass transit system, encouraging the use of public transport by members of the public, while bicycles are only for leisure purposes, recreational activities and sports. This motion today has proposed designating bicycles as a mode of transport. But if it is forced through in the absence of comprehensive ancillary facilities, it will not only be impractical, but also give rise to a host of negative problems.

Since the germination of the idea of "inclusive cycling" in Hong Kong, there have been views that the Government should offer greater incentives for members of the public in Hong Kong to commute by bicycles. It can not only help reduce emissions and improve roadside air quality, but also encourage people to exercise more to promote physical well-being. But in reality, given an inadequacy of ancillary facilities and a short supply of bicycle parking spaces, the illegal parking problem has gone from bad to worse instead. The large number of bicycles parked by roadside railings in the New Territories has not only affected the streetscape, but also obstructed access.

At present, a number of countries around the world actually encourage their people to use or rent bicycles in order to improve air quality, and many people often use countries where bicycles are commonly used for commuting, such as Denmark, the Netherlands and those countries with an emerging trend of using bicycles, like Singapore, for comparison. Nevertheless, given the difference in the circumstances between Hong Kong and these countries in terms of geographical features, traffic conditions, traffic rules, civic awareness, etc., a direct comparison may not be appropriate.

Bound by its own geographical constraints, roads in the urban areas are tremendously narrow and busy in Hong Kong. With the continual growth in the number of vehicles, there is actually a shortfall of loading/unloading bays for light goods vehicles, let alone car parking spaces. Conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles are a common sight. Riding bicycles on busy roads will only increase the chances of traffic accidents. In recent years, we can often see teams of cyclists riding real fast on busy roads, which is actually most dangerous.

In fact, given the traffic conditions of Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, there is simply no way to spare space for providing zones and roads dedicated to bicycles only. Take Hong Kong Island as an example. Cyclists are actually prohibited from using expressways and pavements. They can only use such normal roads as King's Road and Johnston Road. The roads are already narrow, and some of them carry tram tracks. I believe the provision of additional passageways dedicated to bicycles only is by no means an easy task, and replanning is even out of the question.

According to police statistics, in the past two years, the number of casualties caused by bicycles stood at some 2 000 cases. But in the first two

months this year, 310 traffic accidents caused by bicycles were recorded, causing 321 casualties, up by more than 10% from the 279 cases and 290 casualties recorded in the same period in 2016. Obviously, the cycling safety awareness of the general public is still on the low side. For this reason, the Liberal Party does not encourage the use of bicycles as a mode of transport by members of the public in urban areas unless the Government has come up with solutions to address road safety issues.

Compared with the urban areas where land use has reached capacity, new towns and new development areas are more suitable for the construction of dedicated cycle tracks. Hence, the Liberal Party will not oppose the proposal put forward by Chief Executive LEUNG Chun-ying in the Policy Address early this year to link up the sections of cycle tracks in new towns and new development areas, so as to create a bicycle-friendly environment for the convenience of those who wish to cycle. Perfecting the existing cycle track networks will make it convenient for local residents to commute by bicycles for short journeys, and enable members of the public to cycle for leisure on holidays.

Currently, 90% of the people are users of modes of public transport, which are particularly congested during peak hours. While such major modes of public transport as MTR trains, buses and ferries allow members of the public to, provided that no obstruction is caused, carry on board bicycles properly folded up or with their wheels removed, we should know that not many people commute by cycling now. However, let us assume that bicycles are designated as a mode of transport. I believe many will carry bicycles on board such modes of public transport, thereby fuelling conflicts among people in the course of boarding or alighting or over space occupied. For this reason, we do not approve of designating bicycles as a mode of public transport rashly.

While cycling is an activity beneficial to both body and mind, prolonged cycling in an environment with poor roadside air quality will affect our health and incur heavy social costs. According to the findings of a report released by the School of Medicine, the University of London in 2011, cyclists who frequently rode on busy highways breathed in more than twice the amount of pollutants than pedestrians did, and in 2015, the King's College London even recommended cyclists minimize the use of major roads.

Deputy President, I wish to point out that as a driver, every time I see cyclists riding on public roads, I feel envious yet worried. As a driver, when I see them during the course of driving, given the difference in speed and the narrow roads in Hong Kong, which differ much from that overseas, I will get butterflies in my stomach. Sometimes when I am a passenger sitting at the back instead of the driver's seat, it will add to my worries because I can still have some control over it if I am the one who drives. Hence, I believe it may not do any good if the Government still fails to come up with a comprehensive transport policy.

Lastly, Deputy President, the Liberal Party considers that if the Government is unable to come up with proper ways of segregating pedestrians, vehicles and bicycles, we cannot support the motion this time around. Thank you, Deputy President.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, Members might have listened to a song called *Daisy Bell (Bicycle Built for Two)* in childhood. It is about the wonderful use of bicycles. Its lyrics depict the strong affection of a boy for his lover. The boy said that even though he could not afford a carriage to pick her up and take her to the wedding ceremony, the ceremony would still be wonderful as long as the two of them could ride on his bicycle together. We can see from this that cycling was already regarded as an alternative mode of transport long ago. But owing to the Industrial Revolution ... Actually, motorbikes are also a kind of bicycles. If Members visit any museum, they will see that motorbikes were actually bicycles fitted with a motor in the early days. The rider might start the motor when he was tired or climbing a slope.

The downfall of bicycles can certainly be ascribed to the rise of motor cars. The philosophy of governance of many countries was to enable everybody to own a car, such as a Volkswagen. HITLER said, "Trust me. Nazism will enable every one of you to own a car." After FORD invented a new method for his production lines, he said that every American would be able to own a car. Actually, the current development of motor cars fitted with so many luxurious features is a result of manpower input as the basis together with the installation of mechanical devices. Therefore, the crux of this motion today is to restore this means of transport adopted by human beings long ago.

Mr SHIU Ka-fai should support this motion. The reason is that his perception of cycling as a dangerous activity shows that it is necessary to enact express legislation and then formulate various rules and regulations on the basis of the law, so as to turn bicycles into a mode of transport. Only if we adopt this as the basis will we utilize social resources and recognize bicycles as an alternative mode of transport, a means of transportation or a means of travelling around according to some people.

The issue under discussion today calls for our serious attention to bicycles. The lyrics of the song I quoted a moment ago are about cycling as an alternative mode of transport for going to the wedding ceremony due to a lack of money. Of course, this song owes its origin to the United States. If we refuse to take this angle as the basis, we cannot possibly achieve anything. We have discussed this matter for quite some time in the legislature. For example, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong has likewise expressed the need to build proper cycle tracks because cycling is a recreational activity among people. But this is not the issue now under discussion.

The point is simple. Just now, Mr Dennis KWOK told us that he cycled all the way from Taikoo Shing to Admiralty. If he cycles on expressways, I will be really concerned about his safety. He certainly will not do so. What I mean is that if we regard bicycles as a mode of transport, then we should impose regulation and require cyclists to, for example, obtain a licence, wear certain protective gear and receive training. As I have seen, many cyclists do not bother to make any gestures and pull out all of a sudden. It looks like they really perceive their bicycles as armoured vehicles. For these reasons, I think it is necessary to formulate a policy and then begin the fermentation process in this Council, which will certainly hold public hearings. This is the only way to attain real success.

This is precisely the crux of the entire debate today. So, if anyone raises opposition on the ground that it is dangerous to cycle on roads, then I will say this reason actually cannot stand. The reason is that these days, drivers of other modes of transport share a misconception about cycling, the misconception that cycling on roads causes hindrance. The case of our protests is just the same. Some people think that protesting on the streets poses obstruction to traffic as they do not understand that everybody can use our roads. Actually, they do not

have to be so furious. Protests may cause them inconvenience for a little while. The case of cycling is just the same.

So, in discussing this issue, we must ask the Government to consider the whole matter thoroughly. If bicycles are designated as a mode of transport, cyclists should certainly be required to pay a licence fee because the Government will only provide them with services after receiving their payments, and road traffic rules should be formulated to help them. Other road users shall be penalized if they are reckless of cyclists' safety.

I once almost lost my life when cycling in Germany. That day, I suddenly felt a strong turbulence when cycling—I am not good at cycling, and Mr LEUNG Che-cheung was wrong in saying that I did not know how to cycle. On that occasion, I was really close to death. Why? Many container trucks drove past the area near my lodging. Those truck drivers might also think that I was an idiot. At the time, I was cycling on a carriageway instead of a cycle track for the sake of convenience. When a container truck drove past me, my whole body wobbled. Perhaps it was really God who came to my rescue on that occasion. Had I failed to stay calm and hold the crossbar tightly with all my strength and tumbled towards the container truck, there probably would be no more of a Legislative Council Member called LEUNG Kwok-hung.

So, my argument is actually very simple. But I can tell Members that one problem will definitely arise because Hong Kong is a city suffering from "car-mania". Despite high vehicle registration and fuel taxes, the number of cars has nonetheless recorded a 50% growth. On this matter, I think the incentives for the Government to designate bicycles as a mode of transport are honestly too few because they offer no tax revenue. And, Members should understand that car and fuel sellers are very fierce groups with vested interests. They will certainly raise as much opposition as possible to the idea of encouraging Hong Kong people to cycle more often. I am not joking. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung and Mr CHAN Hak-kan may rise to speak later on. I hope they can offer a bit of help in convincing Members of this Council to voice unanimous support. The motion just proposes a direction. And if it is wrong, this Council may remedy the situation because this motion is not intended to have any legislative effect. I really wish to tell Members that we must provide cyclists with some road space and turn bicycles into a mode of transport.

MR LEUNG CHE-CHEUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, we are supposed to "give way". I very much agree with Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's suggestions and comments. Just now while discussing this motion, some Honourable colleagues said they would use bicycles as a mode of transport travelling to the Legislative Council. An Honourable colleague, President Andrew LEUNG, jokingly said if so a by-election will become necessary very soon. It means that it is very dangerous to cycle on the roads. Honourable colleagues commuting to the Legislative Council by such a mode of transport will be vulnerable to accidents. In other words, the motion we discuss today is very important, that is how to protect the safety of people using bicycles as an eco-friendly mode of transport. It is the most important factor in our consideration.

Overall speaking, in the past there have been six discussions on similar topics such as safety of bicycles, bicycle issues, cycling environment and bicycle-friendliness in the Legislative Council, which involved papers provided by the Government. For oral questions alone, there were three. It proves that this issue is a major concern to Honourable colleagues. The discussion today is about a bicycle-friendly policy and how to designate bicycles as a mode of transport.

However, I found it quite strange after studying the laws of Hong Kong. I wonder if the Secretary knows that, according to the existing legislation, anyone violating the Road Traffic Ordinance ("the Ordinance") when cycling on the road will be subject to the same penalties as driving motor vehicles. I believe the Secretary must know this law. Yet, I have asked many Honourable colleagues about this, and they all said they do not know. Mr CHAN Hak-kan, the Ordinance stipulates that a driving licence holder who violates the Ordinance when cycling on the road will incur demerit points but the fine will be lower and the penalty more lenient given that bicycle speeding is less serious. Reckless cycling incurs a fine of just \$500, while careless driving means real troubles and the offender is liable to a fine of \$5,000 and imprisonment.

Do we think that bicycles have become a mode of transport? We cannot say they have not because there are already penalties for cycling on the road. Reckless cycling, unless the rider does not have a driving licence, will incur demerit points. In other words, the Ordinance governs bicycles as well. Honourable colleagues consider that the existing Ordinance may not be able to cover some situations. I have this question: How will the Government handle cyclists breaking the rules when cycling on cycle tracks, such as disobeying the

rules of the cycle tracks? Does the Government have a set of criteria? I know it has. There are signs along cycle tracks mandating cyclists to dismount and push the bicycles at some junctures; non-compliance can induce prosecution. However, is there a speed limit? It seems not because the Government has not put in place measures to check the speed of bicycles. For the safety of the public and cyclists, will the Government dedicate more efforts to exercising regulation?

Moreover, many beginner cyclists are susceptible to falling, affecting the safety of other drivers. Will the Government require riders of bicycles on cycle tracks or roads to complete some courses so as to enhance their traffic knowledge and even cycling knowledge? Only in this way can the purpose of designating bicycles as a mode of transport, which I have just mentioned, be achieved. However, I have heard the opposing views raised by many Honourable colleagues, who think that many problems may arise if various ancillary facilities are not put in place before implementation. It may even reduce the incentive of people who wish to commute by bicycles. Then how do we promote environmental protection? I believe, in this respect, there is a process and the Government must conduct genuine studies and discussions.

The shortage of bicycle parking spaces is a fact. Parking spaces for bicycles in Hong Kong total 57 758. But for example in Yuen Long, some areas often suffer from obstruction of passageways due to shortage of bicycle parking spaces. The District Council, upon receipt of complaints, expends a lot of resources on specially clearing the bicycles. In other words, more than 50 000 bicycle parking spaces are not enough. There are 20 000 spaces in Yuen Long and Tuen Mun altogether, accounting for two fifths of the total, but it remains not adequate. The Government needs to make stronger efforts in identifying suitable spots for additional bicycle parking spaces so that people who are willing to commute by bicycles can access appropriate parking spaces.

As regards the newly-launched bicycle-sharing scheme, people have already had some opinions, because these bicycles are indiscriminately parked, obstructing streets and people. Therefore, while increasing parking spaces, the Government needs to regulate shared bicycles so that a correct attitude towards bicycle-friendliness can be established for the promotion of a more eco-friendly mode of transport.

I so submit. Thank you, Deputy President.

MR CHAN HAK-KAN (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I have always been concerned about environmental protection, so I would like to discuss this issue from two aspects: environment protection and the positioning of cycling in the Government's transport policy.

As a matter of fact, the whole world except Hong Kong is promoting green transport. It is strange that Hong Kong is not too much in favour of green transport—the Under Secretary is looking at me with eyes wide open—why? I wish to bring up old scores of the Transport and Housing Bureau ("the Bureau") which has just cancelled the tax concession for electric vehicles. The whole world is promoting electric vehicles, but the Hong Kong Government has cancelled the tax concession for electric vehicles due to an increase in the number of vehicles, forcing people to replace them with diesel or petrol cars. This is absolutely a regression. Of course, the Secretary may say that this is the responsibility of WONG Kam-sing, but I believe the Bureau has a leading role in this matter. So, I wish to take this opportunity to criticize the Government.

