

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1258/20-21
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/ITB

Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 15 June 2021, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, GBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP

Members absent : Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan

Public attending officers : Agenda item IV

Innovation and Technology Bureau

Dr David CHUNG Wai-keung, JP
Under Secretary for Innovation and Technology

Ms Daisy LO Chi-yun
Principal Assistant Secretary for Innovation and
Technology (4)

Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

Mr Victor LAM Wai-kiu, JP
Government Chief Information Officer

Mr Tony WONG Chi-kwong, JP
Deputy Government Chief Information Officer

Mr Jason PUN Si-keung
Assistant Government Chief Information Officer
(Cyber Security and Digital Identity)

Agenda item V

Innovation and Technology Bureau

Dr David CHUNG Wai-keung, JP
Under Secretary for Innovation and Technology

Ms Daisy LO Chi-yun
Principal Assistant Secretary for Innovation and
Technology (4)

Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

Mr Victor LAM Wai-kiu, JP
Government Chief Information Officer

Mr Tony WONG Chi-kwong, JP
Deputy Government Chief Information Officer

Efficiency Office

Ms Elsa HUNG Pui-ling
Assistant Commissioner for Efficiency (3)

Clerk in attendance : Mr Daniel SIN
Chief Council Secretary (1)6

Staff in attendance : Ms Mandy LI
Senior Council Secretary (1)6

Miss Judy YEE
Council Secretary (1)6

Miss Yolanda CHEUK
Legislative Assistant (1)6

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes of meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)924/20-21 -- Minutes of the meeting held on
15 March 2021)

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2021 were confirmed.

II. Information papers issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)902/20-21(01) -- "Guide to Filming in Hong
Kong" provided by the Film
Services Office under Create
Hong Kong

LC Paper No. CB(1)926/20-21(01) -- Administration's response to
the submission from a member
of the public regarding
inappropriate wording used in
news report of Radio
Television Hong Kong [LC
Paper No. CB(1)860/20-
21(01)]

LC Paper No. CB(1)943/20-21(01) -- Administration's response to
the submission from a member
of the public on matters
relating to the display of the
national flag and the regional
flag by Radio Television Hong
Kong [LC Paper No.
CB(1)876/20-21(01)]

2. Members noted that the above papers had been issued since the last meeting.

3. The Chairman referred to the Administration's response (LC Paper No. CB(1)926/20-21(01)) to the submission from a member of the public regarding inappropriate wording used in news report of Radio Television Hong Kong ("RTHK"). In reading RTHK's response, the Chairman commented that, when covering news related to the Mainland and Taiwan, RTHK should establish its own standard that adhered to the one-country principle rather than customarily adopting the conventional expressions, notwithstanding the practice and the choice of terminologies commonly adapted by the mainstream media. The Chairman said that this view should be conveyed to RTHK for consideration.

(Post-meeting note: The Chairman's views have been referred to the attention of the Administration for consideration.)

III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper No. CB(1)984/20-21(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)984/20-21(02) -- List of follow-up actions)

Schedule of meetings for the remainder of the 2020-2021 session

4. Members agreed that regular Panel meetings should be held on the second Monday between July and September 2021 from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, except in August 2021 in which the meeting should tentatively be scheduled for Monday, 16 August 2021. Members noted that a meeting date on Monday, 11 October 2021, from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, had been reserved to discuss any urgent matters that might arise before the end of the term.

(Post-meeting note: The schedule of regular meetings of the Panel for the remainder of the 2020-2021 session was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1010/20-21 on 16 June 2021.)

Proposed discussion items for future meetings

5. The Chairman suggested that the Panel would discuss with the Administration the film censorship regulatory framework and the promotion of wider application of digital technology at the next regular Panel meeting scheduled for Monday, 12 July 2021. Principal Assistant Secretary for Innovation and Technology (4) said that the Administration would propose items for

discussion by the Panel at the meetings in due course.

