

Legislative Council

Agenda

Wednesday 8 September 2021 at 11:30 am
(or immediately after the Chief Executive's Question Time
to be held at 11:00 am that day)

I. Laying of Papers on the Table of the Council

1 item of subsidiary legislation and 2 other papers to be laid on the Table of the Council set out in **Appendix 1**

II. Questions

Members to ask 22 questions (6 for oral replies and 16 for written replies)

Questions for oral replies to be asked by

1. Hon Holden CHOW
(Support for the tourism industry)
2. Hon Wilson OR
(Expediting public housing production)
3. Hon Paul TSE
(Value for money in respect of engaging consultants)
4. Hon Mrs Regina IP
(Revitalizing the Growth Enterprise Market)
5. Hon Elizabeth QUAT
(612 Humanitarian Relief Fund)
6. Hon CHAN Han-pan
(Improving taxi services)

Public officers to reply

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

Secretary for Transport and Housing

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Under Secretary for Development
Under Secretary for Home Affairs

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Under Secretary for Security

Secretary for Transport and Housing

Contents of 22 questions, Members to ask such questions and public officers to reply set out in **Appendix 2**

III. Members' Motions

1. Proposed resolution to extend the period for amending subsidiary legislation (L.N. 139 to L.N. 146 of 2021)

Mover : Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan

Wording of the motion : **Appendix 3**

2. Proposed resolution to extend the period for amending subsidiary legislation (L.N. 154 of 2021)

Mover : Hon Frankie YICK

Wording of the motion : **Appendix 4**

3. Motion on “Mending the social rift and fostering social cohesion”

Mover : Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG

Wording of the motion : **Appendix 5**

Public officer to attend : Chief Secretary for Administration

Clerk to the Legislative Council

Council meeting of 8 September 2021

Laying of Papers on the Table of the Council

Subsidiary legislation

Legal Notice No.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. <u>Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2021</u> | 218 of 2021 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

Other papers

2. Government Flying Service Welfare Fund Report by the Controller, Government Flying Service on the Administration of the Fund for the year ended 31 March 2021 (including Financial Statements and Report of the Director of Audit)
(to be presented by Secretary for Security)
3. Report No. 27/20-21 of the House Committee on Consideration of Subsidiary Legislation and Other Instruments
(to be presented by Hon Starry LEE, Chairman of the House Committee)

22 questions to be asked at the Council meeting of 8 September 2021

| | | Subject matters | Public officers to reply |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Questions for oral replies | | | |
| 1 | Hon Holden CHOW | <u>Support for the tourism industry</u> | Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development |
| 2 | Hon Wilson OR | <u>Expediting public housing production</u> | Secretary for Transport and Housing |
| 3 | Hon Paul TSE | <u>Value for money in respect of engaging consultants</u> | Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury Under Secretary for Development Under Secretary for Home Affairs |
| 4 | Hon Mrs Regina IP | <u>Revitalizing the Growth Enterprise Market</u> | Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury |
| 5 | Hon Elizabeth QUAT | <u>612 Humanitarian Relief Fund</u> | Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury Under Secretary for Security |
| 6 | Hon CHAN Han-pan | <u>Improving taxi services</u> | Secretary for Transport and Housing |
| Questions for written replies | | | |
| 7 | Hon Steven HO | <u>Flooding problem in the New Territories North</u> | Secretary for Development |
| 8 | Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan | <u>Members of the public carrying out outdoor activities under inclement weather</u> | Secretary for Security |
| 9 | Hon Jimmy NG | <u>Supporting the professional services sectors</u> | Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development |
| 10 | Hon LEUNG Che-cheung | <u>Fertility rate of Hong Kong on the low side</u> | Chief Secretary for Administration |
| 11 | Dr Hon Pierre CHAN | <u>Public Wi-Fi services provided in public hospitals</u> | Secretary for Food and Health |
| 12 | Hon Vincent CHENG | <u>Country parks</u> | Secretary for the Environment |
| 13 | Hon Alice MAK | <u>Transport infrastructure for Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen New Development Area</u> | Secretary for Transport and Housing |
| 14 | Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG | <u>Evening secondary courses</u> | Secretary for Education |
| 15 | Hon Frankie YICK | <u>Public transport services</u> | Secretary for Transport and Housing |
| 16 | Hon Starry LEE | <u>Attracting talents to come to Hong Kong</u> | Secretary for Security |
| 17 | Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok | <u>Market Modernization Programme</u> | Secretary for Food and Health |
| 18 | Hon LUK Chung-hung | <u>Couriers for food delivery online platforms</u> | Secretary for Transport and Housing |
| 19 | Hon CHAN Hak-kan | <u>Emission of air pollutants by public transport modes</u> | Secretary for the Environment |
| 20 | Hon Tony TSE | <u>Self-regulation of professional sectors</u> | Secretary for Security |
| 21 | Hon CHAN Hak-kan | <u>Data relating to housing</u> | Secretary for Transport and Housing |
| 22 | Hon Frankie YICK | <u>Drivers' use of mobile phones or tablet computers while driving</u> | Secretary for Transport and Housing |