Cycling has become a trend in many European and Asian cities in the last decade and is positioned as a feeder transport for the last kilometre within the city which can help people reach their destination as soon as possible. For example, public bicycle rental services are available to people living near train stations in Paris, Tokyo, Taipei and Seoul. The public transport model for the last kilometre was also introduced in Beijing and Shanghai recently. Studies have shown that, under this model, the annual carbon emission in Beijing has dropped by 540 000 tonnes, which is equivalent to the total annual carbon emission of 170 000 small private cars. It can thus be seen that using bicycles as the mode of transport for the last kilometre can reduce emission and is more environmentally friendly. However, it seems that the Government does not agree with positioning bicycles as a mode of transport. We often relay the actual situation of New Territories residents to the Government. For instance, housewives going out for groceries and sending their children to school or people going to work may not take the minibus because they can never get on a green minibus. They can only go to the train station by bike and then transfer to a train. Housewives sending children to school or going to the grocery by bike is actually very environmentally friendly. For them, cycling is a means of transport. However, as the Government sees bicycles as a tool for recreation, there are many problems in the design of cycle tracks and facilities.

Deputy President, the issues related to bicycles that we often discuss include: fragmented cycle tracks; inadequate signage on some cycle tracks; some cycle tracks in Sha Tin turn 90 degrees after a hidden slope, so cyclists may risk bumping into the wall. Why are there these defects in the design? It is because the Government did not position bicycles as a mode of transport. If bicycles are positioned as a mode of transport, the Government must meet a high standard in designing cycle tracks, ancillary facilities and parking spaces. But as cycling is only considered as recreational, the Government can act perfunctorily. For the Government, it is a pass as long as people do not often get knocked down to death. If the Government can position bicycles as a supplementary mode of transport, or even as a mode of transport as Mr HUI Chi-fung suggested, the problems of cycle tracks and parking spaces that we often criticize will all be solved. Part of the current transport connection issues in the New Territories can also be solved, and thus a three-win situation can be achieved. So why is the Government not doing this? I am utterly puzzled.

In 2008, the Government proposed the construction of a super cycle track connecting Sai Kung to Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. Has the works been completed? The Secretary is shaking his head, meaning it has yet to be completed. It will be completed in 2020. It takes more than 10 years to build a cycle track of this standard. The time taken would be enough to build a few more Ma On Shan Rail or Express Rail Link. It gives people the impression that the Government really does not attach any importance to a policy on bicycles. The Director of Audit's Report No. 63 has made comments on this issue, I am not going to make any further elaboration here.

I would like to tell the Government that bike-sharing is a new trend. An Honourable colleague has mentioned the problems of illegal parking and indiscriminate disposals caused by bike-sharing. In fact, these problems can easily be solved by putting in place regulation. In Taiwan, for example, anyone parking a shared bicycle illegally is liable to penalties or arrest. These are measures that Hong Kong may follow. The implementation of the policy and relevant business development of bike-sharing should not be impeded simply because of the emergence of some minor problems.

Lastly, I hope that the Government will continue to comprehensively review its policy on bicycles in terms of their positioning and hardware, so that

bicycles can be taken as both a recreational tool and a supplementary mode of transport which is not only helpful to the public not also the environment.

Thank you, Deputy President.

DR PRISCILLA LEUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, every time I went past Castle Peak Road-Ting Kau Section, I would see many people who like cycling and jogging moving towards the West Rail station along the harbourfront. I remember very deeply that on one occasion, when a few secondary school students studying in Kowloon but living in the New Territories met me, they said to me, "Dr LEUNG, we often receive publicity leaflets here stating that there will be a cycle track here. Can you help us ask your colleagues in New Territories West and Kowloon West (that means including me) when the contents of the publicity leaflets will indeed materialize so that we can cycle safely?" Bearing their question in mind, I wish to say a few words for these young people.

I believe the implementation of a bicycle-friendly policy in Hong Kong is really meritorious but preceded by many rough goings. It may not be accomplished in just a couple of years. Nevertheless, we still have many dreams. For example, we always wish to have a continuous harbourfront promenade in Kowloon West. I remember that at that time when we met with Ms Carrie LAM, who was the then Secretary for Development, we asked her if the Government could work on the easier part first and the difficult ones later, constructing a section first and then proceeding to the next one. The rough goings did not end until 2017, when we began to see something taking shape. The ancillary facilities in the West Kowloon Cultural District and many other scenes have given us a glimpse of hope. Moreover, will the developer concerned lend us its road sections for planning?

I believe that the situation of the bicycle-friendly policy is similar. We know that under the existing legislation, bicycles can travel on roads as vehicles, except for highways and the Government's tunnels. I often go to the road section mentioned by me just now. According to my observation, it is very dangerous to cycle on that road. I also remember a serious traffic accident which occurred a few years ago in which a number of athletes who loved cycling were hit by a green minibus when they were practising in Sai Kung. It was heart-rending, and we hoped that the Government would boldly formulate a 10-year plan and develop it jointly with the harbourfront so that the future road

development, especially in the planning of new towns, would demonstrate a bicycle-friendly policy.

I know that apart from policy and legal issues, the development of such a policy will certainly involve environmental protection, sports, transport, education and town planning. Why did I mention education? Because during our discussion about the harbourfront planning, we proposed designating some road sections for cycling, but some members of the public objected. I do not know whether those people who threw the bicycles into the river in Sha Tin hold such views, but I very much hope that we can start with culture in promoting this bicycle-friendly policy.

Just now many Honourable colleagues mentioned Germany. I think apart from Germany, the Netherlands has also done a good job. A number of my friends who are Dutch professors will really cycle to the train stations and then cycle back home from the train stations after work. Some of my lawyer friends also have this habit. This is about our mindset, that means whether we accept it or not. If the entire city starts to consider it as something good to environmental protection and the air quality, and many young people also like it, then we should try to see if we can facilitate this cause by all means in design and planning.

The Mainland used to be a kingdom of bicycles. I lived on the Mainland for two years in the 1990s. Initially I did not know how to ride a bike, but I had got to learn it. Many classmates from Hong Kong really did not know how to ride a bike, but even if we had to go to see a bonesetter repeatedly, we had got to learn it because it was only when we knew how to ride a bike that we could move about in the school campus freely, and we could cycle from the campus to Xiangshan, etc. Certainly, at that time the air quality in China, especially Beijing, was much better than it is now. Now the people have become a lot wealthier. Those who were relatively poor back then can own three or four cars now, thus causing the present serious situation of traffic congestion. Even the odd-even licence plate restriction on driving in the city has failed to solve the problem, and smog has appeared, too. Certainly, this is not the only reason, but when society is modernized and everyone uses motor cars as a substitute for bicycles, a serious problem will arise in the environmental protection of the city.

Hence, in our view, the Government needs to conduct a study on the legislation in this regard. Cyclists on the road are in great danger. So are

motorists because the latter do not know when they will bump into the cyclists. For this reason, even though bicycles will not immediately become a formal mode of transport, I think there is still a need to amend the legislation and provide clearer guidelines out of safety considerations.

I am also a bit worried. Certainly, we will support Mr HUI Chi-fung's motion in the general direction, but the Government must do a lot of work before we can rest assured. Is it too reckless to designate bicycles as a mode of transport? Will many accidents happen on roads? I hope the Government will change its mindset as mentioned by me just now. In particular, I hope the Transport and Housing Bureau will make consideration from various angles when it deals with the bicycle-friendly policy. This matter involves road designers, the education sector, the cultural sector, as well as the Development Bureau which is responsible for new town planning. It is because in constructing a continuous harbourfront promenade, the Development Bureau will have to exert its best to designate some road sections for implementation of the bicycle-friendly policy so that cyclists can use the road safely while the safety of pedestrians can also be assured. I hope this matter, like the harbourfront, will be handled in a cross-bureau approach. This is also a benevolent policy. Hence, I hope the Government can conduct a cross-bureau study (*The buzzer sounded*) ...

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Dr Priscilla LEUNG, your speaking time is up. Please stop speaking.

DR PRISCILLA LEUNG (in Cantonese): ... and formulate a long-term bicycle-friendly policy.

Deputy President, I so submit.

MR CHAN KIN-POR (in Cantonese): Deputy President, cycling is a healthy activity which has been very popular among young people all along.

In recent years, environmentalism has taken root in people's mind. As a form of green transport, cycling has naturally become popular. Besides,

bicycles are a prevalent mode of transport for short-haul journeys in many European and American cities. Such a trend has become representative of a voguish lifestyle, and many people go to work by bicycle.

The promotion of cycling as an alternative means of commute and even a mode of transport is an international trend. Hong Kong is a metropolitan city. I agree with the assertion that the Government needs to formulate a bicycle-friendly policy. But I am a bit concerned about the motion today. Apart from striving for the formulation of a bicycle-friendly policy, the motion also expresses the hope of encouraging people to use bicycles as an alternative mode of transport in urban and rural districts, so as to promote low-carbon transport and achieve environmental protection purposes. But at the same time, some other problems may arise, especially the occurrence of more bicycle accidents. The motion today may have underestimated the seriousness of this problem.

Actually, two serious accidents involving bicycles occurred in Sha Tin recently, causing serious injuries to two cyclists. A look at statistics will give us a clear picture of the seriousness of bicycle accidents. The Government's statistics show that over the past six years, bicycle accidents claimed the lives of 66 people in Hong Kong, and as many as 14 000 people were injured. During the same period, 734 people were killed in traffic accidents in Hong Kong and 95 000 people were injured. A comparison can show the seriousness of bicycle accidents. On average, 11 people are killed every year. This is indeed a shock to us. Let us look at this matter from another angle. Statistics show that in 2015, there were 2 328 accidents involving motorbikes. But there were 2 685 accidents involving bicycles. In other words, the number of bicycle accidents was even greater than that of motorbike accidents. Members must note that these bicycle accidents were so serious that medical attention in hospital was required. In the case of those minor cases, it is utterly impossible to compile any statistics.

(THE PRESIDENT resumed the Chair)

It is generally believed that cycling is a safe activity. But they may not realize that so many accidents have occurred. Without an adequate safety awareness and skillful techniques, it can also be dangerous to cycle on cycle

tracks. Over the years, many bicycle accidents have occurred in the course of descending a slope. So, even if the Government intends to promote a bicycle-friendly policy, I think it should make vigorous efforts to promote safety education and instill the knowledge of safe cycling in people.

The Government has long since made its stance clear, saying that due to safety concerns, it does not encourage people to use bicycles as a mode of transport in the urban areas. But it has also said that as opposed to urban areas, new towns with a lower density in the New Territories have the necessary conditions for adopting bicycles as an alternative mode of transport for short-haul journeys. At the same time, the Government has also stressed that when formulating any measures for encouraging people to adopt bicycles as an alternative mode of transport, it must take account of the fact that Hong Kong is a tiny place with many people and a very high density of development already, and should make safety its primary consideration.

Some people may think that the Government's position is rather conservative. But it is actually reasonable to make consideration from the angle of safety. Besides, road conditions in Hong Kong are honestly different from those in many major cities. The city centre of Hong Kong is crowded with people and vehicles, with vehicles travelling at a high speed on narrow roads and the presence of many large vehicles. Many foreigners utterly dare not drive in Hong Kong, and we can imagine the risks involved in cycling. So, after weighing various pros and cons, I think the Government may consider the idea of allowing cyclists to use certain non-busy urban carriageways. But it must put in place auxiliary safety measures, such as designating dedicated lanes for cyclists. But it should not encourage them to use busy carriageways.

As I said just now, apart from promoting the use of bicycles, a bicycle-friendly policy should also cover the promotion of a safety awareness. Cyclists are not required to wear a safety helmet under the existing legislation. But many incidents involving serious casualties are precisely caused by the failure of cyclists to wear a safety helmet. So, the first thing that the Government should do is to consider the enactment of legislation to mandate wearing of safety helmets by cyclists. Besides, should cyclists be required to undergo certain training or tests before they are allowed to cycle on major carriageways? The Government must conduct studies on all these matters.

Furthermore, the motion proposes to permit the use of bicycles on designated spacious pavements in safe circumstances. I think this proposal is very much problematic because cyclists may lose control of their bicycles anytime when cycling. At the same time, many people cycle at a high speed, thus posing certain risks to pedestrians (especially children and elderly people) on pavements. Besides, there may be difficulties in executing this arrangement as cyclists may not know which pavements they are permitted to use and vice versa. Neither will it work if frequent changes are made. As a result, they will only be induced to cycle on all pavements. This is the last thing the Government wishes to see. So, due to various safety concerns, I believe the Government should also conduct some serious studies.

I so submit.

MR KWONG CHUN-YU (in Cantonese): President, I rise to speak in support of the motion proposed by Mr HUI Chi-fung on formulating a bicycle-friendly policy.

Let us first look at the achievements made by Hong Kong athletes in cycling. From HUNG Chung-yam, WONG Kam-po, WONG Wan-yiu to Sarah LEE, cyclist athletes, one generation after another, have brought Hong Kong to the centre stage in the international sports arena. However, in the context of sports for all, it seems difficult to introduce cycling into the community of Hong Kong.

We can look at the introduction for the Cycling Information Centre, in which a paragraph states, "Cycling Information Centre ("CIC") is a one-stop information platform for the public at large who are interested in cycling activities... you will find relevant information supplied by various Government departments on recreational and leisure cycling activities". The term "recreational and leisure cycling activities" is used. According to the description given by the Government on the information webpage of the Transport Department, we can imagine that the Government still regards bicycles as a tool for recreational and leisure activities. We are not yet in the discussion on whether bicycles can be used as a mode of transport in daily life.

Honestly, I trust that many "cycling enthusiasts" in Hong Kong have met the following situation, that is, they have to remove the wheels of their bicycles when they carry their bicycles on railways. Regarding this approach of removing wheels of bicycles for space-saving purposes, some foreigners find this strange. Foreigners find the practice ironic, for removing the wheels will make it more difficult for cyclists to balance their bicycles.

There are many inadequacies in ancillary facilities in Hong Kong. Some time ago, we conducted an on-site inspection with the media to examine the fatal traps found along cycle tracks. We notice that the inverted-U shape speed reducing channels, commonly called the "ancestral tablets", are still found along cycle tracks. Originally, these reducing channels were installed to require cyclists to dismount, but due to the occurrence of some fatal accidents, these reducing channels were replaced by some yellow plastic bollards a few years ago. However, in the last few months, we notice the re-emergence of these inverted-U shape "ancestral tablets", and some gigantic "ancestral tablets" of extended length are placed across cycle tracks. This practice is breaking the promise made by TD a few years ago, under which steel inverted-U shape "ancestral tablets" would be replaced gradually by yellow plastic bollards, and making cycle tracks increasingly inconvenient to cyclists. In fact, many cyclists have criticized the cycle tracks in Hong Kong for being fragmented and full of fatal traps. From these, we know whether the Government is determined in creating a bicycle-friendly environment, not to mention the construction of the super cycle track.