(Post-meeting note: Members were informed vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1037/20-21 issued on 22 June 2021 that two discussion items (a) Update on the application of information technology to combat COVID-19 and (b) Film censorship regulatory framework were included in the agenda of the meeting on 12 July 2021.)

IV. Progress on the implementation of the "iAM Smart" platform and e-Government services

(LC Paper No. CB(1)984/20-21(03) -- Administration's paper on progress on the implementation of the "iAM Smart" platform and e-Government services

LC Paper No. CB(1)984/20-21(04) Paper on progress on the implementation of the "iAM Smart" platform and e-Government services prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Updated background brief))

Briefing by the Administration

6. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Innovation and Technology ("US for IT") briefed members on the implementation progress of the "iAM Smart" platform and e-Government services. Details of the briefing were given in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)984/20-21(03)).

Discussion

"iAM Smart" registration and usage

7. Ms Elizabeth QUAT said that she supported the "iAM Smart" platform as it was one of the smart city key infrastructure projects, and would provide a reliable means of identity verification for members of the public as they access online government services. She relayed the views she had received about the difficulties many people had experienced in registering "iAM Smart". Ms QUAT also mentioned that her office had received many public enquiries on how to register "iAM Smart". She asked whether and how the Administration would

improve the registration process. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan expressed a similar view, and suggested that the Administration should provide more registration points at MTR stations to facilitate the public, especially the elderly, to register "iAM Smart".

8. Government Chief Information Officer ("GCIO") advised that at present, more than 440 000 people had registered for "iAM Smart" accounts. Comparing with overseas economies like Estonia and Singapore, the "iAM Smart" platform had recorded a higher registration rate during the initial half-year period. The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer ("OGCIO") would continue to step up publicity to promote the "iAM Smart" platform. GCIO further said that, in registering an account with "iAM Smart", users were required to scan the front size of their Hong Kong Identity Cards from three different angles to enable the system to verify the genuineness of the identity cards and capture the required information. OGCIO had set up a hotline for handling public enquiries. Apart from registering using personal mobile phones, members of the public could also register "iAM Smart" accounts at about 180 registration points across the territory, including the registration service counters at post offices (excluding mobile post offices) and the self-registration kiosks at the MTR stations, shopping malls and sports centres. OGCIO had also deployed mobile registration teams at various venues such as Community Vaccination Centres to help the public register for the service.

9. Ms Elizabeth QUAT noted that the "iAM Smart" platform also supported the initiatives to combat the COVID-19 epidemic, and pointed out that the public was concerned whether the Administration had made sufficient preparation for resumption of cross-boundary travel in the future. Noting that members of the public could download their electronic vaccination records using the "iAM Smart" mobile application ("app"), Ms QUAT enquired whether the "iAM Smart" platform would support mutual recognition of virus testing results and the vaccination records so as to facilitate cross-boundary flow of people between the Mainland and Hong Kong amid the epidemic. Ms QUAT also remarked that some local residents returning to Hong Kong from the Mainland were required to undergo compulsory testing even when they were holding virus testing results issued by the relevant Mainland authorities. She queried whether the Administration would put in place arrangements for mutual recognition of virus testing results and the vaccination records when the epidemic situation had stabilized and cross-boundary travel resumed.

10. GCIO said that members of the public could make use of the "iAM Smart" mobile app to download the electronic vaccination records and present the records

on entry to certain designated venues under the "vaccine bubble" initiative¹ when necessary. Meanwhile, OGCIO had assisted the Department of Health ("DH") in developing the "Health Code" data conversion system with the Guangdong Province and Macao authorities. The "Return2HK" scheme, which made use of the "Health Code" data conversion system to facilitate Hong Kong residents currently in Guangdong Province or Macao to return to Hong Kong, was launched in November 2020. Furthermore, OGCIO had been liaising closely with the Food and Health Bureau ("FHB") to consider ways to further facilitate Hong Kong people to make use of their non-local vaccination records to prove that they had received vaccination.