Question 1
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Support for the tourism industry

Hon Holden CHOW to ask:

Hong Kong's tourism industry has been on its last legs since the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 epidemic. Members of the tourism industry look forward to an expeditious resumption of normal traveller clearance between Hong Kong and the Mainland, so that the flow of people between the two places will return to normal and the hardship of the tourism industry will be relieved. Regarding the support for the tourism industry, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the latest progress of the discussions between the Government and the Mainland authorities on the resumption of normal traveller clearance, including whether adoption of the traveller clearance arrangements between the Mainland and Macao (which have been proved effective) has been considered, so as to facilitate the flow of people between the two places and help Hong Kong's tourism industry recover;
- (2) given that the disbursement of a new round of cash allowances for travel agents and practitioners of the tourism industry as announced by the Government last month is one-off in nature, and that the 2 000 temporary positions created for practitioners of the tourism industry will be cancelled following the progressive closure of the community vaccination centres, of the new measures put in place by the Government to support travel agents and practitioners of the tourism industry to tide over the difficulties; and
- (3) as mutant strains with higher transmissibility may cause the epidemic all over the world to persist for a long period of time, whether new measures are in place to make good use of the currently excessive human resources arising from the standstill of the tourism industry, and to provide more temporary positions and vocational training for practitioners of the tourism industry; if so, of the details?

Question 2
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Expediting public housing production

Hon Wilson OR to ask:

The number of public housing flats produced in the last financial year has hit a record low in 10 years. The average waiting time of general public housing applicants has been rising continuously (which was 5.8 years as at the end of March this year), and moving increasingly further away from the target of providing the first public housing flat offer to general applicants at around three years on average. On expediting public housing production, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) as the Hong Kong Housing Authority (“HA”) is using the modular integrated construction (“MiC”) method in constructing a 12-storey building in the Public Housing Development at Tung Chung Area 99 project as an MiC pilot project, of the relevant progress;
- (2) what criteria on the basis of which, and when, HA will decide whether or not to adopt MiC method across the board in future; and
- (3) of HA’s other means, apart from using MiC method and components produced with off-site prefabrication technology, to speed up housing production, especially the means which can minimize the delays in works progress caused by factors such as inclement weather or manpower shortage?

Question 3
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Value for money in respect of engaging consultants

Hon Paul TSE to ask:

Some members of the public are concerned about the Government's practice over the years of spending huge sums of money on engaging consultants for purposes such as publicizing Hong Kong and taking forward public works projects. For example, in 2001 and 2010, without extensive consultation, a total of \$30 million was spent on designing and promoting the "flying dragon" icon logo to publicize "Brand Hong Kong", which was criticized as a black box operation; in 2015, nearly \$70 million was spent on commissioning a consultancy study on the Environmentally Friendly Linkage System for Kowloon East, but eventually the system was not adopted; in June last year, \$49 million was spent on engaging a consultancy firm to formulate a strategy to publicize Hong Kong overseas; and in December last year, \$550 million was allocated for conducting consultancy studies related to artificial islands in the Central Waters. A senior engineer has described the situation as "a chaotic situation of consultants administering Hong Kong". In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has drawn up guidelines on engaging consultants; if not, whether it will do so; if it has, of the relevant procedure and criteria, as well as the method for determining the level of consultancy fees; whether it has reviewed if the practice of engaging consultants in the aforesaid cases was cost-effective;
- (2) whether it will, in conducting recruitment exercises for the relevant civil service posts, accord priority to applicants with experience in consultancy work, so that the research work for similar projects can be entrusted to civil servants in future; and
- (3) of the respective total amounts of expenditure incurred by the Government in each of the past five financial years on engaging consultants to publicize Hong Kong and take forward public works projects; whether it has reviewed if such a practice is necessary and in line with the principle of fiscal prudence?