President, as a member of the Yuen Long District Council, I started paying attention to the progress of that super cycle track years ago. Obviously, we now see that the progress of the project is far from satisfactory. Yet, many facilities along the track are rather interesting and baffling, such as some wrong signs and some oblique sections, and so on. These speak volumes about the Government's attitude in promoting a bicycle-friendly policy with an all-out effort and whether the Government considers it worthy to introduce supportive policies to do more, particularly in terms of community facilities.

Let us look at practices adopted by other cities or countries. In 2010, the Government of South Korea announced spending KRW 1,000 billion on the construction of a cycle lane connecting town centres in the city. It is expected that by 2019, a cycle lane network of more than 3 200 km will be completed in South Korea. At the same time, in 2010, Singapore introduced a similar works

project on the construction of cycle lanes of 45.3 km with the objective of connecting residents to various transportation hubs.

We can see how far Hong Kong is lagging behind these objectives. Hence, we hope the discussion today will strike home the message that bicycles are an environmentally friendly mode of transport which can lower carbon emission. If the Government formulates matching policies, this mode of transport will be incorporated into our daily life, thus benefiting the city as a whole.

We note that in Taiwan, bicycle-sharing facilities are promoted by municipal governments. In Beijing and Paris, many good bicycle facilities are provided. According to a survey conducted by a cycling organization in Berlin, the city has 710 bicycles per 1 000 people, and 500 000 of its population, accounting for 15% of the population of the city, commute by bicycles every day. This is obviously a very beautiful picture. If Hong Kong is sincere in promoting cycling, though it may not necessarily be able to catch up with their pace, it may at least set the direction. Hence, this is the time we reviewed afresh the bicycle-friendly policy.

President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr HUI Chi-fung, you may now speak on the amendments. The time limit is five minutes.

MR HUI CHI-FUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Mr LEUNG. I also thank the four Members for proposing the amendments. In fact, those Members proposing the amendments generally support a bicycle-friendly policy, and they have also put forward excellent proposals on various aspects, such as technical matters and bicycle-related ancillary facilities. For example, Dr YIU Chung-yim proposed in his amendment that cycling should be permitted in the urban areas, and explained how people may cycle in the densely populated urban areas through an elaboration of the difference between cycle lanes and cycle tracks, which is precisely a response to the remarks of the Government.

The Administration has heard at least 10 Members talk about their understanding just now, and it is also pointed out in government papers that

bicycles are regarded as a cultural and recreational facility for leisure and entertainment. But in his opening remarks, the Secretary advised in the negative because the Government also encourages the use of bicycles as a mode of transport for short journeys in non-urban areas. This is exactly the crux of the issue. Should they only serve as a mode of transport for short journeys? Just like the "Dawn Ride", a bike ride from Tai Koo to the Legislative Council is not a short journey. Why can we not cycle all the way through? Why does the Government discourage it? Why is it permitted in non-urban areas only? A number of Members have mentioned that countries all over the world can make it possible for people to cycle in the densely populated urban areas, so can Hong Kong.

In contrast, Mr CHAN Han-pan's amendment is relatively conservative, focused more on the risks involved. A number of Members have also questioned whether cycling is such a risky activity. In fact, as asked by Members, did the chicken or the egg come first? In the absence of a bicycle-friendly policy and comprehensive auxiliary facilities, and without changing the mindset of the public by developing a sense that bicycles are a mode of transport to be accorded priority and protection, users of other vehicles will certainly not see them as important, thereby putting them at risk.

Hence, should we formulate a policy first in order to remove risks, or should we do so in view of the risks involved? This warrants careful consideration by the Government.

I hope the Government can heed the concrete proposals put forward by the several Members proposing the amendments and the original motion, so as to formulate a comprehensive bicycle-friendly policy.

Mr LEUNG, I so submit.

UNDER SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING (in Cantonese): President, before I speak on behalf of the Government, let me first give an explanation. As the Secretary for Transport and Housing, being the keynote speaker, has to attend a trade event, I will now give these concluding remarks for him. But he has been listening to Members' views earlier.

President, I am grateful to a number of Members who spoke earlier, and in his speech, the Secretary gave a brief account of the Government's bicycle-friendly policy. Next, I will respond to the major views put forward by Members in the course of debate earlier.

On promoting a bicycle-friendly environment, the Government and the Council actually share the same goal. Also, the incumbent Government has long since recognized bicycles as a mode of transport for short-distance commute, not solely for recreational purposes. Hence, a bicycle-friendly policy has already become part of the Government's transport policy. The questions lie in how to promote it and provide ancillary facilities step by step, and whether the use of bicycles as a mode of transport on the busy urban roads should be encouraged. While I concur that Hong Kong should draw more on the successful experience of overseas cities, we should not overlook the road constraints we face locally, the needs of different road users and their attitude in road use. Through contact with our counterparts in other cities, we have got some observations and they have also shared theirs with us. For example, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government shared with us the key challenges they faced in their implementation of a bicycle policy: (1) the problem of indiscriminate parking of bicycles; and (2) an increase in bicycle accidents.

President, the Secretary has stressed road safety in his opening remarks, and just now, I have also heard a number of Members talk about the importance of road safety in the urban areas. The designation of cycle lanes for use by bicycles is the best approach, but concerning this, it is really difficult to identify such space in the urban areas. Nevertheless, we also understand that some cyclists wish to ride on carriageways. In fact, according to the existing legislation, bicycles can normally be ridden on carriageways, except some sections of carriageways designated as zones where cycling is prohibited owing to road safety considerations, such as expressways, government tunnels, and bicycle prohibition zones mainly located at flyovers and underpasses. But certainly, cyclists must abide by the relevant traffic rules. That said, if cyclists ride on carriageways—as I said just now—they must pay attention to traffic conditions and develop mutual understanding and respect with other road users. Particularly on urban roads, given the high traffic volume, we do not encourage the use of bicycles as a mode of transport.

Certainly, the Government is also duty-bound to properly carry out publicity and education work in this regard, targeting the safety awareness of road users. Currently, some 300 road sections are designated as bicycle prohibition zones across the territory. As most of the prohibition zones were designated many years ago, they may have undergone changes in terms of circumstances and traffic conditions. In late 2013, the Transport Department ("TD") engaged a consultancy to review about 100 of these bicycle prohibition zones. The consultancy has proposed the review methodology, based on which 10-odd bicycle prohibition zones have been abolished. TD and the consultancy will also consult the Road Safety Research Committee under the Road Safety Council. After such consultation, TD expects to carry out the associated complementary works projects one after another, so as to implement the abolition of some of the bicycle prohibition zones.

Concerning a Member's criticism of the slow progress of the construction works of the cycle track networks in the New Territories, I wish to make a clarification here. According to the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the construction works of the section from Ma On Shan to Tuen Mun have actually been implemented in an orderly manner, and it will be opened for public use in phases, making the scheduled progress as reported by the Development Bureau to the Legislative Council in 2015. As to the construction works of the section from Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan, we actually face technical difficulties and divergent views of members of the local communities. Some people are supportive of the works and call for expeditious implementation by the Government, but there are also some who think the opposite. This reflects that the use of bicycles or the construction of cycle tracks will attract both support and strong resistance, and that not every project will be welcomed by the public. Hence, the Government must not turn a blind eye to the views of local residents. The Development Bureau and the Civil Engineering and Development Department need to implement the construction works of the section from Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan step by step.

A number of Members have also mentioned the shortage of bicycle parking spaces faced by various districts. As stated by the Secretary in his opening remarks, the Government has all along been providing bicycle parking spaces in accordance with the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, and sometimes, it will recommend a level of provision higher than that laid down in

the Standards, exerting strenuous efforts to increase parking spaces. Take last year as an example. TD provided about 1 000 more public bicycle parking spaces in various districts in the New Territories. Furthermore, as mentioned by the Secretary in his opening remarks, TD has also updated the Transport Planning and Design Manual to include new bicycle rack designs as standard designs, so as to provide more bicycle parking spaces.

We notice that some overseas places, such as Japan, have an automated bicycle parking system in place. The Civil Engineering and Development Department is undertaking a pilot study on underground bicycle parking systems in a bid to examine their technical and operational feasibility and cost-effectiveness. Subject to the findings of the study, the Government will consider the feasibility of introducing such automated bicycle parking systems.

President, a Member has suggested studying the mandatory wearing of helmets by cyclists by way of legislation. In fact, TD has examined overseas practices and found that the majority of the overseas jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Singapore, do not mandate the wearing of helmets by cyclists. If such requirements are to be introduced in Hong Kong, we need to carefully consider public acceptance and the feasibility of enforcing such requirements and instituting prosecutions. We consider that a more practicable approach is to promote cycling safety and encourage cyclists to use safety equipment through education and publicity.

President, I once again thank those Members who have spoken. They have offered much valuable input on how to promote a bicycle-friendly environment. Climate changes have become an imminent issue. Various government bureaux and departments are putting their heads together, actively looking for and rolling out solutions. As regards traffic and transport, the Transport and Housing Bureau and the departments under its charge have all along been committed to promoting "green commuting" over the past five years. Through launching the "Walk in HK" programme announced by us early this year and our efforts in promoting a bicycle-friendly environment in new towns and new development areas, we hope members of the public can reduce the use of mechanized transport for short-distance commute, thereby improving street level air quality and reducing road traffic congestion. I concur that in implementing a bicycle-friendly policy, various government departments need to step up their planning efforts, introduce software and hardware ancillary measures to be taken

forward in a pragmatic and orderly manner, and change cultural preferences. We will keep up with our efforts and gauge the views of people from all walks of life in the community, so as to press ahead with promoting a bicycle-friendly environment.

President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now call upon Mr LUK Chung-hung to move his amendment.

MR LUK CHUNG-HUNG (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mr HUI Chi-fung's motion be amended.

Mr LUK Chung-hung moved the following amendment: (Translation)

"To add "since bicycles are recognized as a mode of green transport," after "That"; to add "through planning" after "construction of cycle tracks"; to add "by making reference to the experience of overseas countries in providing parking facilities for bicycles, such as the underground bicycle parking venues in Japan" after "public organizations"; to delete "bicycle facilities" after "concerning" and substitute with "the quantities of bicycle parking spaces provided in different areas, and implementing the recommendations on improving the design of cycle tracks made in the Transport Department's report on Traffic and Transport Consultancy Study on Cycling Networks and Parking Facilities in existing new towns in Hong Kong, including the erection of appropriate traffic signs, widening of cycle tracks at curved sections, replacing traditional steel bollards by collapsible plastic bollards as well as properly covering the existing U-channels"; to add "by making reference to the practices of European and other countries where road markings of designated cycle lanes are added onto carriageways to ensure that cyclists enjoy equal rights to use roads" after "urban areas"; to add ", and introducing consequential amendments to the Road Traffic Ordinance to enhance the regulations governing the use of pavements by cyclists" after "spacious area"; to add "and cyclists' " after "motorists' "; to delete "the related information" after "awareness of" and substitute with "road safety"; to

delete "encouraging and assisting" after "(11)" and substitute with "actively formulating a policy to assist local bicycle manufacturing and related industries, including"; to delete "and" after "bicycle-sharing" and substitute with ","; to add ", bicycle servicing and repairing as well as bicycle accessories" after "hiring"; to delete "and" after "industries,"; and to add "; and (13) organizing more large-scale cycling races and cycling-related activities to cultivate the interest of the public in cycling, so as to turn bicycles into a mode of transport of the public" immediately before the full stop."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Mr LUK Chung-hung to Mr HUI Chi-fung's motion, be passed.

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

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

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Members have already been informed that as Mr LUK Chung-hung's amendment has been passed, Dr YIU Chung-yim has withdrawn his amendment.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr CHAN Han-pan, as Mr LUK Chung-hung's amendment has been passed, you may move your revised amendment.

MR CHAN HAN-PAN (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mr HUI Chi-fung's motion on "Formulating a bicycle-friendly policy and designating bicycles as a mode of transport" as amended by Mr LUK Chung-hung be further amended by my revised amendment,. As it is a revised amendment, I need to explain to Members a few points. First, the original motion proposes building cycle tracks in the urban areas, which I propose to change to "appropriate districts" as I consider appropriate districts carry a wider scope and greater application. But I am not able to make this proposal in my revised amendment. Nevertheless, I consider it very important.

Moreover, due to the serious shortage of bicycle parking spaces in many districts, I propose reviewing the supply of bicycle parking spaces in my amendment. On the other hand, I also hope that the authorities will ensure the sufficiency and clarity of signs along cycle tracks, conduct regular inspections of cycle tracks and repair damaged facilities. The aforementioned proposals are retained in my revised amendment. I implore Honourable colleagues to continue to support my amendment. Thank you.

Mr CHAN Han-pan moved the following further amendment to the motion as amended by Mr LUK Chung-hung: (Translation)

"To add "; (14) expeditiously completing the connection works on linking up the cycle tracks in eastern and western New Territories, so as to connect the cycle tracks in various districts of the New Territories; (15) comprehensively reviewing the supply of bicycle parking spaces, including stations along the railway lines, outlying island ferry piers, etc. and introducing a new automated bicycle parking system and other relevant ancillary facilities; (16) assisting existing housing estates in providing more bicycle parking spaces; (17) encouraging and assisting bicycle hiring services in different operation modes to be developed in a fair and regulated environment; and (18) regularly conducting inspections and surveys on cycle tracks and expeditiously repairing damaged facilities to ensure safety of users" immediately before the full stop."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That Mr CHAN Han-pan's amendment to Mr HUI Chi-fung's motion as amended by Mr LUK Chung-hung be passed.

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Charles Peter MOK, as the amendments of Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr CHAN Han-pan have been passed, you may move your revised amendment.

MR CHARLES PETER MOK (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mr HUI Chi-fung's motion as amended by Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr CHAN Han-pan be further amended by my revised amendment.

Mr Charles Peter MOK moved the following further amendment to the motion as amended by Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr CHAN Han-pan:
(Translation)

"To add "; and (19) designing suitable cycling routes based on the planning of a smart city through the effective use of data, so as to enhance traffic benefits" immediately before the full stop."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That Mr Charles Peter MOK's amendment to Mr HUI Chi-fung's motion as amended by Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr CHAN Han-pan be passed.

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

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

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr HUI Chi-fung, you still have 10 seconds to reply. Thereafter, the debate will come to a close.

MR HUI CHI-FUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you for this 10-second speaking time. Just now, a Member said a bicycle-friendly policy is not a matter of impracticability but a matter of reluctance. I hope the Government has listened clearly to Members' speeches today for the formulation of a bicycle-friendly policy.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mr HUI Chi-fung, as amended by Mr LUK Chung-hung, Mr CHAN Han-pan and Mr Charles Peter MOK, be passed. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

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

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Debate on motion with no legislative effect.

The motion debate on "Advocating the establishment of a 'baby fund'".