11. The Chairman commented that the preparatory work for the resumption of cross-boundary travel should have been completed. He asked whether the Administration had conducted trials on any arrangements for mutual recognition of virus testing results, the vaccination records, and vaccine efficacy tests between Hong Kong and the Mainland. US for IT and GCIO said that it was technically feasible to put in place a mutual recognition arrangement, and the Administration had been communicating with the Mainland on the matter. In response to the enquiries from Ms Elizabeth QUAT and the Chairman, GCIO said that technical system was put in place to support mutual recognition arrangement with the Mainland. In fact, the Administration had implemented the "Return2HK" scheme, and facilitation measures for cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers who had received two COVID-19 vaccine doses.

12. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan enquired whether eTax account holders would no longer be able to manage their tax affairs, such as tax payment, through their eTax accounts and if so, the handover period between eTax and the "iAM Smart" platform; and whether the Administration would in parallel provide eTax and "iAM Smart" for the public to use online services.

13. Mr CHAN Han-pan commented that "iAM Smart" app users could not readily access information or services directly from the app, as most of the functions only provided a link to the relevant websites, such as eHealth, the Public Sector Information ("PSI") portal, etc.; the information provided by myGovHK and "iAM Smart" was duplicated. Mr CHAN suggested that the "iAM Smart"

¹ "Vaccine bubble" is an arrangement to restore the city to normality in a gradual and orderly manner. The Administration had adopted a new direction in fighting the epidemic, under which social distancing measures were relaxed with "vaccine bubble" as the basis, with a view to responding to the aspirations of various trades and the public to resume normal daily lives as soon as possible. The social distancing measures under the first phase of "vaccine bubble" took effective on 29 April 2021. Given that the local epidemic situation had become more stable and the vaccination rate was increasing steadily, the measures under the second phase of "vaccine bubble" also took effective on 24 June 2021.

platform should instead enable the public to log on to various public services directly. Mr CHAN also pointed out that members of public were still required to fill in their personal details every time when they accessed online services through the "iAM Smart" platform. He asked the Administration to enhance the "iAM Smart" platform so that users could access different e-Government services in one digital identity authentication process. Moreover, options should be provided for users to choose and determine the government information to be shown in the user interface.

14. GCIO advised that one of the major objectives of the "iAM Smart" platform was to provide personalized notification and replace the personalized service platform myGovHK in the long run. While members of the public could make use of the "iAM Smart" mobile app to download the electronic vaccination records directly, they might still need to access existing government online services by linking their "iAM Smart" with the accounts they had previously created with the relevant government departments. The Administration would continue to explore other enhancement features to be added to "iAM Smart".

15. The Chairman suggested that the Administration should illustrate, with graphics, how one could use the various functions offered in the "iAM Smart" platform. He was particularly concerned whether members of the public could access different government services using a single identity authentication process. GCIO said that the "iAM Smart" platform enabled members of the public to log on and use online government services with a single digital identity. The Administration would consider integrating different authentication systems to enable members of the public to log on and access various government and commercial services in a simple and convenient manner. It would also consider providing a visual presentation of the major functions of "iAM Smart" in order to enhance the public's understanding of the "iAM Smart" platform.

16. Mr Martin LIAO noted that the public might be able to access more than 110 government online services through "iAM Smart" by end-July 2021 and that there would be more than 160 government online services accessible through the "iAM Smart" platform by end-2023. He asked why the Administration should take more than two years to complete the connection of the government online services to the "iAM Smart" platform, while the digital infrastructure was already in place. Mr LIAO also enquired whether the Administration would prioritize the launch of e-Government services having regard to the popularity of the services, such as booking of leisure facilities through the Leisure Link System, online application of government job openings. He further asked about the Administration's plans (in terms of short-, medium- and long-term plans) and targets to promote and support public organizations and private organizations to adopt "iAM Smart" in their online services in the next three to five years.

17. US for IT indicated that at present, six public and private organizations (including two electricity companies, the gas company, two banks and one insurance company) had already adopted "iAM Smart". OGCIO, in collaboration with Cyberport, launched the "iAM Smart" Sandbox Programme in March 2020, enabling financial institutions as well as companies engaging in FinTech-related business at Cyberport and Hong Kong Science and Technology Park to conduct testing.

