

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Friday, 18 November 2022

The Council continued to meet at Nine o'clock

MEMBERS PRESENT:

THE PRESIDENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HAN-PAN, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE KWOK WAI-KEUNG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ELIZABETH QUAT, B.B.S., J.P.

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

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE HOLDEN CHOW HO-DING

THE HONOURABLE SHIU KA-FAI, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE YUNG HOI-YAN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN CHUN-YING, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LUK CHUNG-HUNG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU KWOK-FAN, M.H., J.P.

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

THE HONOURABLE VINCENT CHENG WING-SHUN, M.H., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE TONY TSE WAI-CHUEN, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE DOREEN KONG YUK-FOON

THE HONOURABLE CHU KWOK-KEUNG

THE HONOURABLE STANLEY LI SAI-WING, M.H.

DR THE HONOURABLE HOEY SIMON LEE, M.H., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE DOMINIC LEE TSZ-KING

DR THE HONOURABLE TIK CHI-YUEN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE STANLEY NG CHAU-PEI, S.B.S.

DR THE HONOURABLE JOHNNY NG KIT-CHONG, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE CHAU SIU-CHUNG

DR THE HONOURABLE CHOW MAN-KONG

DR THE HONOURABLE DAVID LAM TZIT-YUEN

THE HONOURABLE LAM CHUN-SING

THE HONOURABLE LAM SO-WAI

THE HONOURABLE NIXIE LAM LAM

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW LAM SIU-LO, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE DUNCAN CHIU

THE HONOURABLE YIU PAK-LEUNG, M.H.

DR THE HONOURABLE WENDY HONG WEN

THE HONOURABLE DENNIS LEUNG TSZ-WING, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG MAN-KWONG, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE EDWARD LEUNG HEI

THE HONOURABLE KENNETH LEUNG YUK-WAI, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN YUET-MING, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE ROCK CHEN CHUNG-NIN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN YUNG, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE SUNNY TAN

THE HONOURABLE JUDY CHAN KAPUI, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE MAGGIE CHAN MAN-KI, M.H., J.P.

IR THE HONOURABLE CHAN SIU-HUNG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HOI-YAN

THE HONOURABLE JOEPHY CHAN WING-YAN

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HOK-FUNG, M.H., J.P.

IR THE HONOURABLE GARY ZHANG XINYU

THE HONOURABLE LILLIAN KWOK LING-LAI

THE HONOURABLE BENSON LUK HON-MAN

DR THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN WONG YUEN-SHAN

THE HONOURABLE EDMUND WONG CHUN-SEK

THE HONOURABLE KINGSLEY WONG KWOK, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE YANG WING-KIT

REVD CANON THE HONOURABLE PETER DOUGLAS KOON HO-MING,
B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE TANG FEI, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE TANG KA-PIU, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAI TUNG-KWOK, G.B.S., I.D.S.M., J.P.

PROF THE HONOURABLE LAU CHI-PANG, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE KENNETH FOK KAI-KONG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LOUIS LOONG HON-BIU

THE HONOURABLE NGAN MAN-YU

THE HONOURABLE CARMEN KAN WAI-MUN

DR THE HONOURABLE TAN YUEHENG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE SO CHEUNG-WING, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE YIM KONG

MEMBERS ABSENT:

THE HONOURABLE ROBERT LEE WAI-WANG

IR THE HONOURABLE LEE CHUN-KEUNG

DR THE HONOURABLE DENNIS LAM SHUN-CHIU, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAM SAN-KEUNG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN PUI-LEUNG

DR THE HONOURABLE KENNEDY WONG YING-HO, B.B.S., J.P.