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

I call upon Dr CHIANG Lai-wan to speak and move the motion.

ADVOCATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "BABY FUND"

DR CHIANG LAI-WAN (in Cantonese): President, I move the following motion: Advocating the establishment of a "baby fund".

President, the Legislative Council has held a hearing recently on support for singletons. The discussion held at the meeting focused on two issues: firstly, the housing problem faced by singletons; and secondly, their employment problem.

President, the hearing appears to have nothing to do with my advocacy of establishing a "baby fund", but it can precisely bring us to the difficulties generally faced by the young generation. Some people think that young people nowadays do not support the Government, and some others consider that young people do not have a sense of belonging to Hong Kong. Where did the problem come from? Over the years, apart from providing essential education and livelihood assistance for children from poor families, has the Government really made long-term preparations for the next generation?

Should we fail today to expeditiously look for solutions to the problems for the next generation and the problems are left unsolved, young people in the future will, like those in need of support in society today, face such problems as lack of housing, job prospects, opportunities of upward movement, and so on. Hence, we must expeditiously look for solutions to the problems and formulate a long-term and effective policy to give children hope.

President, the basic concept of the "baby fund" advocated by me originated from "the hearts of parents ". All parents will definitely strive to make proper preparations for their children. In this connection, should the parental government officials do something? My proposed establishment of a "baby fund" is a long-term and effective policy. It is also a future fund established for the people, including the next generation.

First of all, I propose that \$100 billion be allocated by the Government as the "baby fund" reserve to be taken charge of by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. When an annual fiscal surplus is recorded, the Government may allocate a certain percentage of the surplus and inject it into the reserve fund, which will in turn make contribution to the account of each and every baby. In this connection, the Government should establish a management committee on personal accounts for the "baby fund" ("the committee") to take charge of managing, operating and making investments for the deposits in the personal accounts under the "baby fund".

The committee will be responsible for opening a personal account for each baby born in Hong Kong to a Hong Kong permanent resident. In the first year after its birth, the baby will receive \$10,000 injected by the fund. Subsequently, we propose that annual injections be made by the committee and parents on a matching basis of 1: 0.5 respectively. For instance, if \$4,000 per annum is injected into a baby account by the fund, \$2,000 per annum will be injected by the baby's parents. In other words, the principal savings in the account will be increased by \$6,000 per annum. The deposit in the account will continue to be invested and accumulated until the account holder reaches the age of 18. In the interim, if a relative of the account holder expresses a willingness to increase the amount of contribution, it is worth encouraging. If some households encounter difficulty in making contributions, they may apply for exemption from making contributions pro rata. The Government may also seek other avenues to assist children from families in financial hardship.

It is proposed that the "baby fund" basically serves three purposes: first, further studies; second, home acquisition and third, treating critical illnesses. Except for treating critical illnesses, account holders can use their account fund only for further studies and home acquisition upon reaching the age of 18.

According to our rough estimation, if computation is based on a \$10,000 injection received by a baby after birth, coupled with an annual injection of \$6,000, and assuming an annual 3% rate of return received by each baby's account with inflation discounted, more than \$160,000 will be saved over a period of 18 years. I believe this sum of money can meet part of the tuition fees of their university education or studies abroad. As for the down payment for home acquisition, Members definitely consider this amount of money inadequate. I agree with this, too. Nevertheless, it is always better to start saving on top of \$160,000 or so than from scratch. Should two "baby fund" account holders get married, the two accounts combined may make it faster for their dream of home ownership to realize.

Of course, not all account holders need to withdraw money from their accounts for further studies, home acquisition or treating critical illnesses. In that case, account holders may transfer their entire sum of savings or unused portion of the fund to their Mandatory Provident Fund accounts in the future, so that they can continue to make planning for their future to assure better retirement protection.

Similar funds are launched in many countries or regions for the next generation. For instance, Baby Bonus came into operation in Singapore back in 2001. This scheme consists of two components, namely a Cash Gift and joint savings. Insofar as the Cash Gift is concerned, each newborn will receive a sum equivalent to HK\$45,000 to HK\$56,000, depending on the number of children in the family. Subsequently, a corresponding amount of money will be injected by the Government according to the amount of money deposited by the parents. This programme will converge with other savings schemes operated by the Government, too.

In addition, similar schemes are also available in the United States, Korea and Taiwan, mostly targeting poor children. For instance, a reserve was already provided for orphans and children with disabilities in Korea more than a decade

ago. The reserve was later extended to cover low-income households and further include children from low- and middle-income households in 2008 and 2010 respectively. It is provided that their accounts mainly serve such purposes as higher education, housing rentals, medical expenses, and so on.

President, the establishment of a "baby fund" may bring a lot of benefits which, in our opinion, can address the woes of young people nowadays. As I mentioned just now, the committee will be responsible for investments and fund operation. In order to achieve the expected return of 3% per annum, we propose that investments be made in some relatively stable items with substantial return, such as sovereign debts, infrastructure shares, Mass Transit Railway, tunnels, and so on. What is more, priority may be accorded to the issuance of new shares to the committee, so that it can make subscription on behalf of the "baby fund" account holders, with a view to boosting their stable return. Under this scheme, I believe the young generation will have a chance to share the economic benefits and nurture a greater sense of belonging to Hong Kong.

The second benefit is that young people will develop the habit of keeping savings earlier, so that they will have more confidence in equipping themselves in future. According to the findings of a financial survey conducted in a recent study on 500 working youths aged 18 to 29, 86% of the respondents faced personal financial problems, more than 60% were unable to make ends meet, nearly one third were debt-ridden, nearly 40% simply did not have any financial targets, and the remaining respondents merely focused on short-term goals, such as making travel plans, whereas many did not take long-term plans seriously.

President, the "baby fund" conceived by us can precisely remedy these problems because it seeks to encourage the next generation to develop the personal savings concept and make preparations for their own future at a tender age, so that they will have a sum of money to assist them in realizing their dreams when they reach the age of 18. Hence, we believe the "baby fund" can reverse the problematic situation whereby some young people are already debt-ridden before they start saving money and, hence, they have a gloomy outlook and do not hold expectations for the future. What is more, some of them may even have the problem of self-rejection.

The third benefit is that the disparity between the rich and the poor will be narrowed and cross-generational poverty be alleviated. I believe I need not elaborate further because everyone can benefit from the "baby fund" regardless of family background and race. So long as they were born in Hong Kong to an eligible resident, they will be eligible to open a "baby fund" account. Since the value of a personal account will rise every year, account holders may reap the fruits of economic development, too. In other words, children will not feel that they have nothing or no opportunities for further studies or home acquisition because they do not have the backing of rich parents.

The fourth benefit is that we can bring hope to children through the establishment of a "baby fund". A survey on young people was published by The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong on Monday. Its findings reveal that, among people of the 18 to 27 age group, less than half wished to get married, and the reasons for having no intention to get married included failing to find a partner or enjoying living by themselves. Moreover, 32% of the male respondents indicated that they were financially inadequate, whereas only 56.5% of the respondents stated that they would like to have children in the future. Compared to the 71% recorded in 2006, this figure represents a drastic fall. Why are young people increasingly reluctant to have children? In fact, this survey reflects the young people's lack of confidence in the future, not to mention making preparations for their next generation. This is why I firmly believe that the "baby fund", if established, can provide members of the public with additional incentives to give birth, which can assist the Special Administrative Region Government in formulating a long-term population policy. The personal "baby fund" account owned by everyone can also bring children hope.

President, the initiative proposed by me today is not instant noodle. We have to wait for at least 18 years, that is, when the children reach the age of 18, before its effectiveness can be seen. As the saying goes, it takes 10 years to grow a tree and 100 years to nurture a man. I deeply believe that the "baby fund" can definitely bring hope to our next generation. My advocacy today merely seeks to throw a sprat to catch a mackerel. I hope Members can draw on collective wisdom, make concerted efforts and think up suggestions to enable the next generation to enjoy a better life.

I so submit. Thank you, President.

Dr CHIANG Lai-wan moved the following motion: (Translation)

"That children of the new generation are our successors in future society and we in this generation should endeavour to properly pave the way for them to enter the workforce; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to, through different forms of financial assistance, including making reference to the practices adopted by the existing Child Development Fund and the many overseas sustainable growth funds with savings elements, establish for newborns a sustainable and cumulative 'baby fund' consisting of joint savings by the Government, families and third parties (such as relatives and friends of the fund holders); the fund should be used mainly for further studies, home acquisition and coping with critical illnesses, and can be combined with retirement protection, so that children can develop the habit of keeping personal savings at a tender age to make preparations for the future; the fund also allows children from families with different financial situations to have more opportunities of upward mobility, thereby narrowing the disparity between the rich and the poor and alleviating cross-generational poverty, so that they will be hopeful in their upbringing, more confident when entering the workforce, and more positive and optimistic in facing the future."

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

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

I will call upon Members who move the amendments to speak in the following order: Mr HO Kai-ming and Mr SHIU Ka-chun; but they may not move amendments at this stage.

MR HO KAI-MING (in Cantonese): President, dreams are beautiful but reality is cruel. The same applies to raising children. Some surveys indicate that women in Hong Kong also want to have more children. A few years ago, the

findings of a survey conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong showed that the desired number of children for women of childbearing age was 1.76. However, the actual fertility rate has been dropping in the past few decades. In 2001, the fertility rate dropped to 0.93, meaning the number of children every woman of childbearing age would give birth to was less than one. In 2007, the fertility rate returned to one or above. In 2015, the fertility rate in Hong Kong was only 1.195. Since the fertility rate in Hong Kong is not high, our population ageing problem becomes increasingly serious.

Why would the fertility be so low? Many respondents indicated that financial burden was one of the causes whereas accommodation was another. Certainly, the results of these surveys were expected. Since it costs a lot of money to raise a child and accommodation is lacking, people just do not want to make so much commitment. I think many parents are facing these problems.

President, I became a father recently and experienced the two difficult situations mentioned. If I were still a member of the District Council, I would be pressed by the financial burden of the family like an average wage earner does. Regarding the support from the Government, I would at most enjoy a tax allowance, yet I would not get any subsidy to help me cope with the difficulties encountered at the birth of my child. Hence, I consider the provision of financial subsidy an effective incentive in raising the fertility rate in Hong Kong.

The establishment of a "baby fund" under discussion today is proposed along this line of thought. In fact, the "baby fund" is not a new thing. Take the United Kingdom as an example. They have the Junior Individual Savings Accounts which are tax-free saving accounts for parents to keep savings for their children till they reach 18 years of age. The money in the account can be used freely for study or home purchase. Moreover, in the United States, there is a children saving plan called "529 college saving plan". It is designed for parents to save for future college tuition for their children. Savings under the plan are tax-free, and its objective is to encourage parents to save ahead for their children's higher education expenses.

In fact, Hong Kong also has arrangements similar to these children saving plans. In 2008, the Government introduced the Child Development Fund ("CDF"), which is a plan featuring consolidated effort from the Government, family, community and the business sector. The CDF enables children growing up in grass-root families to participate and led by a mentor. Apart from making target savings, the mentor will also spend three years to accompany the child in his or her development, and discuss with the child the way to spend the savings he or she has made. This programme which is now in the sixth round has helped a lot of children.

The "baby fund" proposed under the present motion is similar to CDF in the sense that it relies on joint contribution from various parties, including families and third parties. In this aspect, the "baby fund" and CDF are the same. Yet regarding the savings under the "baby fund", I hope the Government will also make contribution, particularly in supporting the development of children in grass-roots families and helping them to break away from cross-generational poverty.

According to the recent announcement of the Government, the latest Gini Coefficient is 0.539, the most serious since the reunification, which is also a record high in 45 years. This reflects that the problem of disparity between the rich and the poor is very serious in Hong Kong. Our situation is worse than some African countries. Had the Government not provided the various subsidy schemes, I thought Hong Kong would have run into great troubles. For children growing up in a poor family, their opportunities are far more limited than children in middle-class or rich families. They are restricted by their limited resources in their academic studies, as well as their participation in study-related activities and exchange programmes, which in turn prevent them from expanding their horizons and affect their chances of moving up the social ladder. Hence, the contribution of the Government to the "baby fund" is very important, for it will place children in poverty at a fairer starting point.

As for the usage of the "baby fund", I emphasize in my amendment that the fund should be used according to the children's wish, for their personal growth and development, including growth planning, further studies and cultivation of hobbies. As for using the fund for home purchase, I do not oppose it, yet I do

not encourage young people to make home ownership the purpose of their life. When I was studying in the university, the target of "four should-haves"—should have cars, children, wife and flats—was very popular. However, it was not a complimentary notion but a derogatory one. I think Secretary Stephen SUI may have heard this back then when he was studying. This is not a good target. Nonetheless, I think it will be very difficult for young people nowadays to achieve this target of "four should-haves". Young people nowadays are living in this predicament.

We encourage young people to have dreams. If so, can we start making savings in their childhood so that they may have a sum of money to pursue their dreams in future? Not everyone in this world has to study in the university. If a young man likes brewing coffee and latte art, he may use the sum to study barista courses in Hong Kong or overseas. If a young man really loves writing, he may use the sum to publish his own books. If he is an inventor, he may use the sum as the start-up fund for his innovations. In my view, if it is a good idea, it is worthy for young people to give it a try. Hence, I agree with Mr SHIU Ka-chun's proposal that the use of the fund should not be subject to any restriction.

Moreover, I have added to the "baby fund" a social dimension in my amendment, which purpose is for the fund to be used for promoting various measures conducive to children's growth and development, for the baby caring and child care services provided for grass-roots families in Hong Kong are seriously inadequate. For instance, places for community baby or child care services are extremely limited and the waiting time is very long. As for community child care services, the development has all along been undesirable and one of the reasons is shortage of resources. If the money under the social level of the "baby fund" can be used for designated purposes to create a holistic community child care environment for grass-roots families, it will be conducive to freeing women to join the labour force, so that they can go out to work and increase the income of their families. Originally, we plan to include in the amendment some proposals concerning babies and beneficial to parents, such as paternity leave and maternity leave, yet those proposals cannot be added due to the restriction of the scope of the question. Yet, we consider these issues carry great relevance.

We think it is worthy to introduce the "baby fund". As I mentioned earlier, other countries, like the United Kingdom and the United States, have implemented similar children savings plans to encourage parents to plan ahead for their children in further studies and the pursuit of dreams, which is most desirable. However, the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions considers the focus of the establishment of the "baby fund" is to help grass-roots families to make savings, so the Government must be involved. In fact, organizations concerned about grass roots also hope to participation from the Government. For only with its participation will grass-roots families be able to make savings. If grass-roots families are tight in coping with their meals and accommodation, how will they have the money to save for their children? Hence, the "baby fund" should endeavour to help grass-roots families, so that their children can develop their strengths and break away from cross-generational poverty.