Question 4
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Revitalizing the Growth Enterprise Market

Hon Mrs Regina IP to ask:

The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited (“SEHK”) launched the Growth Enterprise Market (“GEM”) in 1999, and amended the GEM Listing Rules in 2018 to raise the GEM admission requirements and remove the “streamlined application process” for transfer of listings from GEM to the Main Board. Some members of the industry have pointed out that the amendments concerned have undermined the positioning of GEM as a “stepping stone” to the Main Board, and deprived small and medium enterprises (“SMEs”) of the opportunity to raise funds through listing on GEM (given the fact that only one company was newly listed on GEM in the first half of this year). In addition, in the absence of investors’ attention, it is difficult for the 360-odd companies currently listed on GEM to raise funds (as illustrated by the fact that the “amount of funds raised by companies after listing” last year was less than one fourth of that a decade ago). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether it knows if SEHK has plans to revitalize GEM, so that more SMEs can raise funds through listing on GEM; if SEHK does, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 5
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

612 Humanitarian Relief Fund

Hon Elizabeth QUAT to ask:

In June 2019, the “612 Humanitarian Relief Fund” (“the Fund”) was established to raise funds through online crowdfunding so as to provide relief in terms of money, etc. for those injured and those arrested in the movement of opposition to the proposed legislative amendments. As at the end of July this year, the donations received cumulatively by the Fund exceeded \$253 million. It has been reported that the Fund has not applied for registration under the Societies Ordinance, nor does it fall within any of the associations to which the Societies Ordinance does not apply as specified in the Schedule to the Ordinance. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has studied if the Fund is required to apply for registration or exemption from registration under the Societies Ordinance; if it has studied and the outcome is in the affirmative, of the follow-up actions;
- (2) whether it will enact legislation to regulate public fundraising activities for raising funds to subsidize persons suspected of breaking the law; and
- (3) given that the Fund itself does not have a bank account and has been receiving donations through a bank account of another body, namely “Alliance for True Democracy”, whether it has investigated if the Fund has received funds from organizations or persons outside Hong Kong, and if the activities of these two associations have contravened the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance and other laws?

Question 6
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Improving taxi services

Hon CHAN Han-pan to ask:

Some members of the taxi trade have pointed out that in recent years, taxi business has been reeling from the double blows of economic downturns and the rampant activities of using private cars for illegal carriage of passengers for hire and reward (“illegal carriage of passengers”). As a result, taxi drivers have suffered a reduction of income, and service quality has been deteriorating. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that most of the taxi drivers place several mobile phones on the dashboard in order to use several online ride-hailing applications, whether the Government will stipulate that such applications may send taxi-hailing messages only to those taxis stopping and waiting for customers or empty taxis, so as to avoid taxi drivers being distracted while driving, thereby minimizing traffic accidents; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether it will study afresh the implementation of a premium taxi service scheme to enhance the quality of taxi service through means such as licensed taxis forming fleets, employing vehicles of new models with better facilities, and improving the remuneration and training for drivers, so that those members of the public who are willing to pay a higher fare can choose taxi service which is of higher quality and safer; if so, of the details and the timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether it will expedite the legislative work on raising the penalties for illegal carriage of passengers, and introduce new measures to step up efforts in combating such activities; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 7
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Flooding problem in the New Territories North

Hon Steven HO to ask:

In recent months, serious flooding has occurred at a number of places in the New Territories North (“NTN”) during a series of rainstorms. Some residents in the district have pointed out that the district’s flood discharge capacity has been undermined by a number of development projects and infrastructure works projects carried out in the district in recent years. This situation, coupled with drainage channels being blocked by unauthorized works carried out by some people on government lands on which they had encroached, has caused serious flooding even at locations where flooding had rarely occurred in the past. As a result, the residents, farmers and pig farm operators in the district have suffered substantial property losses. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of reports received in the past five years by the Government about unauthorized works being carried out on illegally occupied government lands in NTN; concerning such cases, (i) the procedure for taking law enforcement and regulatory actions and (ii) the number of prosecutions instituted by the Government, as well as the general and maximum penalties imposed on the convicted persons; what new measures are in place to curb such acts;
- (2) of the monthly numbers of requests for assistance and complaints related to flooding received by the Government from NTN residents in the past five years; among such cases, the total value of property losses as reported by the residents, and the assistance provided to them by the Government;
- (3) of the government departments responsible for scrutinizing whether the development projects and infrastructure works projects under planning will affect the flood discharge capacity of the surrounding areas when they are carried out, as well as the procedure for such scrutiny work;

- (4) whether the Government will (i) conduct a comprehensive study on the development planning and flood discharge capacity of NTN, (ii) formulate measures to comprehensively improve the flood discharge capacity in the district, and (iii) set up a dedicated department or inter-departmental working group for implementing such measures, so as to resolve the flooding problem in NTN; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (5) given that a number of pig farms in NTN experienced several occasions of serious flooding in just one month, which caused heavy losses to the operators, whether the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department has provided immediate assistance to such operators, and assisted the affected pig farms in expeditious restoration and enhancement in flood prevention facilities?