PUBLIC OFFICERS ATTENDING:

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KWOK-KI, G.B.S., I.D.S.M., J.P.
CHIEF SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION

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

THE HONOURABLE PAUL LAM TING-KWOK, S.B.S., S.C., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE

THE HONOURABLE CHEUK WING-HING, G.B.S., J.P.
DEPUTY CHIEF SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION

THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL WONG WAI-LUN, G.B.S., J.P.
DEPUTY FINANCIAL SECRETARY

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG KWOK-KWAN, S.B.S., J.P.
DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE

THE HONOURABLE KEVIN YEUNG YUN-HUNG, G.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM

THE HONOURABLE ERICK TSANG KWOK-WAI, G.B.S., I.D.S.M., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS

THE HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER HUI CHING-YU, G.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY

THE HONOURABLE TANG PING-KEUNG, G.B.S., P.D.S.M., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR SECURITY

THE HONOURABLE TSE CHIN-WAN, B.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

DR BERNARD CHAN PAK-LI, J.P.
UNDER SECRETARY FOR COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, AND
SECRETARY FOR COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PROF THE HONOURABLE LO CHUNG-MAU, B.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR HEALTH

THE HONOURABLE LAM SAI-HUNG, G.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

THE HONOURABLE BERNADETTE LINN HON-HO, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT

THE HONOURABLE WINNIE HO, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR HOUSING

THE HONOURABLE MRS INGRID YEUNG HO POI-YAN, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE

DR THE HONOURABLE CHOI YUK-LIN, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

PROF THE HONOURABLE SUN DONG, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY

THE HONOURABLE ALICE MAK MEI-KUEN, S.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR HOME AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

THE HONOURABLE CHRIS SUN YUK-HAN, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE

MR MICHAEL CHEUK HAU-YIP, P.D.S.M., J.P.
UNDER SECRETARY FOR SECURITY

MR JEFF SZE CHUN-FAI, J.P.
UNDER SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

CLERKS IN ATTENDANCE:

MS ANITA SIT, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

MS AMY YU, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

MS MIRANDA HON, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

MEMBER'S MOTION

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): This Council will continue with the motion debate on the 2022 Policy Address.

Secretary for Development, please speak.

MOTION DEBATE ON THE 2022 POLICY ADDRESS**Continuation of debate on motion which was moved on 16 November 2022**

SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT (in Cantonese): President, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Members for putting forward many valuable views in the debate yesterday. I would like to first make a few points in response to the work on land supply. In this regard, our guiding direction is “enhancing quantity, speed, efficiency and quality”.

Enhancing quantity

In mid-October, immediately upon the publication of the Policy Address, we announced for the first time that the supply of developable land is forecast to reach 3 280 hectares in the next decade. Externally, this is a public commitment; internally, this will facilitate self-monitoring and provide an incentive.

Some people have asked whether we are confident that we can meet the target. We are confident to a certain extent. And we will do our utmost in terms of research, explanation and implementation. However, one crucial point is that we need the support of Members and the community, including the agreement that we should adopt a multi-pronged approach to land formation so that we do not fall again into the argument of having B in place of A or C in place of B. That said, I am fully aware that land formation projects are invariably controversial to a certain extent, with existing residents and shop owners being dissatisfied because of the direct or indirect impact, and some people speaking out in defence of their ideals. While pushing ahead, we must also listen to the public's views and respond to their reasonable aspirations. Although we have improved the rehousing and compensation policies, we still need to do a better job in case management and provide information and support to those affected.

By demonstrating sustained land formation efforts and clear objectives, the Government is regaining control of land supply, but this does not mean that we do not need the forces of the private market. On the contrary, the Government cannot take charge of all land formation and development. Developers have a role to play in land development, but the important thing is that the Government always sets the conditions for approval, and the Government will take the lead on major land development projects. The three Land Sharing Pilot Scheme applications endorsed in principle by the Chief Executive-in-Council earlier are a good example of the private sector serving to complement Government-led land supply initiatives within the framework set by the Government.

To this day, there are still criticisms in the community that public-private-partnerships (“PPPs”) are a transfer of benefits, and I absolutely disagree with this saying. Our focus is on whether the outcome of our PPP projects is beneficial to the people and to our society; whether they are carried out in accordance with the rules and regulations that have been laid down and announced; whether the Government’s contribution in terms of direct expenditure or deduction of land premium is good value for money, and whether the developer has fully paid the land premium for its development. We need to serve an efficient market with a capable government in an open, fair and effective manner.