President, I so submit.

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): President, I thank Dr CHIANG Lai-wan for proposing the motion and Mr HO Kai-ming for proposing an amendment, for they have enabled the Legislative Council to thoroughly discuss the support for children of the new generation. The "baby fund" advocated by Dr CHIANG consists of joint savings by the Government, families and third parties (such as relatives and friends of the fund account holders). The fund targets infants aged zero irrespective of the financial conditions of the family and is mainly used for further studies, home acquisition and coping with critical illnesses, and even for retirement protection.

The original motion specifically mentions that the "baby fund" should make reference to the practices adopted by the Child Development Fund ("CDF"). I wish to point out in the first place that the objective of CDF is different from that of the "baby fund" proposed by Dr CHIANG. Founded in 2008, CDF aims to facilitate the long-term development of grass-roots children aged 10 to 16 or currently a Primary 4 to Secondary 4 student. Under CDF, provisions are made to non-governmental organizations or schools as project operators, and each project, which will last for three years, comprises three key

components, namely Targeted Savings, Mentorship and Personal Development Plan.

Every grass-roots child participating in a project will be matched with a mentor who will, throughout the three-year project, share with the participant his or her life experience and provide guidance to the participant in drawing up the personal development plan. The project operator is required to provide training to the participants throughout the three-year project in such respects as financial management, communication skills and life planning. In the first two years of the project, a participant will save HK\$200 monthly and upon successful completion of the savings programme, the participant can be provided with 1:1 matching contribution made by corporate or private donors, and also a special financial incentive provided by the Government. In the third year of the project, the participant may use his or her savings, which can be accumulated up to a maximum sum of \$14,400, to implement his or her personal development plan, such as developing an interest, paying for training costs or purchasing learning tools. The project operator/school and mentors will provide guidance on and oversee the use of the savings by the participants to implement their personal development plans.

Despite that the "Targeted Savings" in CDF comprises savings, matching contribution and a financial incentive provided by the Government, it is only a component of CDF which attaches importance to encouraging grass-roots children to accumulate intangible assets, such as positive attitudes, resilience, social networks, and so on, with a view to laying a foundation for their long-term development.

From this Members can see that CDF and the "baby fund" proposed in the motion are different in their policy objectives. This is why there are also marked differences in the age and financial conditions of target participants, the use of the savings, the operation of the fund, and so on.

As a father of two children, certainly I am equally concerned about the growth and future of children and youngsters. In fact, the SAR Government

very much agrees that children are our successors in society and has made great efforts to invest on children. We firmly believe education can facilitate the whole-person development of children and enhance their ability to pursue lifelong learning, thereby laying a foundation for their future. To this end, the SAR Government is committed to providing children with equal opportunities of receiving quality education, and education has consistently topped the list of recurrent expenditures of the Government. In 2017-2018, the recurrent expenditure on education is estimated to be HK\$78.6 billion, accounting for 21% of the total recurrent expenditure of the Government. We also endeavour to support the development of grass-roots children. Apart from CDF mentioned earlier, assistance has been provided to grass-roots children on various fronts, including the financial assistance schemes and a number of assistance programmes under the Community Care Fund for needy students. I will explain these policy measures in greater detail in my closing remarks. Moreover, the Low-income Working Family Allowance introduced in 2016 is also designed to particularly take care of families with children and youngsters by providing a Child Allowance to encourage working families to stay in active employment and ease inter-generational poverty.

We consider that providing support to needy children from the grass roots using a multi-faceted, target-specific approach to enable them to receive good education and training is the best way to help these children get rid of poverty and move up the social ladder. On the contrary, if all children are provided with a sum of money at young age irrespective of their financial conditions for their use when they have grown up in future, I am afraid it may not be the most effective way to encourage children to work hard and actively make preparations for their future; nor is it effective utilization of public resources.

Members are welcome to make suggestions on ways to support children, especially grass-roots children. With these remarks, President, I will further give a response after listening to the valuable input of Members.

Thank you.

MS CLAUDIA MO (in Cantonese): When I heard Dr CHIANG Lai-wan propose at the outset using \$100 billion to establish a "baby fund" in Hong Kong, I really gasped with surprise. I seldom approve of the Government's philosophy of spending because I consider the Government a squanderer in various aspects, and it has many "white elephant" projects. But I absolutely agree with the Secretary who pointed out just now that this is not the most effective way of utilizing public resources.

As always, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan fails to sort out concepts clearly. What is her actual purpose in proposing the establishment of a "baby fund"? Is it, firstly, for poverty alleviation? Or secondly, to request the Government to spend money to buy the young people's sense of belonging? Or thirdly, to encourage childbearing? She spoke on a load of reasons, but she did not spell out the key significance and purpose. She also obligated the public officer to tell her that the "baby fund" overlapped with the Child Development Fund. As I have heard, the speech made by Members proposing the amendment was, on the contrary, more organized with reasons.

The whole matter has reversed the cause and the effect. She said that since young people lacked a sense of belonging, the Government had to do something to make them love the Government more. Then she dragged in childbearing. This is most awkward. I learnt from an old newspaper clipping in December 2014 that Dr CHIANG Lai-wan had already proposed the establishment of a "baby fund" in Hong Kong at that time. After the birth of each baby, the Government was to inject \$10,000 for the baby once a year until he was 18 years old. It was reported that TAM Yiu-chung, the then Chairman of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB"), replied with a poker face that it was Dr CHIANG's personal view and opinion which had nothing to do with their party. I really wish to hear whether the entire DAB advocates her proposition now.

Why did I say that the whole matter had reversed the cause and the effect? The young couples in Hong Kong are indeed a little afraid of giving birth to children because it costs at least \$4 million to raise a child. Now it may even cost \$5 million or \$6 million. Recently, it has been reported in the news that the transaction price of a parking space in Sai Ying Pun was \$5.18 million. As

such, who dares to have any child? Are the parents supposed to feel grateful as though it is a big mercy bestowed by the king if the authorities give them \$10,000?

As a matter of fact, they are worried mainly about two major problems. The first one is education. Now we all talk about "winning or losing at the starting line". As soon as the babies are born, their parents will worry about their English proficiency. For this reason, since childhood, they have to attend English kindergartens, then English primary schools and English secondary schools. They only hope that their children can speak very fluent English. Moreover, parents have to check their children's homework and even help them do it every day. This alone makes parents crazy.

In a nutshell, parents are not satisfied with the existing education system in Hong Kong. Children whose families are better-off can go to Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, and those who have more money can enroll at international schools. For those who are wealthier, their children will be sent to boarding schools in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the United States at the age of eight to ten. What kind of education system is this? We will feel happier if we keep a puppy, will we not? We do not wish to bring an infant to this world and feel worried together. Parents feel worried when they face their children. So do children when they face their parents. Is this a consideration in deciding whether or not to have any child? Yes, it is definitely among the considerations which can indeed be traced back to the root problem. It cannot be resolved simply by establishing a fund or granting \$10,000.

The second issue is the existing chaos in the property market. The price of the parking space mentioned by me just now is the highest in the world. When we are still unable to solve the housing problem, a parking space surprisingly costs \$5.18 million. Some people may question why young people must acquire properties. They may as well rent a flat. Let us be honest with ourselves, especially those successful businessmen. Suppose a family does not have any self-owned flat. What a great disparity in the distribution of assets there would be between a family having self-owned properties and one which did not have any in the past 20 years.

In fact, the housing problem cannot be resolved. At present, the average waiting time for public rental housing ("PRH") is four and a half years. The Government's "high land price policy" has all along been a subject of criticism, and land prices are surging higher and higher. A land lot in the Aberdeen area on Island South put up for sale by the Government was bought by a tycoon from Mainland China at an unreasonably astronomical price estimated to be 40% higher than the market price. Our land has been "Mainlandized". Now Mainland-funded organizations are most awesome. The local real estate developers, on the contrary, seem to be choosy. The problem is that the housing construction carries a cost, and these organizations did not buy the land for charitable purposes. How will the selling price of properties completed in the future fall down? If things go on like this, how can the problem of surging property prices in Hong Kong be resolved? Young people are either unable to apply for PRH or have to keep waiting for PRH allocation. There is no way they can afford buying any property.

The two major problems mentioned just now are really inconceivable. I often say that the problem of "Mainlandization" actually exists in Hong Kong. We can already see the "red capital" buying up Hong Kong in the two aspects mentioned just now. Facing an uncertain future, the people dare not have children. Moreover, in respect of education, the invasion of the Mainland language is intensifying, not to mention that kind of education intended as of "brainwashing". For this reason, young people dare not have children. Even if a fund of \$100 billion or \$200 billion is established, I do not see what significance it carries.

Thank you.

MRS REGINA IP (in Cantonese): President, I would like to thank Dr CHIANG Lai-wan for proposing the motion and Mr HO Kai-ming for proposing the amendment. I consider the subject very interesting, so I have stayed in the Chamber to listen to their speeches attentively and done some research on it. However, I can hardly agree with their proposals, so I will not give them my support.

Dr CHIANG mentioned earlier that Singapore had implemented the Baby Bonus Scheme, which I think is the reference of Dr CHIANG's proposals. But she fell short of pointing out that the Baby Bonus Scheme of Singapore was proposed in 2013 in the budget with specific and clear objectives, focused on encouraging marriage and having children. It also includes a Marriage and Parenthood Package. The leadership of Singapore has complained a number of times about women, particularly the highly educated, not getting married and the low fertility rate. For this reason, the Singaporean Government offers incentives for raising children. At the birth of a child, the parents will receive a cash gift, like a big red packet. Then, the parents may open a Child Development Account at a number of specified banks to make savings for 12 years with injections from the Government, intended for meeting the payment of child raising expenses like tuition fees for kindergarten and other education expenses. The policy objective is clear and specific, which is not broad, for it is restricted to merely encouraging parents to have children and marriage.

Yet, what do the middle class in Singapore think about the Scheme? I have learnt from the Internet that the middle class in Singapore consider the scheme ineffective. They say the allowance provided by the Government is said to be generous, for they will receive \$6,000 at the birth of a child and another \$6,000 at the opening of the account, followed by a series of tax concessions—tax is heavy in Singapore, so the scheme should have been popular. However, after the scheme has been implemented for a few years, netizens of Singapore say that the scheme is not helpful and it fails to increase the fertility rate. They say, "Don't give us more money, lower the cost of living", so that they do not have to spend several million dollars to buy a parking space and \$10,000-odd to send their children to international schools. They also say, "They would trade money for time". Families of professionals do not need more money, they want more time to stay home and stay with their children. They say, "Money can't buy a less stressful environment for the child to grow up in". In other words, they prefer the Government to provide an environment with less stress and disputes for the development of their children. Hence, the scheme is ineffective to the middle class in Singapore.

The policy objectives of the "baby fund" proposed by Dr CHIANG earlier are much broader. Of course, I agree with her views that we should pave the way for the next generation. Yet, she wants to deal with all the problems related

to further studies, home acquisition and critical illnesses under the "baby fund", making the fund an "almighty fund". In other words, the fund can solve all the problems we encounter in life, so it will be more powerful than the Community Care Fund ("CCF"). Recently, at the Establishment Subcommittee, I listened to a two-hour discussion on issues relating to CCF, and some colleagues commented that it was the "Remedial Fund". Now, this "baby fund" is even more powerful, it is the "almighty fund" that can provide solutions to all woes in life.

Dr CHIANG proposed that parents be granted \$10,000 at the birth of a child and then \$6,000 each year. She requires the Government to set aside \$100 billion for management by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority ("HKMA"). If the return rate is 3%, the child will have \$160,000 when he or she reaches a certain age. When they get married, the two will have \$300,000-odd in total.

President, honestly, what can we do with \$300,000 today? Will someone dare get married and give birth to children merely because the Government will give them \$300,000-odd? Hence, the fund is useless in encouraging them to get married, not to mention home acquisition or meeting the needs arising from critical diseases. On the contrary, regarding Dr CHIANG's proposal for the setting up of a fund to be managed by HKMA, I wonder how much manpower HKMA has to increase and whether the return rate can be guaranteed at 3%.

We all know that the return rate of HKMA for the first quarter of this year has risen, yet it has incurred losses in the past and the return rate of several quarters in the past has been rather low. The Government told us that HKMA could guarantee a return rate of six-odd percentage points (the average return rate for the past six years) and it has dropped to 3% now. Recently, a retired "financial-meister", Joseph YAM, said that the next round of financial tsunami would be fiercer.

Members know that after the financial tsunami in 2008, many saving accounts and funds were left with nothing due to the high risks involved. Given that the Mandatory Provident Fund schemes have aroused many worries about their high management fees and low return rates, I do not support setting up another fund. However, I agree that we should look after the future needs of children.

I notice that a Member has pointed out in his amendment that Hong Kong has signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Since I have stood for an election recently, I have had more contact with members in various sectors. I then learnt that according to the definition of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children refer to persons aged between zero and 18. I thought it was children between zero and eight years of age before that. Recently, many experts, including the Hong Kong Paediatric Society, have approached me to express the inadequacies of child services in Hong Kong for children between zero and 18 years old—President, a paediatric foundation was set up in Hong Kong recently. They pointed out that child care services were insufficient and the salaries for child care workers were too low. There are many health problems about children, such as nutrition, obesity and drug abuse, and so on, and the problems are serious. Our children need more care.

Hence, I will only support the early establishment of a children commission, so that the Government may invite experts from various sectors, be they doctors, nurses or social workers, to come to the Legislative Council to examine ways for securing additional resources to address all kinds of problems concerning children. Yet, I oppose setting up another fund. Thank you, President.

MR KENNETH LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, I thank Dr CHIANG Lai-wan for proposing this motion on advocating the establishment of a "baby fund". Dr CHIANG's motion is actually well-intentioned, but in fact, I am also aware of some problems.

Hong Kong is a place with an exceedingly low fertility rate. According to the statistics in 2014, the number of children per women aged 15-49 is 1.23, making it one of the places with the lowest fertility rate in the world. Other places with a low fertility rate include South Korea (1.21), Taiwan (1.17) and Singapore (1.25). Obviously, these are places with a successful economy, and as Mrs Regina IP said, these are also places with a stressful living environment and fierce competition.

While Dr CHIANG's motion means to do good, I am aware of two problems: first, her proposal has overlooked the actual operations of finance and market economy; and second, she may have oversimplified the issues of a low fertility rate and upward mobility. Let me first explain how she simplifies the issues. Earlier on, both Mrs Regina IP and Ms Claudia MO mentioned why many couples in Hong Kong chose not to have children. It actually boils down to two major issues. President, they are the housing and education issues in Hong Kong, which I am not going to repeat. I am afraid, without any solutions to these two major issues, the low fertility rate of Hong Kong cannot be overcome just by appropriating some money.