Question 8
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Members of the public carrying out outdoor activities
under inclement weather

Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan to ask:

In recent years, some members of the public have taken risks by carrying out outdoor activities such as hiking as well as chasing wind and wave during inclement weather, and accidents of their sustaining injuries or deaths have occurred from time to time. For example, on 20 July this year when the Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 and the Amber Rainstorm Warning Signal were in force, a man was washed away by rapids while hiking in a stream in Ma On Shan and died unfortunately. Such members of the public not only recklessly disregarded their own safety, but also put search and rescue (“S&R”) personnel in danger. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) among the S&R calls involving outdoor activities received by the authorities in the past five years, of the number of those received when weather warnings were in force, and set out, by date of receipt, the outdoor activities and the number of S&R personnel involved in each call as well as the government departments to which such personnel belonged;
- (2) of the average amount of public expenditure incurred in each of the S&R operations relating to the calls mentioned in (1), with a breakdown by the government departments and the types of equipment (including inflatable boats and helicopters) involved;
- (3) whether it will study closing off dangerous hills and waters during the periods when specified weather warnings are in force, and prohibiting members of the public from going up such hills or going out to such waters during such periods without justifiable reasons, so as to prevent them from encountering danger;
- (4) whether it will, by following the practices of the management authorities of the national parks in the United States, the authorities of the Taiwan region or certain prefectural governments of Japan, levy a post-incident “S&R charge” on those members of the public who have taken risks by carrying out outdoor activities under inclement weather during which they have encountered danger and called for help, so as to achieve punitive and deterrent effects; and

- (5) whether it has plans to step up education and publicity efforts, so as to educate members of the public not to carry out high-risk outdoor activities under inclement weather; if so, of the details?

Question 9
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Supporting the professional services sectors

Hon Jimmy NG to ask:

In November 2016, the Government launched the Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme (“PASS”) with a total commitment of \$200 million, with an aim to support Hong Kong’s professional services sectors to carry out worthwhile projects, thereby spearheading proactive outreaching promotion efforts and enhancing service standards. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the following information on PASS for each year since it was implemented and the period from 1 January to 31 July this year: (i) the number of funded projects, (ii) the number of projects rejected, (iii) the number of beneficiary organizations, (iv) the average amount of grant per project, and (v) the major beneficiary sectors;
- (2) whether it will consider afresh formulating a set of quantitative key performance indicators for assessing and monitoring the effectiveness and achievements of all funded projects; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) given that financial services, maritime services and tourism services are pillar industries of Hong Kong, whether the Government will include such sectors in the list of eligible professional services sectors and encourage the relevant organizations of such sectors to apply for funding under PASS; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) as the Chief Executive announced in the 2020 Policy Address that a funding of \$50 million had been set aside for setting up a Professionals Participation Subsidy Programme (“PSP”) under PASS to subsidize major professional bodies to participate, after the epidemic situation has stabilized, in relevant exchange, promotion and professional standard enhancement activities organized by the Government, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and overseas Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, so as to encourage Hong Kong’s professional services sectors to step up efforts to promote Hong Kong’s competitive edges and professional services to the Mainland cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and overseas markets, of the following information on PSP since it was launched: (i) the number of

approved applications, (ii) the total amount of subsidies granted, and (iii) the estimated number of beneficiaries?

Question 10
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Fertility rate of Hong Kong on the low side

Hon LEUNG Che-cheung to ask:

It is learnt that the fertility rate of Hong Kong has been on the low side and dropping continuously in recent years and it even dropped to a record low of 0.87 last year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether, in the past three years, it conducted assessments on the reasons for the fertility rate of Hong Kong being persistently on the low side in recent years, and the impacts of the low fertility rate on the various aspects of Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether it has explored new measures to boost the fertility rate; and
- (3) whether it has set a warning line for the fertility rate, so that the Government will take more aggressive measures to encourage childbearing in the event that the fertility rate has fallen below the warning line; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 11
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Public Wi-Fi services provided in public hospitals

Dr Hon Pierre CHAN to ask:

At present, all public hospitals are installed with Wi-Fi.HK hotspots (“hotspots”) to provide members of the public with free public Wi-Fi services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the following information on the hotspots currently installed in various public hospitals (set out in a table): (i) the number of hotspots (and among them, the respective numbers of those using 2.4 and 5 GHz bands), (ii) the locations and (iii) the daily average usage;
- (2) whether it knows the factors considered by the Hospital Authority (“HA”) when selecting locations in public hospitals for installing hotspots;
- (3) given that hotspot signs have been put up near each hotspot in various public hospitals at present, whether the Government knows if HA has assessed, in respect of such signs, whether (i) their display positions are appropriate, and (ii) their numbers are sufficient; if HA has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) whether it knows the cyber security measures adopted by HA for protecting the safety of Wi-Fi service users?