The 3 200-odd hectares of “spade-ready” land to be formed over the next decade will all come from Government-led land formation initiatives. As the Deputy Financial Secretary indicated yesterday, many of these sites involve two of our key development engines—the Northern Metropolis and the reclamation of artificial islands around Kau Yi Chau. These two projects are huge and will continue to play an important role in land supply beyond the coming decade.

Another new source of land formation announced in the Policy Address comes from the study on the “Green Belt” zone. We have further identified about 255 hectares of “Green Belt” sites, which we estimate can provide 70 000 housing units. We will strive to rezone the first batch of sites by 2024 and complete the review of other “Green Belt” areas next year. However, I would like to point out here that making good use of “Green Belt” sites does not necessarily mean large-scale housing construction. For example, the “Green Belt” sites in the southern part of Lantau, with an area of about 1 000 hectares, can partly support eco-tourism and heritage tourism, and the Sustainable Lantau Office of the Development Bureau will help promote this area of work.

Yesterday, some Members spoke in support of the development of Tseung Kwan O Area 137 into a new community primarily for housing purpose (providing about 50 000 housing units), but they expressed concern about the near-shore reclamation in the vicinity, adding that the project and future community facilities on the reclaimed land might affect existing residents. I would like to stress that the Government has not yet completed the study and that we will conduct a public consultation by the end of this year when the study is completed. These advance views expressed by residents are well noted.

Enhancing speed and efficiency

Enhancing speed and efficiency is a matter of streamlining development procedures. In terms of statutory procedures, after consultation with the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) Panel on Development and extensive consultation with stakeholders, we are working closely with our law drafters in the Department of Justice, aiming to present the draft legislation to LegCo before the end of this year. Some Members asked yesterday when the draft legislation would take effect, and I urge the legislature to expeditiously give us the green light. The streamlining of administrative procedures is an ongoing task. We have recently embarked on a new round of study on several issues identified in the Policy Address, with the aim of putting forward specific proposals in various areas from the middle of next year.

However, I want to solemnly state that enhancing speed should by no means compromise site safety or become an excuse to ignore safety. We need to help the industry improve its speed with the aid of technology and new techniques. This includes the promotion of Modular Integrated Construction so that it will be not only a construction method but also an industry that Hong Kong can be proud of. In addition, we will be promoting the extensive adoption of Smart Site Safety System on construction sites from next year. We have also pledged to devise a roadmap next year for the industry and the Government to fully adopt Building Information Modelling (BIM) for plan approval. The purpose of the roadmap is to enable the industry and the Government to provide support and training in this direction. We will make good use of the Construction Innovation and Technology Fund and do a good job in respect of design courses in tertiary institutions.

Enhancing quality

In terms of enhancing quality, accelerating the urban renewal of old areas is an integral part. We have proposed to lower the compulsory sale application thresholds and raise the bond issuance limit of the Urban Renewal Authority. We are glad to hear that both the legislature and the flat owners in old urban areas give us their support. We have recently submitted a paper to the relevant LegCo Panel, setting out the details of lowering the compulsory sale application thresholds. I look forward to thoroughly discussing this with Members. In the future, we will also consult various stakeholders, including professional institutes and residents' organizations.

Concluding remarks

President, the provision of sufficient land to meet the needs of the community in various areas is a challenge that the Government and the community need to face together. Since taking office, the new Government has been committed to this mission by actively pursuing various projects and reforms. In the days ahead, we will strive to implement the measures proposed to create strong impetus for growth and address people's concerns and difficulties in daily life.

With these remarks, I urge Members to support the Policy Address this year.

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I am most grateful to the Members who expressed support at the debate held yesterday for various housing policy initiatives set out in the 2022 Policy Address and for their invaluable views.