18. GCIO responded that about 440 000 and 169 000 people had respectively registered for "iAM Smart" accounts and could use digital signing function. The number of people registering for use of "iAM Smart" had been increasing progressively and so far had met expectations. As regards the government online services on the "iAM Smart" platform, the Administration would accord priority to introducing e-Government services which were frequently used by the general public. GCIO further said that some e-Government services would adopt "iAM Smart" progressively by 2023 when the major upgrade of the relevant systems was completed.

Publicity and promotion of "iAM Smart"

19. Ms Elizabeth QUAT, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan, Mr CHAN Han-pan and Mr SHIU Ka-fai asked the Administration to step up publicity to promote "iAM Smart". Mr CHAN suggested that the Administration should provide registration service for residents during the territory-wide identity card replacement exercise, or require mobile phones manufacturers to pre-install the "iAM Smart" mobile app in the devices sold in Hong Kong. Mr SHIU expressed support for the implementation of the "iAM Smart" platform and e-Government services. Mr SHIU held the view that as "iAM Smart" was a crucial measure to give impetus to the development of innovative e-Government services and streamline processes, more people would register and use "iAM Smart" to experience the convenience brought by the platform. He commented that the Administration should strengthen publicity measures to educate the public on how to use "iAM Smart".

20. GCIO said that OGCIO had enhanced publicity to promote "iAM Smart" through various channels. Moreover, OGCIO had deployed mobile registration teams in the Community Vaccination Centres to assist the public in registering "iAM Smart", and would consider deploying mobile registration teams at Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres to facilitate registration of "iAM Smart" by members of the public and enabling the pre-installation of the "iAM Smart" mobile app.

"LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app

21. Mr SHIU Ka-fai expressed concern about the recent incident relating to the leakage of hundreds of e-mail addresses of people who had made enquiries on the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app. He sought explanation on the reasons for the incident. GCIO responded that a contractor had accidentally sent an acknowledgement e-mail in May 2021 to more than 400 people who had submitted enquiries related to the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app at the same time, while these acknowledgement e-mails should have been issued individually. OGCIO had issued a warning letter to the contractor concerned and had instructed the contractor to take immediate measures to avoid recurrence of similar incidents. OGCIO had also made apologies through e-mails to the affected individuals. In response to Mr SHUI's enquiry as to whether the use of the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app would have any privacy implications, GCIO replied in the affirmative and emphasized that the incident was not related to user privacy protection of the mobile app. Mr SHUI said that the Administration should clarify any misunderstandings of the public on the mobile app where necessary.

22. Ms Elizabeth QUAT said that the public could store their COVID-19 vaccination records (electronic vaccination records) in the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app but the mobile app did not store the user's personal data. It would be possible for any person to use another person's electronic vaccination record to enter the catering premises which required customers to show their COVID-19 vaccination records. She suggested that the Administration should consider integrating the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app into the "iAM Smart" platform so as to help verify the identities of the record holders.

23. GCIO responded that the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app did not require prior registration for its use. The Administration's objective was to facilitate the public to store and display their vaccination records and related QR codes through the new functions under the vaccine bubble. Operators of catering premises would normally require customers to display their vaccination records without verifying their names, while the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") would use a special app to inspect customers' vaccinations records so as to verify the authenticity of the records when necessary, and at the same time verify the identities of the record holders. Enforcement actions would be taken against offenders where appropriate.

24. Ms Elizabeth QUAT expected that more activities such as local group tours and cruise journeys would be launched soon and more catering business would

choose to operate in Type D mode of operation² in its premises as the epidemic continue to recede. Ms QUAT remained concern about the possible misuse of electronic vaccination records stored in the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app if the identities of the record bearers did not need to be verified. Ms QUAT considered that apart from conducting inspections and taking enforcement actions by FEHD, the Administration should assist the responsible persons of business premises in verifying the identities of the holders of electronic vaccination records, for example, through the "iAM Smart" platform. The Chairman made a similar comment.