Moreover, let me talk about why Dr CHIANG's motion, while demonstrating a variety of new perspectives, has overlooked the current market operation. What I wish to point out is that some savings funds are currently available in Hong Kong. They are certainly operated by private banks or insurance companies, which can also make savings for children. For some funds, people may choose to save for a child from the age of zero to the age of 18, or from the age of zero to the age of 21. Certainly, we all know that the dividends or interest from savings we get are not subject to government taxation.

A wide range of investment funds for making savings for children available in the market are actually options offered to parents by private banks and insurance companies. Options are already available for parents to think about how they should save for their children. Certainly, people may say that such savings plans are affordable by the middle class or professionals only.

In fact, President, in the past, I already discussed the population policy of Hong Kong on various occasions, and pointed out to the then Chief Secretary for Administration, Ms Carrie LAM, that if we wished to offer incentives for families to give birth to children, the current provision of tax concessions under the tax regime, namely the salaries tax reduction for the first to the ninth child, may not be the best approach. This is actually not enough. Tax reduction is simply not enough. My suggestion is to require joint contributions by parents, third parties and even the Government. For each baby born in Hong Kong to parents one of

whom being a Hong Kong permanent resident, and also resides or settles in Hong Kong thereafter, the Government may as well provide that family with an annual cash grant of \$50,000 from the first year since its birth to, for example, the age of five. Five times \$50,000 equals \$250,000, that is, each baby will be given a cash grant of \$250,000. Certainly, they may also use the cash grant for savings or investment purposes.

Certainly, \$50,000 is just a throwaway example used by me. Frankly, if each baby is to be given \$250,000, and assume that there are 100 000 babies, the amount involved will be rather substantial. Certainly, the Government may consider the amount of grant to be given. What can truly help a family is for it to be actually given some additional cash allowances the year their baby is born. They may employ a helper to help take care of the baby with such cash allowances or keep the money as savings, which is a matter of their own choice and planning.

According to Dr CHIANG Lai-wan's motion, "the fund should be used mainly for further studies, home acquisition and coping with critical illnesses, and can be combined with retirement protection". In that case, people in Hong Kong are rather pathetic because they will be forced to make savings from their birth to the age of 18 or even the retirement age of 65. In fact, Hong Kong is a free economy. How people make arrangements for their lives should be a matter of free choice by themselves or their families. Certainly, the Government is obliged to propose advocacy or assist those families in need. But a so-called "baby fund" which is universal in nature actually cannot achieve the purpose of assisting the upward movement of those families in need, and runs counter to the overriding principle of our market economy as a free economy under which consumers should be given the freedom of choice because this is forcing every family or parents of a baby to make contributions and save for the baby from the age of zero, and keep doing so even after the baby has reached the age of 18.

Certainly, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan mentioned in her motion "so that children can develop the habit of keeping personal savings at a tender age to make preparations for the future". I am skeptical about this. Is saving a good habit

regardless of circumstances? Certainly, it is necessary to save for a rainy day, but is saving the only option? Such discussions involve value judgment.

Hence, having regard to all this, I have reservations about this motion.

Thank you, President.

MR WILSON OR (in Cantonese): President, just now I heard an Honourable colleague say that while the motion on "Advocating the establishment of a 'baby fund'" is well-intentioned, it has overlooked market operation and simplified the issues. I consider such criticisms completely unrealistic.

President, I believe Members are well aware that today we still face the issue as to how we may urge the Government to introduce more policies to facilitate the healthy upbringing of babies after birth. What are the problems faced by us now? They include heavy pressure of employment and livelihood, increased costs of raising children and a change in the concept of family among the new generation, which are the major factors contributing to Hong Kong being the place with the lowest fertility rate in the world. As a developed region, Hong Kong faces particularly acute problems of a low fertility rate and population ageing. The social atmosphere of Hong Kong gives no incentive for young people to have children. Young people have no confidence in raising children due to long working hours and low income, coupled with the financial difficulties they face or various factors, and most importantly, dim prospects in their eyes. Hence, we will not find it difficult to understand why Hong Kong is the place with the longest life expectancy and among those with the lowest fertility rate in the world. We can expect to see the emergence of a shortage of local manpower and a serious problem of population ageing in Hong Kong, posing an enormous challenge to our population policy. Hence the SAR Government must exhaust every possible means to make preparations for the future, offering greater incentives to encourage childbirth.

President, Hong Kong is an affluent society, and our Government is also an affluent government. According to government data, the fiscal reserves of the SAR Government stand at nearly \$1,000 billion. I think we must use public

money properly, return wealth to the people, find targeted solutions to some social ills with public money, and formulate long-term planning for Hong Kong.

In my view, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan's proposal for a "baby fund" is precisely a means to return wealth to the people and a way to actively encourage more young people to have children. According to Dr CHIANG Lai-wan's proposal, upon establishment of the "baby fund", a sum of HK\$10,000 will be injected into a personal savings account as the initial deposit of each newborn baby in Hong Kong in the first year after birth. Then every year when the Government records a surplus, it will again inject money into the accounts of eligible children up to a ceiling of \$4,000 until the age of 18. The fund may be used for treating critical illnesses, further studies and home acquisition after the age of 18.

On the face of it, if a sum of \$10,000 is to be injected for each baby, to be followed by an annual injection capped at \$4,000, it will be a substantial amount. But Members may do some calculations with a calculator. If the fertility rate of Hong Kong remains at the present level with about 60 000 newborn babies every year, actually the Government will only need to inject HK\$600 million for these 60 000 babies annually. Given that the fiscal reserves of Hong Kong stand at \$1,000 billion at present, we can absolutely afford it. We can foresee that in the future, Hong Kong will face a low fertility rate, a shortage of local labour and serious population ageing in the long run, which may add to our social costs by then, and we may still be unable to cope with the various social problems that follow. It would be better to make preparations for the future now by boosting the fertility rate than take remedial actions when it is already too late. From this perspective, I think it is more worthwhile to spend on a "baby fund" community-wise.

In our view, to invest in a child fund is to invest in the future. In addition to adjusting the demographic structure and alleviating population ageing, the fund can also address such issues as youth development and cross-generational poverty. The fund will be the initial endowment for our future masters in their life, serving multiple purposes including further studies, home acquisition and coping with the medical expenses for critical illnesses. All of these are the important "firsts" of young people in their journey of life.

We have this pet phrase of youngsters having neither prospect nor hope. A child fund can offer an additional platform for youth development. Early accumulation of wealth for the younger generation by the community and provision of more development opportunities for young people from different strata will motivate them to be more active in planning their life and drawing up personal development plans for the future, so that young people will not only hold hope for the future, but also make headway toward their life goals step by step in a more pragmatic manner during their upbringing. We believe it will not only help get young people become more focused on their future development, but also facilitate good career or life planning often stressed by us, and provide more positive vibes for creating a positive and upbeat social atmosphere.

I am aware of the "Child Development Fund" already put in place by the Government, of which the idea of targeted savings is similar to the proposal made by us in the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB"). As far as I know, while the projects are well-received, their coverage is limited with eligibility requirements and a quarterly quota of 3 000 children only. Given its duration of only two years, while it may help children develop a habit of keeping savings in some measure, children are only able to make one wish come true with such an amount but unable to do proper planning, and it cannot be seen as a long-term investment either.

In fact, now we can see that neighbouring regions and countries have put in place measures to boost their fertility rates, such as a wide range of monetary incentives. Let me just talk about measures similar to the Child Development Fund. We know that such measures have already been implemented in Singapore, Korea and Taiwan. Compared with Singapore and Korea where such measures were implemented in 2001 and 2007 respectively, Hong Kong is lagging far behind as our discussion has just started now. But this is the prevailing trend in Hong Kong, lagging behind others on virtually every front. Filibustering is a common sight in the Legislative Council, thereby delaying the whole policymaking process. Hence, we should waste no more time. In fact, for this proposal put forward by DAB, we can barely wait for its passage, hoping that a consensus may be reached in the community as early as possible.

President, let me reiterate that a child fund is an investment in the future. All the money spent on it will eventually be ploughed back into Hong Kong people, ultimately benefiting our next generation. For the future well-being of Hong Kong, it is worth careful study and consideration.

With these remarks, President, I support Dr CHIANG Lai-wan's motion and Mr HO Kai-ming's amendment. Thank you, President.

MR FRANKIE YICK (in Cantonese): President, this motion today advocates making reference to the practices adopted by the existing Child Development Fund ("CDF") and overseas growth funds with savings elements to establish for newborns a "baby fund" underpinned by tripartite savings. But the Liberal Party considers the proposal ill-conceived, with vague details and objectives.

First, if we make reference to the practice adopted by CDF, the first thing we need to understand is CDF founded in 2008 aims to facilitate the longer-term development of children from disadvantaged backgrounds with a view to alleviating inter-generational poverty, with certain restrictions imposed on the household income of the beneficiaries.

If we make reference to the practices adopted by some overseas places, such as the Child Development Co-Savings Scheme launched by the Singaporean Government, we should know that it mainly supports children in coping with the education and medical expenses arising from their upbringing. According to the details of the Scheme, in addition to an initial fund disbursed by the Government as the first step, for household savings as the next step, based on the household input, the Singaporean Government will also match dollar-for-dollar the amount of savings parents contribute, subject to a cap for a maximum period of 12 years.

The Scheme seeks not to alleviate poverty. The Singaporean Government expects that families will be encouraged to have more children through the Scheme. As it is a measure to boost the fertility rate, it is naturally not subject to any household income restrictions. Hence, the Liberal Party wonders whether

the motion this time around seeks to alleviate poverty or boost the fertility rate. If this proposition is intended to serve two purposes in nature, the Liberal Party will think that it is self-contradictory with no room for both to co-exist.

Once the "baby fund" is positioned as a poverty alleviation measure, the principle of allocation will then be directing resources to helping those families in need. The line drawn may arouse public concern about whether there is any discriminatory labelling, thereby leading to division. Even if such an initiative is gradually accepted by the community, the Liberal Party considers it redundant to launch a similar fund project on top of the existing CDF or associated projects.

If the "baby fund" is a measure to boost the fertility rate, we should support it. But how to raise funds, the amount to be raised, whether the approach of "indiscriminate provision of benefits" is cost-effective and whether such resources are sustainable in the long run are issues that warrant deliberations. The Liberal Party is also worried that it will be a repeat of the retirement protection issue, causing endless disputes over the allocation of resources in the community.

Moreover, as proposed by the original motion, the "baby fund" should be used mainly by children for further studies, home acquisition, coping with critical illnesses and retirement protection in the future, so that children can develop the habit of keeping personal savings at a tender age and be given more opportunities of upward mobility. The Liberal Party considers that such a one-stop all-in-one package is detached from reality both in terms of its objectives and approach, and its implementation will be difficult.

The basis of the proposed fund is savings by parents instead of children, so the ones who make such savings are parents, not children themselves. For this reason, the objective of "enabling children to develop the habit of keeping personal savings at a tender age" seems a bit far-fetched.

Furthermore, home acquisition is an important life event that requires well-thought-out planning founded on personal financial strength, and that not all

babies have to acquire homes. For example, 60% of the local population are currently living in public housing. Hence, I believe that if such responsibilities and costs are to be borne by the community for each baby, it will be difficult to reach a consensus.

In addition, retirement protection is long-term life planning upon entry to the job market, and at present, both employers and employees are making monthly contributions at fixed percentages according to their salary levels. If we go further to require the Government, families and private enterprises to collectively make contributions to the "baby fund" as proposed by the amendment, no matter whether the fund seeks to alleviate poverty or boost the fertility rate, such an approach is tantamount to victimizing private enterprises. In the absence of valid grounds, it is naturally difficult to garner public support.

Moreover, given the current economic slowdown coupled with a number of policies unfavourable to business launched by the authorities one after another in recent years, such as the minimum wage, the operating environment of the business sector has gone from bad to worse. In view of this, the authorities should really refrain from victimizing private enterprises time and again, so as to avoid any backfiring that may drag the economy further down while the attempt to boost the fertility rate also ends in failure.

In fact, the Liberal Party has no negative thoughts about any attempt to boost the fertility rate or taking forward various measures conducive to the upbringing and development of children as there is no contradiction and conflict between both. But after all, given its foreign exchange reserves and fiscal reserves amounting to some \$2,000 billion, the Government should assume a more significant role of promotion and be committed to offering the strongest financial backing.

According to overseas experience, in the policy area of boosting the fertility rate, comprehensive planning and ancillary measures are more desirable than the provision of financial incentives alone. The Liberal Party expects the Government to learn the painful lesson, formulating a comprehensive population

policy to boost the fertility rate on the basis of the existing resources, thereby injecting new impetus for the future development of our society.

President, I so submit.

MR ALVIN YEUNG (in Cantonese): President, the motion proposed by Dr CHIANG Lai-wan is indeed an eye-opener. In essence, the notion she proposed is to "save money to rescue Hong Kong". She considers that all problems in life can be resolved so long as children begin saving money at a tender age. This is really compatible with Hong Kong's core values.

President, I would like to share with Dr CHIANG a line from Mencius, "If, on self-examination, I find that I am upright, I will go forward against thousands and tens of thousands."¹ The motion proposed by Dr CHIANG to establish a "baby fund" can really be described as "going forward against thousands and tens of thousands". When voices calling for abolition of the Mandatory Provident Fund ("MPF") were already heard in Hong Kong society a long time ago, when the latest survey conducted last month revealed that nearly 60% of the wage earners were dissatisfied with the MPF System and, what is more, when members of the public seriously suspected the Government's intention of implementing MPF was to protect the insurance industry and transfer benefit, Dr CHIANG can somehow stand her ground by proposing that an additional fund be established for the people of Hong Kong. If it is not a show of bravery, not a breadth of mind of insisting on doing what she thinks is right and ignoring all voices of objection, what is it?

We must not quote ancient literature out of context. The first sentence of Mencius' saying means that a person considers himself upright even on self-examination. This is not the first time Dr CHIANG proposes the establishment of a "baby fund". Actually, such a grand idea was reported by the media as early as four years ago. According to a report carried in the *Oriental Daily News* on 19 December 2014, this issue was discussed between the

¹ <<http://ctext.org/mengzi/gong-sun-chou-i/zh?en=on>>

pro-establishment camp and the former Financial Secretary, John TSANG, during a dinner gathering in which Dr CHIANG proposed the establishment of a "baby fund" (quote): "When Ann reportedly put forward the proposal the evening before yesterday, the Financial Secretary immediately looked at the DAB Chairman, TAM Yiu-chung, who was sitting at the same table. TAM then said coldly, "The proposal represents Ann's personal opinion. It has nothing to do with DAB." (End of quote) Obviously, Ann must have engaged in careful and serious consideration again and again, believing that the well-conceived "baby fund" would definitely benefit Hong Kong before she felt confident in raising the proposal with the Financial Secretary and even proposing this motion in the Legislative Council today for discussion.