We find it encouraging that the community at large welcomes the policy measures on housing proposed in this year's Policy Address. Certainly, it will become our driving force to ensure the proper implementation of such measures in the future. As the Deputy Financial Secretary already made a general response to such topics as housing supply and "Light Public Housing" ("LPH") yesterday, I will now give further details on the specific arrangements for the construction and operation of LPH. Then I will talk about matters relating to public-private partnership, waiting time for public rental housing ("PRH"), redevelopment of PRH estates, as well as sub-divided units ("SDUs"), which were the concerns raised by many Members yesterday.

“Light Public Housing”

(i) Site search

Firstly, regarding LPH, we will work with different parties to identify sites that can be made available in the short term, including both government and private land, for the development of LPH projects. Some six sites are being considered, and we are pressing ahead with the relevant preliminary work, including site investigation and design, to determine their suitability for development of LPH and, if so, their development scale. Once the selection process is finalized, we expect that details of such sites will be announced in the first quarter of next year.

(ii) Design

In terms of design, LPH units are essentially “no-frills” units that can provide simple and adequate accommodation to those in need within a short period of time. I have heard some reports suggesting that LPH units or projects adopting the Modular Integrated Construction (“MiC”) approach will be built by stacking up cargo containers, which is totally untrue. LPH units are to be constructed specifically by contractors in accordance with the design specified by the Architectural Services Department. Moreover, MiC is a construction method that can be applied extensively on a wide range of projects, including the construction of hostels, hotels, schools, and even hospitals.

(iii) Rent

The rent of LPH will be linked to that of traditional PRH and is initially set at 90% of the rent of newly completed traditional PRH in the same district. Depending on the size of the units and the district in which they are located, the rents of LPH units are initially estimated to range from \$570 to \$2,650.

(iv) Operation

Members are particularly concerned about the operation of LPH. Under the current proposal, the Government will adopt a more proactive role in the selection of operating organizations. Meanwhile, we are carefully contemplating the operational details of LPH and will invite tenders from experienced operators to help take up the management and daily maintenance of LPH. While these

operators can be non-profit-making organizations, they may also be experienced management organizations or collaborative joint ventures of the two.

The operating organizations will also be required to provide some social services to tenants of LPH. Acting as a bridge and a counsellor, the operators will provide assistance to the tenants in respect of community participation or even employment and financial management.

(v) Target

We earnestly hope that the first batch of some 1 000 LPH units can be completed in 2024-2025 at the earliest. To achieve this target, we will seek funding approval from the Legislative Council in the first quarter of 2023. Adopting a parallel approach, we will press ahead with the design, tendering, and construction of LPH projects and the early finalization of subsequent operational matters. I hope Members will support the relevant funding proposal in due course.

Public-Private Partnership

I would also like to say a few words about public-private partnership. It was announced in the 2022 Policy Address that the Government would introduce a new Pilot Scheme on Private Sector Participation in Subsidised Housing Development to tap into private market forces to help increase the supply of subsidized housing. We plan to put up three sites for tender in batches from the next financial year onwards for interested developers to build subsidized sale flats which will be sold to eligible persons at a specified discounted rate from the market price. Under the Pilot Scheme, developers will also be encouraged to apply for rezoning of their own private land for the development of subsidized sale flats. The Government intends to formulate the policy framework for the Pilot Scheme in the first quarter of 2023.

Regarding the previous Private Sector Participation Scheme (“PSPS”), while we had many successful examples, there were also individual projects plagued with issues with the quality of flats. It is because, under the former scheme, private organizations could always receive a guaranteed sum for each flat, regardless of whether the flats had been sold or at what price. In retrospect, it was probably not the most effective way to encourage private sector developers to ensure flat quality.

Taking into account past experience with PSPS, the Government will put in place a mechanism this time to provide sufficient incentives to encourage participation by private organizations while ensuring the quality of the flats. On this premise, we will neither provide any guarantee for the amount of sales proceeds from the flats according to an agreed price nor buy back any unsold flats from the developers. We will announce further details of the new pilot scheme in due course.