25. GCIO agreed to consider members' suggestions. He added that the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app was meant to provide a convenient digital tool to help members of the public record the time of their visits to different venues during the epidemic. More convenient and user-friendly operation of the mobile app would facilitate people to use in recording their whereabouts.

26. The Chairman commented that any person who unlawfully obtained and used others' vaccination records committed the offence of accessing to computer with criminal or dishonest intent, and would be liable to prosecution. The Chairman asked the Innovation and Technology Bureau to consult the Department of Justice on the relevant legal issues.

Open data

27. Mr Michael TIEN commented that the terms and conditions of use of government data as published on the PSI portal and related websites were not only inconsistent, but also lacked clarity about the extent to which members of the public were authorized to use the data for commercial purposes. Very few datasets in the PSI portal offered application programming interfaces ("APIs") and existing government data were disseminated in a format not easily usable by application developers. Mr TIEN suggested that the Administration should draw on the experience of the Singapore government, and likewise set up an inter-departmental group, to be led by the Chief Secretary for Administration, to facilitate the opening up of government data for use by private organizations and commercial sectors.

² Type D mode of operation refers to the arrangement where the maximum number of customers allowed in a premises would be relaxed to 100% of its normal seating capacity, and the maximum number of customers allowed at each table would be increased to 12 persons. The vaccination requirements for customers would be relaxed to two-thirds of the persons at the same table having received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Regarding banquets, there should be at least two-thirds of the participants who had received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and the maximum number of participants would be increased to 180.

28. GCIO advised that since the implementation of the new open data policy in 2018, bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") had opened up a total of over 1 000 new datasets via the PSI portal. The number of datasets on the PSI portal had increased to more than 4 000 in total. Apart from government's data, other useful data had also been opened up by a number of public and private organizations in the PSI portal, including the real-time arrival data of all the franchised bus operators and the MTR Corporation Limited, etc. At present, about 1 800 APIs were available to support different applications. The total downloads of open data in 2020 was as high as 10 billion. GCIO further said that OGCIO had revised the terms and conditions of the PSI portal, which clearly specified that the open data published by the PSI portal could be freely used for commercial purposes. The open data initiative was well received by the community. For example, the utilization of real-time arrival data related to public transport was about 3 billion times in May 2021. The Administration would continue to open up more useful data and geographic data for free use by the public, and encourage public and private organizations to share their data for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.

29. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan enquired how the Administration would open up data such as meteorology, traffic, etc. for free public use, including whether the Administration would work with relevant operators to release the data.

30. GCIO said that all B/Ds should as a matter of principle endeavour to release data under their purview via the PSI portal unless there were justifications to do otherwise. Regarding real-time data related to public transport, private operators had released their real-time arrival data on PSI portal to enable the development of smart apps. With the collaborative efforts of various B/Ds and the information technology ("IT") industry, the open datasets on PSI portal had enabled the accelerated development of the "Interactive Map Dashboard on the Latest Situation of COVID-19 in Hong Kong" that provided the public with the latest information on the epidemic. OGCIO was also working in collaboration with the Transport Department ("TD") on the development of a "Traffic Data Analytics System" with a view to facilitating TD to perform predictive analytics for enhancing traffic management and efficiency with artificial intelligence and big data analytics. Relevant data analytics results would be disseminated as open data to the public through the "HKeMobility" mobile app and the PSI portal.

Use of blockchain technology in Government services

31. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan noted that OGCIO was planning to develop a common blockchain platform which was expected to be launched in 2022. She sought information on the blockchain platform, including what projects would be

launched through the platform, which government departments would be involved, details of the pilot projects and the expected outcomes of such projects.