It is a pity that, though Dr CHIANG manages to convince herself that she is upright on self-examination, and she has the breadth of mind of insisting on doing what she thinks is right and ignoring all voices of objection, I really have nothing to say except raising objection to her motion. The biggest problem with her motion is that the Government is required to set up a \$100 billion seed fund and then make an annual injection of \$10,000 for each newborn baby. Before the baby reaches the age of 18, an additional injection of \$10,000 will also be made should a surplus continue to be recorded.

Firstly, Dr CHIANG's proposal for an allocation of \$100 billion by the Hong Kong Government for a livelihood-related item can already be described as wishful thinking. Furthermore, in delivering the Budget this year, the incumbent Financial Secretary, Paul CHAN, predicted an \$8 billion deficit for 2020-2021. In other words, even if the Government starts making contribution this year, it can no longer do so when the children reach three years old, which means that they are going to lose their hope and future. We consider the fund very problematic if it is infeasible and unsustainable.

Secondly, the design of matching contributions by the Government and parents has already fallen into the vicious circle mentioned just now. President, given our great dissatisfaction with MPF, will Hong Kong people be willing to make contribution to a proposed additional fund? Dr CHIANG is right in saying that parents will try their very best to make proper preparations for their children. It is only right and proper that parents save money to bring up their children.

Since they can already save money in a flexible manner to make proper preparations for their children, why should they face so many constraints for the sake of making contributions which can be expended only when their children reach the age of 18? As regards Dr CHIANG's view that the "baby fund" can help children develop the habit of keeping personal savings, President, the contributions will be made by the Government and parents, so how can the children develop the habit of saving?

Speaking of sustainability and flexibility, President, I would like to talk about some practical considerations. A pet phrase of Hong Kong people is "it costs \$4 million to bring up a child", which came from an advertisement and has been circulated since 2006. Today, 11 years down the line, is \$4 million enough to bring up a small child?

According to Dr CHIANG's estimation, the yield of the fund is approximately \$160,000. Honestly, when the children reach the age of 18, what can they study and what properties can they purchase by expending the "baby fund" benefits? As pointed out by me at the beginning of my speech, we must not quote ancient literature out of context. The quoted saying of Mencius was preceded by "If, on self-examination, I find that I am not upright, shall I not be in fear even of a poor man in his loose garments of hair-cloth?"² It means that if a person, on self-reflection, finds that his point of view is problematic, he will definitely feel uneasy when facing the general public. I hope to share this line with Dr CHIANG for mutual enlightenment.

I so submit.

MR CHEUNG KWOK-KWAN (in Cantonese): President, as a popular saying goes, "parents' worries about their children never end". I believe this saying strikes a chord with all parents. Parents will worry whether their newborn babies will fall ill, whether they are well-fed, and whether they can grow up healthily. When their children go to school, they will worry whether their

² <<http://ctext.org/mengzi/gong-sun-chou-i/zh?en=on>>

children will be admitted to a reputable school and receive good education. When their children start to make friends, they will also worry if they will befriend bad people and go astray. When my children plan to get married, I as a father of two daughters will worry if their husbands are good men, whether they will be dearly loved by their future husbands, and whether they will have a secure home. Quite many friends of mine are young parents who mind their babies without sleep and rest every day. Some others might contemplate every day which kindergartens or primary schools they should choose for their children or rush back home after work to tutor their children in preparation for dictations, tests and examinations. Meanwhile, quite many friends of mine are young couples. They choose not to have children precisely because of their worry that they can hardly look after their children properly. I think Members must have many friends like these people around them, too.

In fact, the problem of ageing population in Hong Kong is getting worse. One in every eight Hong Kong people is an elderly person aged 65 years or above. The World Health Organization has predicted that, by 2050, Hong Kong will be ranked the fifth city with the largest percentage of elderly people in the world. By then, the number of elderly persons aged 65 years or above will account for 40% of Hong Kong's population. Rapid population ageing will lead to a sharp rise in the elderly dependency ratio, from every 1 000 members of the workforce supporting 172 people who are not members of the workforce in 2010 to every 1 000 members of the workforce supporting 227 people who are not members of the workforce in 2021, thus exerting immense pressure on society and the next generation.

According to the latest announcement by the Census and Statistics Department ("C&SD"), Hong Kong ranked second in the world in the disparity between the rich and the poor with its Gini coefficient reaching 0.539, or a new height in 45 years. C&SD has even stated that, in light of the ageing population, the Gini coefficient will continue to rise. The disparity between the rich and the poor will also continue to widen. While the development gap between the next generation of the rich and the grass roots is widening, cross-generational poverty will also continue to exist since "social class stereotypes" have made upward mobility impossible. As a result, it is even harder to strike a balance in terms of development opportunities for the next generation.

A number of Members who spoke earlier agree that parents in Hong Kong face tremendous difficulty in giving birth and lack confidence in doing so. The proposed establishment of a "baby fund" by Dr CHIANG today happens to respond to the misgivings of parents on this front. Since Dr CHIANG has already explained the concept of the operation of the fund in detail, I will not make any further elaboration here.

In my opinion, the establishment of a "baby fund" was originally aimed at enabling the SAR Government to encourage young couples policy-wise to have children and children born in Hong Kong to be brought up in a fair environment. Since present-day society is civilized, the "fairness" referred to by us is not the "absolute fairness" as advocated by certain people. By "absolute fairness", many people think that it means all children can enjoy equal opportunities of participation in exorbitant extra-curricular activities, visit Europe on study tours, travel to various parts of the world during the summer holidays, and so on. By "equal opportunities", we mean that although the starting lines of children might be different, with some in the front and some at the back, it is most important that all children have a fair chance of taking part in the race and contest the championship.

Thanks to the implementation of 12-year free education, coupled with the imminent implementation of free kindergarten education, all children will have the opportunity to enjoy 15-year free education. Basically, no children in Hong Kong will be denied education. Furthermore, the social welfare safety net has become more and more comprehensive, including the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, the Low-income Working Family Allowance, learning allowances, fee remissions, the Community Care Fund, and so on. Judging from the financial and learning support received by children nowadays before they reach the age of 18, they can be described as enjoying equal opportunities. This explains why I could study law in university and then become a lawyer, even though I used to live in a public rental housing ("PRH") unit. I also know quite many friends who used to live in PRH units and have become doctors, accountants or employers in the business sector upon graduation from university.

Nowadays, the real watershed between the rich and poor might appear after one has turned 18 years old, because young people from better-off families can

opt to develop their interests, study abroad, or start their own business to realize their dreams upon completion of their secondary education. However, if young people from relatively poor families are not admitted to university after graduating from secondary schools, they will have to join the workforce as low-skilled workers to earn meagre wages to make ends meet, not to mention having the opportunities to study, pursue their dreams or even acquire a secure home. Such being the case, the "baby fund" proposed today will provide objective conditions to make preparations for the future for all babies immediately after they were born by saving up a "dream fund" to enable them to enjoy equal development opportunities in society in the future.

I think it is right for Mr SHIU Ka-chun to withdraw his amendment because the "baby allowance" proposed by him is inherently different from a "baby fund". Furthermore, if the purposes of the fund are not subject to any restriction, it might be abused and eventually defeat its objective. I believe the details of the fund proposed by Dr CHIANG are aimed at serving as a sprat to catch valuable mackerels in the hope of enabling society to discuss these issues. Should the "baby fund" be implemented in the future, Members can draw up details slowly.

With these remarks, President, I support the original motion and Mr HO Kai-ming's amendment.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, you may now speak on the amendment. The time limit is five minutes.

DR CHIANG LAI-WAN (in Cantonese): President, first of all, I thank Members for their speeches and Mr HO Kai-ming for proposing the amendment.

When Members propose motions on long-term planning which are not "instant noodles" or not requesting the Government to dish out money immediately, people may not be interested or will throw a wet blanket on them. But it does not matter. We will insist on proposals came up after years of consideration which are beneficial to society and the next generation, despite the different views.

Some Members, including Ms Claudia MO and Mr Alvin YEUNG stated that Mr TAM Yiu-chung had said in 2014 that it is the personal view of CHIANG Lai-wan. They were right. This proposal was first made by me in our party ...

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, please speak on the amendment.

DR CHIANG LAI-WAN (in Cantonese): I would like to respond to other Members' speeches.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): You many only speak on the amendment now.

DR CHIANG LAI-WAN (in Cantonese): Fine, I will now speak on Mr HO Kai-ming's amendment. I thank Mr HO Kai-ming for refining my proposal on a "baby fund".

In fact, a "baby fund" is the expectation of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB") for the implementation of policies by the Government in 2014. We have also raised this expectation with the next Chief Executive this year. We tend to agree with the capital injection and funding sources of the fund proposed by Mr HO Kai-ming in his amendment. Insofar as the two levels of "baby fund" that he proposed, I think it is worth consideration in the long run. Studies can be done together. After all, there is a serious lack of community child care by the Government at present. Parents of grass-roots families have to work and seek ways to take care of their children at the same time. This is an issue on which we have received many complaints from the public.

Nevertheless, my proposal today focuses on urging the Government to establish a "baby fund" at the personal level so that our next generation can actually benefit from it. Mr HO Kai-ming proposed in this amendment that tax

deduction be provided for families and third parties making contributions. We think this is not a bad idea because it can provide an additional incentive for parents to make contributions, and thus make the savings in the personal "baby fund" even more stable. Therefore, DAB supports the amendment proposed by Mr HO Kai-ming. Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): President, the Government has all along attached great importance to nurturing our next generation. Once again, I thank Dr CHIANG Lai-wan who proposed this motion and Mr HO Kai-ming who proposed the amendment, as well as seven other Members for their valuable input today. Now I will give a response to the salient points raised by Members.

First, about learning and continuing education, the Government's policy on student finance is to ensure that no student is denied access to education due to lack of means. To address the learning needs of students from families with financial difficulties, we have in place financial assistance schemes for primary and secondary students, which include the School Textbook Assistance Scheme, Student Travel Subsidy Scheme, Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges and Examination Fee Remission Scheme, in order to alleviate the financial burden of grass-roots families. Moreover, the Community Care Fund has launched a number of assistance programmes to provide greater support for needy students, such as a programme to provide hostel subsidy for needy undergraduate students to meet their hostel expenses.

Financial assistance schemes for tertiary students include the means-tested Tertiary Student Finance Scheme—Publicly-funded Programmes and Financial Assistance Scheme for Post-secondary Students, as well as the Non-means-tested Loan Scheme for Post-secondary Students. To ease the financial burden of fresh graduates who have borrowed student loans, the Government has given loan borrowers the option of starting the student loan repayment one year after completing their studies.

In addition to assistance and loan schemes for tertiary programmes, the Government also has in place the Continuing Education Fund ("CEF") to provide

subsidies to adults with learning aspirations to pursue continuing education and training programmes. Hong Kong residents aged from 18 to 65 can submit claims for reimbursement upon successful completion of the courses. The amount of subsidy is 80% of the fees, subject to a maximum sum of \$10,000. In the 2017 Policy Address, the Chief Executive proposed to inject an additional \$1.5 billion into CEF while undertaking to consider various measures to enhance CEF. A consultant has been commissioned to assist in the review of CEF and explore measures to enhance the operation of CEF. The review is expected to be completed within this year.

To specifically encourage employable families not receiving the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance to become self-reliant through employment while focusing on supporting families with children and youth, the Government introduced the Low-income Working Family Allowance ("LIFA") Scheme in May last year to encourage working families to stay in active employment and ease inter-generational poverty. The Scheme is designed to particularly take care of families with children and youth. Apart from providing the Basic Allowance which is tied to employment and working hours, a Child Allowance is also provided. As at 2 June this year, LIFA Scheme has received about some 74 000 applications, of which 55 000 applications have been approved with the amount of allowance approved totalling \$640 million. Around 119 000 persons have benefited from the Scheme and of these persons, around 52 000 are children or youth. We will launch an overall policy review of LIFA Scheme shortly to further refine the Scheme.

Mr HO Kai-ming proposed that a "baby fund" should be set up at the personal level and that tax deduction be provided to families making contributions. To alleviate the financial burden of taxpayers in bringing up their children, the Government has, for four times over the past six years, increased the Child Allowance and the additional allowance for tax deduction with the most recent increase of the Child Allowance in the year of assessment 2015-2016. The Child Allowance for tax deduction is currently \$100,000, and in the year during which a child is born, the Child Allowance will be increased by an additional \$100,000.

Apart from being subject to material deprivation, grass-roots children are often affected in their outlook, confidence and self-expectations for development due to financial constraints. In this connection, in the non-material aspect, the Child Development Fund that I mentioned in my opening remarks has so far received injections totalling \$600 million. Through non-governmental organizations and schools, a total of 145 projects in nine batches have been launched with participation from over 13 500 grass-roots children. We will continue to help grass-roots children accumulate such intangible assets as positive attitudes, resilience, and social networks through the programmes under CEF, in an effort to help them overcome inter-generational poverty.

President, although the key point of this motion today is "baby fund", the issues of concern to Members are actually not confined to support for the growth of children. What is more, a number of areas relating to the living of adults are also involved, including housing, healthcare, retirement protection, and so on. The relevant Policy Bureaux and departments of the Government have, in various aspects, provided the needy with assistance to meet their needs through target-specific measures. We consider that the current approach is more target-oriented which can also make better use of the limited public resources. We are happy to maintain communication with Members and various sectors of the community on how the existing support measures can be further improved, so that both children and adults can obtain suitable support in various aspects of living.

President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now call upon Mr HO Kai-ming to move his amendment.

MR HO KAI-MING (in Cantonese): President, I move that Dr CHIANG Lai-wan's motion be amended.

Mr HO Kai-ming moved the following amendment: (Translation)

"To delete "children of the new generation" after "That" and substitute with "the Government proposed 'enhancing the quality of our home-grown

talent' in the report entitled 'Population Policy - Strategies and Initiatives' published in 2015, and children"; to delete "including" after "assistance," and substitute with "establish with the fiscal surplus or by way of capital injection a 'baby fund' at two levels, namely, the social level and the personal level; the 'baby fund' established at the social level can be used for promoting various measures conducive to children's growth and development, such as improvement of community baby caring facilities, enhancement of community child care services, as well as extension of free quality kindergarten education to whole-day and long whole-day kindergartens, and also for providing additional support to children from grass-roots families; the 'baby fund' established at the personal level can, by"; to delete "a" after "newborns"; to delete " 'baby fund' " after "cumulative" and substitute with "accounts"; to delete "the fund should be used mainly for" after "fund holders);" and substitute with "this type of fund should provide tax deduction for families and third parties making contributions and should be used, according to the children's wish, for their personal growth and development, including growth planning, cultivation of hobbies, as well as"; to delete "and" after "acquisition" and substitute with ","; to add ", etc." after "illnesses"; to delete "retirement protection" after "combined with" and substitute with "children's savings-related insurance, education funds, etc."; and to delete "the fund" after "future;" and substitute with "this type of fund"."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment moved by Mr HO Kai-ming to Dr CHIANG Lai-wan's motion be passed.