Waiting time for public rental housing

Next, I would like to talk about the waiting time for PRH. Currently, the average waiting time (“AWT”) for PRH only calculates the waiting time of PRH general applicants who are given a flat offer of traditional PRH. With the availability of LPH units as I just mentioned, the Government will introduce an index of Composite Waiting Time for Subsidised Rental Housing (“CWT”) so as to give PRH applicants a better idea of the overall waiting time for improving their living conditions through the allocation of traditional PRH or LPH. Moreover, CWT can reflect more comprehensively and clearly the overall effectiveness of the Government’s provision of different types of subsidized rental housing (including both traditional PRH and LPH) to improve the living conditions of the public.

Some people have questioned that the Government is merely trying to mislead and confuse the public or just playing with figures by introducing CWT. Nothing is further from the truth. The methodology in calculating CWT is largely the same as that of AWT for PRH, in which the waiting time of applicants for the two types of PRH will be counted. The new index will not replace the existing AWT for PRH. To ensure openness and transparency, we will publish both figures together so that members of the public can have a clear idea of the different situations.

This year’s Policy Address is a clear testimony of the Government’s determination to continue its efforts in identifying land for housing development. The Hong Kong Housing Authority (“HA”) has also adopted, where practicable, new methods such as MiC and the “Design-and-Build” procurement model to increase the speed, quality and effectiveness of housing production and shorten the construction period while enhancing building quality and safety standards. We hope that the supply of public housing can be further increased and expedited to provide homes for the needy as soon as possible.

Redevelopment of public rental housing estates

Yesterday, I heard some Members expressing concern about the redevelopment of PRH estates. In fact, the redevelopment of PRH estates is a continuing effort made by HA. With 13 redevelopment projects completed in the past decade, HA is now proceeding with 10. In the future, we will commence redevelopment studies whenever necessary and continue our work in this regard.

The problem of sub-divided units

The problem of SDUs is a matter of grave concern for the public. Likewise, the Government is concerned about the people living in inadequate housing. When determining the housing supply target for the coming 10 years under the Long Term Housing Strategy, the Government has already taken into account the housing needs of inadequately housed households. As I have mentioned earlier, the supply of traditional PRH will be increased substantially over the coming 10 years to meet demand. While the Government is pressing ahead with the construction of traditional PRH, we also have plans to build some 30 000 LPH units and continue with the development of some 20 000 transitional housing units. Such a multi-pronged approach will change the landscape of the SDU rental market. I believe that in 10 years' time, substandard SDUs with poor living environments and high rents will vanish from the market. The Government will keep monitoring the SDU rental market closely.

On the enforcement of tenancy control legislation on SDUs, the Rating and Valuation Department ("RVD") has all along, in addition to taking proactive follow-up actions on reported cases, adopted a multi-pronged approach to proactively investigate offence cases relating to "regulated tenancies", including:

- (i) proactively enquiring about the tenancy situations of tenants;
- (ii) sending invitations to tenants for interviews so as to understand whether their landlords have acted against the law; and
- (iii) RVD and the Water Supplies Department strengthening joint inspections and proactively visiting tenants of SDUs to promote tenancy control on SDUs.

Meanwhile, RVD is in the process of setting up a dedicated enforcement and investigation task force with a view to enhancing the efficiency of enforcement and prosecution.

Concluding remarks

The coming few years will be crucial for implementing various key initiatives set out in the 2022 Policy Address. It will be of immense significance for Hong Kong if we can resolve our long-standing housing problem. I will work with my colleagues in the Housing Bureau and other relevant government departments to implement the various housing initiatives in the Policy Address with utmost determination and greatest efforts.

President, I call on Members to support the Motion of Thanks on the 2022 Policy Address. I so submit.

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS (in Cantonese):
President, I would like to thank Members for presenting their invaluable views on transport and logistics policies.

Transport Infrastructure

On the transport front, the Government has been advocating the “infrastructure-led” and “capacity-creating” planning principles in taking forward transport infrastructure projects with a view to unleashing the development potential of nearby areas along the major transport corridors while fostering better integration with other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (“GBA”) in an effort to perfect the transport network.