32. GCIO advised that OGCIO had worked in collaboration with the Intellectual Property Department, the Environmental Protection Department, DH and the Companies Registry to conduct pilot blockchain projects. The four pilot projects were completed in end-2020 and the results of the pilot applications had been shared with all B/Ds for reference in planning their e-Government services. Besides, OGCIO was also planning to implement a blockchain platform to facilitate B/Ds to develop blockchain application systems more conveniently. In 2020, OGCIO also assisted DH in developing the "Health Code" conversion system with Guangdong Province and Macao to enable recognized medical testing institutions in Hong Kong to upload valid nucleic acid testing results of persons eligible for exemption from compulsory quarantine to DH's "Hong Kong Health Code" system, and using blockchain technology to store records of health code conversion requests in a transparent manner.

33. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the details and findings of the four pilot blockchain projects, namely the transfer of trademarks, optimization of the procedures for preparing environmental impact assessment reports, improvement of the traceability and management for pharmaceutical products, and provision of e-monitoring service for keeping track of filing records of companies, which were completed in end-2020. The Chairman suggested that relevant information could be uploaded onto the OGCIO's website for the reference of the public. GCIO took note of the Chairman' suggestion.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1120/20-21(01) on 13 July 2021.)

V. Progress report on digital inclusion

(LC Paper No. CB(1)984/20-21(05) -- Administration's paper on progress report on digital inclusion

LC Paper No. CB(1)984/20-21(06) -- Paper on digital inclusion prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Updated background brief))

Briefing by the Administration

34. At the invitation of the Chairman, US for IT briefed members on the latest work progress of the various digital inclusion initiatives implemented by the Government. Details of the briefing were given in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)984/20-21(05)).

Discussion

Web/Mobile App accessibility campaign

35. Members noted that the proportion of persons aged 65 or above having used the Internet in the past 12 months had increased significantly from around 9% in 2009 to around 62% in 2019. Ms Elizabeth QUAT commended the Administration's efforts to implement various measures to promote the use of the Internet among elderly people and narrow digital divide in the community. Pointing out that the needy groups in the community, including elderly people, visually impaired and persons with disabilities, new-arrival families, housewives and children from grass-root families, suffered from digital divide, Ms QUAT was disappointed to note that only a few hundred of Hong Kong websites had adopted accessibility designs, despite her efforts in advocating web accessibility over the years. She asked the Administration to make efforts to foster the development of web accessibility. She also enquired about the barriers to persons with disabilities (such as visually impaired, loss of functions of hands and paralysis) in accessing websites, and the Administration's target and measures to help those in need.

36. Deputy Government Chief Information Officer ("DGCIO") advised that at present, all of the 600 government websites had met the Level AA standard of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ("WCAG") Version 2.0 promulgated by the World Wide Web Consortium ("W3C"). In addition, 76 out of the total 80 government mobile apps had conformed to the "Baseline Accessibility Criteria for Government Mobile App". The remaining four apps would also progressively complete system upgrades in order to comply with relevant standards. With regard to enterprises as well as public and private organizations, a total of 316 websites and 61 mobile apps were commended in the Web Accessibility Recognition Scheme ("WARS") 2020-2021 for adopting accessibility design. The awardees included non-government websites and mobile apps frequently used by persons with disabilities, covering different sectors closely related to people's daily lives, such as transportation, banking, insurance, tourism, real estate, telecom service providers and shopping malls, etc.

37. DGCIO further said that OGCIO would continue to promote the adoption of web accessibility design by public and private organizations on multiple fronts,

including collaboration with the Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited to co-organize a new round of WARS in end-2021, provision of free assessment and advisory services to all participating organizations, as well as regular briefing sessions for members of different sectors of the community (including tertiary students as well as practitioners of small and medium enterprises), with a view to promoting the concepts and technical requirements of web accessibility. GCIO pointed out that the funded projects under the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund ("SIE Fund") would address the needs of special community groups. This would also allow them to better understand and make use of digital technology products and services, thereby assisting the promotion of digital inclusion. Assistant Commissioner for Efficiency (3) added that among the projects that had been funded under the SIE Fund, about 100 involved the promotion of digital inclusion or use of digital technologies for enhancement of services. Examples of the projects included software that made use of joystick and voice recognition technology to help persons with severe disabilities use computers with ease. Ms Elizabeth QUAT urged the Administration to step up efforts to promote digital inclusion, including the development of assistive tools and applications for persons with disabilities.