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(Members raised their hands)

Mr Kenneth LEUNG rose to claim a division.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Kenneth LEUNG 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.

Functional Constituencies:

Mr Jeffrey LAM, Mr Steven HO, Mr Christopher CHEUNG, Mr HO Kai-ming, Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr LAU Kwok-fan voted for the amendment.

Mr James TO, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Mr Frankie YICK, Mr Charles Peter MOK, Mr Kenneth LEUNG, Mr Dennis KWOK, Mr SHIU Ka-fai, Mr KWONG Chun-yu and Dr YIU Chung-yim voted against the amendment.

Mr CHAN Kin-por, Mr YIU Si-wing, Mr MA Fung-kwok and Mr CHAN Chun-ying abstained.

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

Geographical Constituencies:

Mr CHAN Hak-kan, Mr CHAN Han-pan, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung, Mr KWOK Wai-keung, Dr Elizabeth QUAT, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan and Dr CHENG Chung-tai voted for the amendment.

Mr Paul TSE, Ms Claudia MO, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, Dr KWOK Ka-ki, Dr Helena WONG, Mr Alvin YEUNG, Mr Andrew WAN, Mr LAM Cheuk-ting, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan, Mr Jeremy TAM, Mr Nathan LAW and Dr LAU Siu-lai voted against the amendment.

THE PRESIDENT announced that among the Members returned by functional constituencies, 21 were present, 6 were in favour of the amendment, 10 against it and 4 abstained; while among the Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, 20 were present, 8 were in favour of the amendment and 12 against it. Since the question was not agreed by a majority of each of the two groups of Members present, he therefore declared that the amendment was negatived.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Since Mr SHIU Ka-chun is not present, this Council will not deal with his amendment.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, you still have 1 minute 12 seconds to reply. Thereafter, the debate will come to a close.

DR CHIANG LAI-WAN (in Cantonese): President, the establishment of a "baby fund" is a plan for the very long term. Therefore, it is not a motion but an advocacy that I have proposed today. A "baby fund" is a fund for the future. I am very astonished to see in this Council Ms Claudia MO and Mr Alvin YEUNG react very strongly on learning that the proposal would involve funds amounting to \$100 billion. Have Members considered that this sum of money is reserved for the next generation? The Government has a reserve of close to \$1,000 billion and now I am only asking the Government to set aside 10% or \$100 billion of it for the next generation. Why is this impracticable? Why are

they so narrow-minded as to reject even such a proposal? And they have behaved in such a flippant, playful manner here.

In fact, for this fund of \$100 billion, I suggest that it be handed to the Hong Kong Monetary Authority for monitoring and investment. Every child at birth is given only a small sum of money, so that when they plan for their life in future, they will not feel that they have nothing to start with. This small sum of money can bring hope to every child in Hong Kong. I hope that Members will continue to make various opinions on this issue. This proposal that I have made is only a sprat thrown to catch a mackerel. I hope Members will support this motion

Thank you, Members. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Dr CHIANG Lai-wan be passed. 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.

Functional Constituencies:

Mr Steven HO, Mr HO Kai-ming, Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr LAU Kwok-fan voted for the motion.

Mr James TO, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Mr Frankie YICK, Mr Charles Peter MOK, Mr Kenneth LEUNG, Mr Dennis KWOK, Mr IP Kin-yuen, Mr SHIU Ka-fai, Mr KWONG Chun-yu and Dr YIU Chung-yim voted against the motion.

Mr Jeffrey LAM, Mr CHAN Kin-por, Mr YIU Si-wing, Mr MA Fung-kwok, Mr Christopher CHEUNG, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok and Mr CHAN Chun-ying abstained.

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

Geographical Constituencies:

Mr CHAN Hak-kan, Mr CHAN Han-pan, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung, Mr KWOK Wai-keung, Dr Elizabeth QUAT, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan and Dr CHENG Chung-tai voted for the motion.

Mr Paul TSE, Ms Claudia MO, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, Dr KWOK Ka-ki, Dr Helena WONG, Mr Alvin YEUNG, Mr Andrew WAN, Mr LAM Cheuk-ting, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan, Mr Jeremy TAM, Mr Nathan LAW and Dr LAU Siu-lai voted against the motion.

THE PRESIDENT announced that among the Members returned by functional constituencies, 23 were present, 4 were in favour of the motion, 11 against it and 7 abstained; while among the Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, 20 were present, 8 were in favour of the motion and 12 against it. Since the question was not agreed by a majority of each of the two groups of Members present, he therefore declared that the motion was negated.

REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL LEAVE OF THE COUNCIL TO GIVE EVIDENCE OF COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Two requests made by the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions of the Department of Justice under section 7 of the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance and Rule 90 of the Rules of Procedure for special leave of the Council to give evidence of Council proceedings respectively in two criminal proceedings, as printed on the Agenda.

TWO REQUESTS MADE UNDER SECTION 7 OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (POWERS AND PRIVILEGES) ORDINANCE (CAP. 382) AND RULE 90 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR SPECIAL LEAVE OF THE COUNCIL TO GIVE EVIDENCE OF COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Council shall now deal with the first request: in relation to the criminal proceedings of *HKSAR v CHENG Chung-tai*.

(The request made by the Department of Justice is set out in Annex III)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): In accordance with Rule 90(2) of the Rules of Procedure, upon the placing of the request on the Agenda, the Council shall be deemed to have ordered that such leave be granted, unless on a motion moved without notice at this meeting by any Member the Council determines that such leave shall be refused.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any Member wish to move the motion?

(No Member indicated a wish to move the motion)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I declare that on the first request, under Rule 90(2) of the Rules of Procedure, the Council has granted the leave.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Council shall now deal with the second request: in relation to the criminal proceedings of *HKSAR v LEUNG Chung-hang, Sixtus & 4 Others*.

(The request made by the Department of Justice is set out in Annex IV)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): In accordance with Rule 90(2) of the Rules of Procedure, upon the placing of the request on the Agenda, the Council shall be deemed to have ordered that such leave be granted, unless on a motion moved without notice at this meeting by any Member the Council determines that such leave shall be refused.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any Member wish to move the motion?

(No Member indicated a wish to move the motion)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I declare that on the second request, under Rule 90(2) of the Rules of Procedure, the Council has granted the leave.

NEXT MEETING

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now adjourn the Council until 11:00 am on Wednesday 21 June 2017.

Adjourned accordingly at 3:50 pm.

Annex III

律政司
刑事檢控科
香港金鐘道 66 號
金鐘道政府合署高座 6 樓
圖文傳真：852-2845 1609



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Prosecutions Division
6/F, High Block
Queensway Government Offices
66 Queensway, Hong Kong
Fax: 852-2845 1609

本司樓號 Our Ref: ESCC 1139/2017
來函樓號 Your Ref:
電話號碼 Tel. No.: 2867 2263

18 May 2017

Mr Kenneth CHEN
Clerk to the Legislative Council
The Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

By Fax (2845 2444) and By Post

Dear Mr CHEN,

**Application for Special Leave of the Legislative Council
for Members and officers of and persons employed by the Council to give
evidence in respect of proceedings held before the Council on 19 October 2016
in the criminal proceedings of:**

HKSAR v CHENG Chung-tai
(Case No. ESCC 1139/2017)

This is an application for Special Leave of the Legislative Council ("LegCo") under section 7 of the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap. 382) and rule 90 of the Rules of Procedure of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Instrument No. A501) for the following Members and officers of and persons employed by the LegCo to give evidence in the criminal proceedings instituted against Hon CHENG Chung-tai ("Hon CHENG") in respect of the proceedings held before the LegCo on 19 October 2016 (the "Council meeting"):-

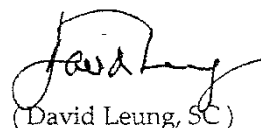
	Name	Role	Remarks
1	Hon LAU Kwok-fan 劉國勳	Member of the LegCo	- witnessed the events that happened during the Council meeting
2	Hon CHIANG Lai-wan 蔣麗芸	Member of the LegCo	- witnessed the events that happened during the Council meeting

3	Mr CHAN Che-fai, Bosco 陳志輝	Senior Public Information Officer of the LegCo	- monitored the filming of the LegCo webcast video capturing the events that happened during the Council meeting
4	Mr SO Ho-kit 蘇豪傑	Security Assistant (I) of the LegCo	- operated the CCTV cameras capturing the events that happened during the Council meeting
5	Mr LAM Tsz-fung 林子峰	Senior Information Technology Officer of the LegCo	- provided video discs containing the CCTV footage of the LegCo and the LegCo webcast video, which capture the events that happened during the Council meeting
6	Mr KWONG Chin-hei 鄺展希	Security Assistant (II) of the LegCo	- witnessed the events that happened during the Council meeting
7	Mr LEE Wing-keung 李永強	Steward of the LegCo	- witnessed the events that happened during the Council meeting

The reasons for the application are as follows. Hon CHENG has been prosecuted for the offence of "Desecration of the national flag", contrary to section 7 of the National Flag and National Emblem Ordinance (No. 116 of 1997), and the offence of "Desecration of the regional flag", contrary to section 7 of the Regional Flag and Regional Emblem Ordinance (No. 117 of 1997). It is alleged that during the Council meeting held in the Chamber of the LegCo on 19 October 2016 and while the summoning bell was ringing, Hon CHENG went to the vacant seats of the other Members of the LegCo and inverted the National Flags and Regional Flags displayed on their desks. It is the prosecution case that Hon CHENG had desecrated the National Flag and the Regional Flag by publicly and wilfully defiling the Flags. The evidence of the above-named witnesses will be necessary in the trial of Hon CHENG, and may involve events which had happened in the Chamber while the Council meeting was held.

Hon CHENG pleaded not guilty to the above offences at the hearing on 16 May 2017. The court set down a Pre-trial Review on 27 June 2017. It is expected that the date of the trial will be fixed soon.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Mr Derek Lau (2867-3513) if we can be of any further assistance.



(David Leung, SC)

Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions

c.c. WDSIP Rainbow KWONG, OC RPOEIT 1 HKI (By Fax (2200-4518) only)

Annex IV

律政司
刑事檢控科
香港金鐘道 66 號
金鐘道政府合署高座 6 樓
圖文傳真：852-2845 1609



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Prosecutions Division
6/F, High Block
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66 Queensway, Hong Kong
Fax: 852-2845 1609

本司編號 Our Ref: ESCC 1269/2017
來函編號 Your Ref:
電話號碼 Tel. No.: 2867 2263

31 May 2017

Mr Kenneth CHEN
Clerk to the Legislative Council
The Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

By Fax (2845-2444) and By Post

Dear Mr CHEN,

**Application for Special Leave of the Legislative Council
for officers of and persons employed by the Council to give evidence in respect
of proceedings held before the Council on 2 November 2016
in the criminal proceedings of:**

HKSAR v LEUNG Chung-hang, Sixtus & 4 Others
(Case No. ESCC 1269/2017)

This is an application for Special Leave of the Legislative Council ("LegCo") under section 7 of the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap. 382) and rule 90 of the Rules of Procedure of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Instrument No. A501) for the following officers of and persons employed by the LegCo to give evidence in the criminal proceedings instituted against Mr LEUNG Chung-hang, Sixtus (D1), Ms YAU Wai-ching (D2), Mr YEUNG Lai-hong (D3), Ms CHUNG Suet-ying (D4) and Mr CHEUNG Tsz-lung (D5), in respect of the proceedings held before the LegCo on 2 November 2016 (the "Council meeting"):-

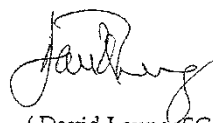
	Name	Role	Remarks
1	Ms CHAN Suk-han, Julie 陳淑嫻	Senior Security Assistant of the LegCo	- witnessed the events that happened during the Council meeting

2	Ms LI Yuk-wah 李玉華	Security Assistant (I) of the LegCo	- witnessed the events that happened during the Council meeting
3	Ms CHOY Yiu-man 蔡瑤雯	Security Assistant (II) of the LegCo	- witnessed the events that happened during the Council meeting
4	Mr CHEUNG Shui-shing 張瑞成	Security Assistant (I) of the LegCo	- witnessed the events that happened during the Council meeting
5	Mr CHAU Kai-ho 周繼豪	Security Assistant (I) of the LegCo	- witnessed the events that happened during the Council meeting
6	Mr KWAN Yiu-kee 關耀基	Senior Security Assistant of the LegCo	- witnessed the events that happened during the Council meeting
7	Mr LAU Kin-wai, Daniel 劉健偉	Security Officer of the LegCo	- witnessed the events that happened during the Council meeting
8	Mr LAM Tsz-fung 林子峰	Senior Information Technology Officer of the LegCo	- Provided video discs containing CCTV footage which capture the events that happened during the Council meeting

The reasons for the application are as follows. D1 to D5 have been prosecuted on one charge of "Taking part in an unlawful assembly" contrary to section 18 of the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245), and an alternative charge of "Attempted Forcible Entry" contrary to section 23 of the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245) and section 159G of the Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200). It is the prosecution case that on 2 November 2016 while the Council meeting was held in the Chamber of the LegCo, D1 and D2 entered the Chamber seeking to take the LegCo Oath and were requested to leave the Chamber by the President, who suspended the Council meeting. When the Council meeting later resumed in Conference Room 1, D1 to D5, together with other persons, charged at the relevant security officers guarding the entrance to Conference Room 1 and attempted to enter Conference Room 1 in a violent manner, thereby committing the above offences. The evidence of the above-named witnesses will be necessary in the trial of D1 to D5, and may involve events which had happened in the Chamber and in Conference Room 1 while the Council meeting was held.

D1 to D5 pleaded not guilty to the above offences at the hearing on 26 May 2017. The court set down a Pre-trial Review on 14 July 2017. It is expected that the date of the trial will be fixed soon.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Mr Derek Lau (2867-3513) if we can be of any further assistance.



(David Leung, SC)

Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions

c.c. WDSIP Rainbow KWONG, OC RPOEIT 1 HKI (By Fax (2200-4518) only)