Question 12
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Country parks

Hon Vincent CHENG to ask:

The Financial Secretary has indicated in the Budget of this financial year that the Government would earmark \$500 million for enhancing the facilities in some country parks, such as providing treetop adventure and repairing wartime relics to turn them into open museums, and will separately earmark \$55 million for taking forward the “Enhancement of Hiking Trails - Phase II” in the coming five years for 10 popular hiking trails in country parks that have potential for tourism. On the other hand, it has been reported that the inappropriate activities of some countryside visitors have made some mountains that used to be verdant barren. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) as the Government indicated in April this year that the various programmes on improving the facilities in country parks would commence this year, of the latest progress of the relevant work (including site identification, design and detailed assessment);
- (2) of the details of and timetable for the feasibility studies and consultation exercises needed to be conducted for providing treetop adventure and repairing wartime relics to turn them into open museums;
- (3) of the details and latest progress of the “Enhancement of Hiking Trails - Phase I”, as well as the implementation timetable for phase II of the enhancement; and
- (4) whether it has surveyed the loss in the past two years of vegetation coverage in mountains; if so, of the area involved (with a breakdown by name of country parks) and the causes therefor; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 13
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Transport infrastructure for
Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen New Development Area

Hon Alice MAK to ask:

The first population intake of Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen New Development Area (“the NDA”) is expected to take place in 2024. However, the Hung Shui Kiu Station proposed to be built between Tin Shui Wai Station and Siu Hong Station on the Tuen Ma Line (“TML”) is currently still at the detailed planning and design stage, and only the first stage of the “Feasibility Study on the Environmentally Friendly Transport Services in Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen New Development Area and Adjacent Areas” (“the Feasibility Study”) has been completed so far. As such, the residents concerned may need to live at a place with inconvenient public transport for several years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the timetable for Stage 2 of the Feasibility Study and the progress made so far; the date expected for commissioning the environment-friendly transport system concerned;
- (2) of the measures in place to speed up the improvement of the transport infrastructure and services for NDA, including speeding up the planning work for Hung Shui Kiu Station, so as to pursue the “infrastructure-led” planning approach; and
- (3) given that a population of 176 000 will be accommodated upon the full intake of residents by the public housing projects in NDA, whether, in order to alleviate the pressure to be brought about by an increased population on the carrying capacity of TML, the Government will consider building a new railway line in New Territories West connecting TML and the urban areas, thereby achieving a diversion effect?

Question 14
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Evening secondary courses

Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG to ask:

The Government currently provides, through the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses (“the Scheme”), financial assistance for adult students taking evening secondary courses offered by approved course providers. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of students taking the courses at various grades offered by the evening secondary schools participating in the Scheme in each of the past five school years;
- (2) of the number of evening secondary students taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination in each of the past five school years and, among them, (i) the respective numbers of those whose examination results met the general entrance requirements for self-financing sub-degree programmes and subsidized undergraduate degree programmes, as well as (ii) the number of those who applied for admission to such programmes;
- (3) given that the financial support received by evening secondary schools and their students is less than that received by secondary day schools and their students (for instance, evening secondary schools being not provided with the “one-off grant for supporting the implementation of the senior secondary subject Citizenship and Social Development”, and evening secondary students being ineligible for the “student grant”), whether the Education Bureau (“EDB”) will consider raising the financial support provided for evening secondary schools and their students to a level on a par with that provided for secondary day schools and their students; if not, of the justifications for that, and whether EDB will enhance the Scheme to provide a higher amount of financial assistance for evening secondary students; and
- (4) as a school sponsoring body announced in June this year that it would discontinue its evening secondary courses from the 2021-2022 school year onwards, whether EDB will provide support for the affected students to help them complete their evening secondary courses?