38. The Chairman enquired how the Administration would make web contents more accessible to the elderly and persons beset with cognitive and physical issues such as dyslexia, and whether graphical interfaces could be provided in the websites to facilitate older persons to access online information. DGCIO replied that WCAG was promulgated by W3C with the objective to provide a single shared standard for web content accessibility. The guidelines explained how to make web contents more accessible to persons with disabilities. GCIO added that different disabilities required different techniques and tools to help them access online information and services, such as visually impaired persons used screen reading software and screen magnifiers, hearing impaired persons required to have text transcripts of audio content or subtitles on video contents. As regards legal responsibilities, GCIO explained that the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 487) had created a legal duty for organizations to ensure that their services were available to everyone regardless of disability. The Administration would continue to promote the awareness of the commercial sector on web accessibility.

39. Ms Elizabeth QUAT said that many organizations were reluctant to build accessible websites due to the lack of knowledge and were worried about the high costs involved. She commented that, in addition to giving recognition to organizations and companies that adopted accessibility designs, the Administration should set targets and review its strategy in the advocacy efforts with targeted organizations, say by putting more efforts to encourage organizations, such as online retailers, to address the specific needs of persons

with disabilities and the elderly.

40. DGCIO took note of Ms Elizabeth QUAT's views, and said that OGCIO would discuss with the Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited about the annual target of promoting the adoption of accessibility design by members of different sectors whose services were frequently used by persons with disabilities. DGCIO added that according to the findings of a survey on web accessibility adoption level in the Asia Pacific region, which was conducted by the Hong Kong Blind Union, Hong Kong ranked third among 12 countries/regions in 2020 while Australia was rated as having the highest average accessibility scores and South Korea ranked second.

Learning arrangements amid the epidemic

41. Ms Elizabeth QUAT said that students from grass-root families might not have ready access to IT facilities and equipment; it might pose difficulties for these students if they had to take classes online, particularly under circumstances such as the COVID-19 epidemic. She asked about the Administration's target and measures to bridge the digital divide among students and reduce student diversity in learning.

42. DGCIO advised that the Education Bureau ("EDB") had announced on 17 May 2021 the Provision of Mobile Computer Devices and Internet Services Support under the Quality Education Fund e-Learning Funding Programme ("Funding Programme"). During the three-year implementation period, schools could apply for the basic funding for each eligible student to purchase a mobile computer device (with a three-year warranty and a mobile device management system installed) and basic accessories (e.g. a protective cover, a stylus pen and a headset) for loan to the student. The maximum amount provided for each student was \$4,700. Schools could also apply for additional funding to purchase portable Wi-Fi routers and mobile data cards for loan to financially needy students who were unable to acquire appropriate Internet services due to the constraints in their living environment. The maximum amount provided for each student beneficiary over the three-year implementation period was \$1,700. Regarding the support on e-learning for students from grass-roots families during the class suspension period, EDB had made flexible arrangements to the Community Care Fund Assistance Programme since March 2020 to subsidize needy primary and secondary students for purchasing mobile computer devices. The Funding Programme had benefited about 34 000 students in the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. In the 2020-2021 school year, about 140 000 students were expected to benefit from the Programme.

43. DGCIO further said that some students were unable to acquire appropriate Internet services. EDB had provided a one-off top-up grant for primary and secondary schools to purchase portable Wi-Fi routers and mobile data cards for use by these students to strengthen support for them in e-learning at home. Students who were receiving subsidies under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme or the School Textbook Assistance Scheme, or having with limited economic means identified by schools, and did not have access to appropriate Internet services through fixed broadband services, would benefit from the additional support under the grant. Schools in need might submit their applications to EDB. A maximum of \$800 would be provided for purchasing both portable Wi-Fi router and mobile data cards on loan for each eligible student.