Question 15
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Public transport services

Hon Frankie YICK to ask:

Some operators of public transport (“PT”) services have relayed that against a backdrop of continuous expansion of the railway network, various PT services other than heavy rail (i.e. franchised buses (“FBs”), Light Rail, public light buses, non-FBs, taxis, trams and ferries) have seen a continuous drop in patronage in recent years, with their room for survival diminishing gradually. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) how the distribution forecast of average daily PT patronage in 2021 set out in the Public Transport Strategy Study (“PTSS”) published in 2017 compares with the actual distribution at present; if there are discrepancies, whether it has assessed the causes for that;
- (2) given that PTSS put forward a number of improvement measures to enhance the strategic arrangements of PT services and promote the sustainable development of PT services other than heavy rail, of the (i) latest implementation situation and (ii) effectiveness of such measures, and whether such measures have improved the business environment of PT services other than heavy rail;
- (3) whether it will consider entrusting the provision of feeder bus services in Northwest New Territories, currently operated by the MTR Corporation Limited, to operators of FBs and green minibuses instead, so as to increase the room for survival of the latter; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (4) given that the Government recently gave approval for FB operators to introduce long-haul bus services featuring no space for standees and plying routes similar to those of the existing residents’ buses, which has resulted in vicious competition and an increase in the number of buses on roads, whether the Government has changed its policy of avoiding duplication of transport resources and maintaining a balance in the PT services ecology; if so, of the details and reasons for that; if not, whether it will review the aforesaid arrangement;

- (5) given that the Government has given approval in recent years for FB operators to operate short-haul shuttle bus routes between districts in the New Territories with relatively low population densities and transport nodes using mid-sized single-deck buses, but such type of routes has all along been plied by green minibuses, of the Government's latest positioning for the latter; and
- (6) whether it will review afresh the demand for as well as the role and positioning of PT services other than heavy rail, and formulate policies on promoting the sustainable development of such services; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 16
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Attracting talents to come to Hong Kong

Hon Starry LEE to ask:

According to Hong Kong Labour Force Projections for 2017 to 2066, the labour force in Hong Kong will reach a plateau at 3.68 million in 2022 and then decrease to 3.51 million in 2031. On the other hand, in order to meet the needs of the economy and cater for sustainable development, the Government has implemented in recent years a number of schemes for importing labour and talents: the General Employment Policy, the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals, the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme, the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates, the Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents, and the Technology Talent Admission Scheme. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of applications received and approved under the aforesaid schemes in each of the past five years; whether it has evaluated the effectiveness of the various schemes on promoting local economic and social development; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices (Overseas and Mainland) and other Offices of the Government on the Mainland will step up efforts in promoting the aforesaid schemes to the local residents, so as to attract more talents to come to Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether it will comprehensively review the relevant arrangements of the aforesaid schemes and make improvements, e.g. streamlining the procedures for applying for and renewal of visas, shortening the time taken for vetting and approval of applications, and relaxing the limit of stay, so as to attract more talents to come to Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 17
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Market Modernization Programme

Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok to ask:

The Government announced in February 2018 that \$2 billion would be earmarked for launching a 10-year Market Modernization Programme (“MMP”) to improve the facilities of public markets (“markets”) under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it will conduct a comprehensive review on the extent of difficulty in and urgency for carrying out modernization works for the various markets as well as on the development potentials of such markets, and set the priorities and timetable for carrying out related works for the various markets, with a view to speeding up the progress and ensuring that such works can be completed within 10 years; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether it will assess afresh the estimated expenditure of MMP, and seek approval from this Council for supplementary provisions as early as possible when necessary; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether, in order to dovetail with modernized markets for maximizing their effectiveness, the Government will step up publicity and education efforts among stall operators and patrons of markets about maintaining the hygiene of markets, so as to build a new culture on using markets; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 18
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Couriers for food delivery online platforms

Hon LUK Chung-hung to ask:

It is learnt that in recent years, food delivery online platforms (“platforms”) have developed rapidly, and more and more people have joined the courier teams of such platforms. Meanwhile, the number of traffic accidents involving such couriers has risen. The work safety of such couriers and whether they are eligible for employees’ compensation after sustaining injuries are in doubt. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the numbers of traffic accidents involving platform couriers in each of the past two years and since January this year, with a breakdown by the mode of travelling adopted by the couriers concerned at the time of the accidents (e.g. by driving motorcycle or private car, riding bicycle, or on foot);
- (2) among the accidents mentioned in (1), the respective numbers of those which were (i) fatal, (ii) serious and (iii) slight, and the respective percentages of such numbers in the total numbers of traffic accidents in the territory during the same periods;
- (3) the respective numbers of platform couriers who were (i) killed, (ii) seriously injured and (iii) slightly injured in the accidents mentioned in (1), and the respective percentages of such numbers in the total casualties of traffic accidents in the territory during the same periods, together with a breakdown by the mode of travelling adopted by the couriers concerned at the time of the accidents; and
- (4) whether the Government will put in place new measures in the coming year to enhance the work safety of platform couriers and the protection of their labour rights and interests?