44. The Chairman asked which party(s) would be held liable for any damage to the computer devices. DGCIO replied that schools would arrange for the loan of mobile computer devices and related equipment to eligible students and be responsible for maintenance of such devices. Students who received the devices must return all the borrowed items when they left schools for various reasons (including graduation, further studies, etc.) during the implementation period of the Funding Programme. Participating schools should arrange to lend the returned equipment to newly eligible students. Any damaged computer devices would be arranged by the schools for repair or disposal.

Measures to promote the adoption of digital technology among the elderly

45. Mr SHIU Ka-fai expressed support for various digital inclusion initiatives. Referring to the Thematic Household Survey of the Census and Statistics Department ("C&SD"), he enquired about the Internet usage among the remaining 38% of persons aged 65 or above, the difficulties in implementing digital inclusion measures and why these elders did not use the Internet service in their daily lives.

46. DGCIO advised that according to the latest findings on IT usage and penetration based on the Thematic Household Survey conducted by C&SD, persons aged 65 or over who had used the Internet during the 12 months before enumeration was 65.9% in 2020. OGCIO would endeavour to promote the use of Internet and electronic services in the daily lives of the elders, with a view to raising the percentages of the elderly in using the Internet and electronic services to 70% by 2023.

47. DGCIO further informed members that OGCIO had launched ongoing Information and Communications Technology ("ICT") Outreach Programme for the Elderly ("Outreach Programme"). Non-profit-making elderly services organizations had been commissioned to visit elderly people across the territory,

including those who were living in residential care homes, receiving day care centre and home care services and the hidden elderly etc., and encourage them to make greater use of digital technology in their daily lives. In view of the development of the epidemic, the Outreach Programme had been conducted through remote means. The outreach activities included teaching the elderly to communicate with relatives and friends by using video call software and using smart robots to teach fitness exercises etc., so that the elderly could continue to participate in the activities amidst the epidemic. Moreover, the "Elderly IT Learning Portal", a web-based learning portal, had launched 18 learning modules, including protection of mobile devices, cyber security and the use of common mobile apps such as "LeaveHomeSafe", "iAM Smart" and "HK eMobility". OGCI had also collected customer satisfaction survey questionnaires in the past few months to gauge the views of elderly people on the design of the learning portal and its contents. OGCI would make reference to the survey results and introduce more modules with relevant contents which met the needs of the elderly.

48. GCI added that upon completion of the Enriched ICT Training Programme ("Training Programme") for the Elderly, the elderly participants could further act as teaching assistants to facilitate other elders in understanding and using technology products and services. OGCI also planned to launch a new round of the Training Programme in end-2021. The new programme would arrange more young people to act as course instructors of the Training Programme to promote inter-generational harmony.

49. Mr SHIU Ka-fai considered that the Administration should provide incentives to encourage the elderly and young people to help more elderly people understand and use digital technology in their daily lives. Mr SHIU suggested that the Administration should organize face-to face courses, instead of online classrooms, for the elderly to arouse their interest in using digital technologies when the epidemic situation stabilized. GCI said that discussion would be held with the engaged non-profit-making organizations and elder academies on the measures to encourage a wide adoption of digital technologies by the elderly.

50. The Chairman noted that the percentage of persons aged 65 or above having used the Internet in the past 12 months had increased significantly from around 9% in 2009 to around 62% in 2019. He reckoned that there were some 700 000 elderly persons aged 65 or above had used the Internet. The Chairman sought elaboration on the population base and methodology of the survey. GCI and DGCI said that persons aged 65 and over in the enumerated households were selected for interview in respect of their usage of the Internet during the 12 months before enumeration. Enumerators of C&SD contacted selected respondents to conduct interviews. The Chairman suggested that the Administration should step up efforts to encourage elderly persons to make

greater use of digital technology, such as using "iAM Smart" and eHealth app.

VI. Any other business

51. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:16 pm.

Council Business Division 1
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