Question 19
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Emission of air pollutants by public transport modes

Hon CHAN Hak-kan to ask:

Regarding the emission of air pollutants by public transport modes, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the quantities of the various types of air pollutants (i.e. (i) sulphur dioxide, (ii) nitrogen oxides, (iii) carbon monoxide, (iv) respirable suspended particulates, (v) volatile organic compounds and (vi) fine suspended particulates) emitted last year by (a) buses, (b) public light buses (“PLBs”), (c) taxis and (d) ferries, as well as (e) the percentage of the quantity of each type of air pollutants emitted last year by such transport modes in the total emissions of air pollutants in Hong Kong (set out in the table below);

| Type of air pollutants | (a) | (b) | (c) | (d) | (e) |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| (i) | | | | | |
| ... | | | | | |
| (vi) | | | | | |

- (2) whether it has estimated the respective numbers of franchised buses, PLBs and taxis that will reach their normal retirement age in (i) 2024, (ii) 2026 and (iii) 2031;
- (3) given that the Government grants subsidies through the New Energy Transport Fund to franchised bus companies for purchasing double-deck battery-electric buses, whether the Government knows the progress of the procurement work, and whether it has plans to encourage franchised bus companies to introduce hydrogen fuel cell battery-electric buses; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (4) of the progress of discussion between the Government and franchised bus companies on the arrangement for the full electrification of single-deck buses, and the implementation timetable;
- (5) as the Government anticipates that the pilot scheme on electric PLBs will not commence until 2023, whether it will explore advancing the commencement of the scheme so as to phase out diesel PLBs as early as possible;

- (6) of the number of first registered PLBs in each of the past three years, with a breakdown by the type of energy they used (i.e. diesel, liquefied petroleum gas, hybrid power, and electricity);
- (7) given that the Government is discussing with the taxi trade the implementation of a trial scheme to examine the operation of electric taxis as well as the performance of taxis of different models, of the relevant details (including the number of charging facilities to be provided);
- (8) of the quantity of air pollutants emitted by ferries as well as its percentage in the total emissions by all vessels, in each of the past three years;
- (9) whether it will draw up a timetable for implementing a requirement that vessels may be powered only by electricity within the Victoria Harbour; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (10) as the Government has indicated in the Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles that it would promote trials for various modes of electric public transport and commercial vehicles, with a view to setting a concrete way forward and a timetable in around 2025, whether the Government will set a more aggressive work target, such as setting before 2025 the percentage of electric buses in the total number of buses in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; and
- (11) whether it has studied the introduction of public transport modes to be powered by hydrogen; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 20
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Self-regulation of professional sectors

Hon Tony TSE to ask:

Some members of the public have pointed out that a number of professionals such as counsels, solicitors, social workers and healthcare personnel have been convicted and sentenced for participating in unlawful activities during the occupation movement in 2014 or the movement of opposition to the proposed legislative amendments in 2019. However, it is seldom heard that the professional bodies concerned have taken disciplinary actions against such persons or cancelled their professional registrations or practising qualifications. Among such persons, an individual has even been elected a member of the registration board of his profession after serving his sentence. Such members of the public are of the view that the aforesaid situation reflects that individual professional bodies have failed to discharge their duties and responsibilities under “professional autonomy” and “professional self-regulation” to eliminate the black sheep of their professions, thus undermining their own credibility and that of the professions concerned, as well as damaging the overall image of Hong Kong’s professional sectors. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the respective numbers of counsels, solicitors, social workers and healthcare personnel convicted since 2014 for the commission of unlawful acts related to the occupation movement or the movement of opposition to the proposed legislative amendments and, among them, the number of those sentenced to imprisonment (including suspended sentences); if such information is unavailable, whether it will gather the relevant information expeditiously;
- (2) whether it knows the details (including the progress and outcome of the disciplinary actions taken) of the follow-up actions taken by the professional bodies and registration boards concerned in respect of the cases mentioned in (1), and set out the information by profession; if such information is unavailable, whether it will expeditiously request the bodies concerned to provide the relevant information;

- (3) of the roles and powers of the Government under the existing legislation in respect of regulating the aforesaid professional bodies and registration boards; and
- (4) of the follow-up actions taken by the Government on the allegations that individual professional bodies have failed to discharge their duties and responsibilities of eliminating the black sheep of their professions?

Question 21
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Data relating to housing

Hon CHAN Hak-kan to ask:

Regarding the data relating to housing, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (“HKMA”), in an effort to measure the effect of mortgage debt service burden on private consumption, estimated in 2018 the outstanding mortgage debt service ratios between 1985 and mid-2017 based on outstanding mortgage debt, whether HKMA has made such estimates since then; if so, of the ratios since mid-2017;
- (2) given that the Hong Kong Housing Authority made in 2018 two changes to the affordability test in the pricing mechanism for the Home Ownership Scheme (“HOS”), one of which being that in assessing affordability, the income limits for White Form applicants were replaced by the median monthly household income of non-owner occupier households (“the median”) as a point of reference, of the year in which the authorities began collecting the data on the median, and the monthly medians since the resumption of the sale exercise for newly built HOS flats in 2014;
- (3) of the number of transactions of first-hand private residential properties in each of the past 10 years, with a breakdown according to the classification of residential units by unit floor area used by the Rating and Valuation Department in compiling its statistics; and
- (4) given that the ownership transfer of residential properties between close relatives may be exempted from payment of the 15% or doubled ad valorem stamp duty, of the number of such exemption cases in the past five years?

Question 22
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Drivers' use of mobile phones or tablet computers while driving

Hon Frankie YICK to ask:

It has been reported that in recent years, as more and more members of the public call taxis, light goods vehicles and goods vehicles by using online ride-hailing applications or making phone calls, most of the drivers of such vehicles place several mobile phones or tablet computers on the dashboard to facilitate communication with their customers. However, such devices not only block the drivers' view, but may also distract them and, as a result, traffic accidents are prone to occur. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of law enforcement operations mounted by the Police in the past three years against drivers' acts of using mobile phones or tablet computers by holding them in their hands or between their heads and shoulders while driving, with a breakdown by vehicle type;
- (2) as the Government indicated as early as in 2015 that it was collecting information for conducting a study on further restricting drivers' use of mobile phones while driving, and such information included the number of mobile phones placed, at the time traffic accidents with casualties occurred, on the dashboards of the vehicles involved in such accidents, as well as overseas countries' regulation of drivers' use of mobile phones while driving and relevant studies, and that the Government had invited the Road Safety Research Committee under the Road Safety Council to conduct a study on the subject concerned, of the latest progress and results of the various relevant studies; whether the Government has decided to impose further regulation, including restricting the number of mobile phones or tablet computers placed on the dashboard; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether it will formulate non-legislative measures to eradicate drivers' acts of using mobile phones or tablet computers while driving; if so, of the details and the expected effectiveness of such measures?

Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance

Resolution

(Under section 34(4) of the Interpretation and
General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1))

Resolved that in relation to the—

- (a) Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2021, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 139 of 2021;
- (b) Prevention and Control of Disease (Disclosure of Information) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2021, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 140 of 2021;
- (c) Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2021, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 141 of 2021;
- (d) Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) (Amendment) (No. 5) Regulation 2021, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 142 of 2021;
- (e) Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) (Amendment) (No. 6) Regulation 2021, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 143 of 2021;
- (f) Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2021, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 144 of 2021;
- (g) Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2021, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 145 of 2021; and

(h) Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2021, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 146 of 2021,

and laid on the table of the Legislative Council on 18 August 2021, the period for amending subsidiary legislation referred to in section 34(2) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1) be extended under section 34(4) of that Ordinance to the meeting of 6 October 2021.

Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance

Resolution

(Under section 34(4) of the Interpretation and
General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1))

Resolved that in relation to the Road Traffic (Driving Licences) (Amendment) Regulation 2021, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 154 of 2021, and laid on the table of the Legislative Council on 18 August 2021, the period for amending subsidiary legislation referred to in section 34(2) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1) be extended under section 34(4) of that Ordinance to the meeting of 6 October 2021.

(Translation)

**Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG's motion on
“Mending the social rift and fostering social cohesion”**

Wording of the Motion

That the enactment of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Bill 2021 has quickly restored stability in Hong Kong society and also brought unlimited opportunities for Hong Kong's future development; however, the disturbances arising from the opposition to the proposed legislative amendments in 2019 have plunged Hong Kong into a serious political rift, with many social problems remaining to be resolved, including that many people, organizations and business operators supporting the Government and law enforcement by the Police have been subjected to boycotts, doxxing, criminal intimidation and even assaults; people arrested for breaking the law under the influence of radical ideas are yet to receive rehabilitation education and reintegrate into society, among whom thousands are students and minors; many family members, neighbours in the community or work partners have turned against each other because of differences in political views; to resolve the social conflicts, it is necessary to not only resolve political and livelihood issues, but also untie the emotional knots in society, so this Council urges the Government to mend the social rift, foster social cohesion and promote restoration of social harmony such that Hong Kong can restore the spirit of agreeing to disagree and seeking common ground while reserving differences, reunite as one, and focus its efforts on seizing the opportunities from the Outline of the National 14th Five-Year Plan, the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the 'Belt and Road' Initiative, thereby contributing to the development of the country.