The three major road schemes and three strategic railway projects announced in the Policy Address are meant to take forward the construction of rail systems and accessible road networks in the Northern Metropolis and other areas. I would like to—not tiring of doing so—make mention here the six proposals. The three proposed major roads are: Northern Metropolis Highway, Shatin Bypass, and Tseung Kwan O (“TKO”)-Yau Tong Tunnel; the three proposed strategic railways are: Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Rail Link, Central Rail Link, and TKO Line Southern Extension. As Members have noticed, the six proposals aim to mitigate existing traffic congestion on major roads, promote integration with GBA, and

support the development of new development areas. The Government will conduct a public consultation exercise on these proposals at the end of this year, and I look forward to more advice from Members by then.

In the meantime, the Government keeps launching a number of road schemes and railway projects. It has just announced this week the commissioning of the TKO-Lam Tin Tunnel in tandem with the Cross Bay Link, TKO, on 11 December this year to provide an additional carriageway between TKO and Kowloon East. Besides, the Government is taking forward a number of major road proposals at the moment, including the building of Route 11, the Tsing Yi-Lantau Link, the widening of the Yuen Long Highway, and the construction of the Tuen Mun Bypass to meet the transport needs of local districts.

As to railways, there are five railway projects, namely the Northern Link Phase I (Kwu Tung Station), Tung Chung Line Extension, Oyster Bay Station, Tuen Mun South Extension, and Hung Shui Kiu Station, of which the construction works will commence progressively starting from next year and set to be completed from 2027 onward.

Furthermore, the First Stage Study of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Rail Link Project will be completed within this year, while the Second Stage Study of the Project will commence in the first quarter of next year.

For the elevated trackless rapid transit system in Kowloon East, we are now conducting a technical feasibility study that is expected to be completed in the first half of 2023. We will promulgate the way forward of the project and continue to communicate and exchange views with the local community in respect of the project.

Mobility with Convenience

To facilitate the commuting public, the Government will continue to take forward smart mobility initiatives by applying advanced technologies to address the ever-increasing transport and traffic needs, such as the provision of the new generation of parking meters and traffic data analysis system that provides real-time information on estimated journey time. We will also continue to take forward various e-licensing initiatives, including launching electronic forms for the majority of permits issued by the Transport Department, further digitalizing vehicle licence information, and streamlining the application procedures for renewal of vehicle licences in order to bring greater convenience to the public.

Traffic and Transport Strategy

Meanwhile, the Government is now conducting the Traffic and Transport Strategy Study. We hope to announce in 2025—or as early as circumstances permit—a strategy blueprint with the target of establishing a reliable, safe, intelligent, environmentally friendly and efficient traffic and transport system.

Logistics

As set out in the National 14th Five-Year Plan, the Central Government has made clear Hong Kong's positioning as the eight centres, and the Transport and Logistics Bureau is tasked to consolidate the positioning and take forward the development of two of such areas. We will continue implementing various policy initiatives to consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's position as an international aviation hub, international shipping centre, and logistics hub for further implementation of the national development strategy.

International Aviation Hub

On the aviation front, the volume of air cargo handled by the resilient Hong Kong International Airport (“HKIA”) last year was still atop the world's tally in the face of the unprecedented impact of the pandemic on the aviation industry. Upon the implementation of the “0+3” arrangement in September this year, its passenger volume also hit a new high since the COVID-19 outbreak. As the epidemic trend becomes stabilized with immigration control measures relaxed, we are confident that Hong Kong's air traffic will soon bounce back.

As to aviation infrastructure, we will continue to support the Airport Authority Hong Kong (“AAHK”) in implementing the three-runway system (“3RS”) project and other infrastructure projects, as well as materializing the vision of developing HKIA into an Airport City. The Third Runway has started with aircraft take-off and landing since July 2022. Targeting to complete the 3RS project in 2024, AAHK is pressing ahead with the remaining works with a view to enhancing Hong Kong's competitiveness as an international aviation hub.

In the meantime, moreover, AAHK continues to proactively develop the intermodal transport connection between HKIA and other cities in GBA, including transforming the existing SkyPier at HKIA into SkyPier Terminal to facilitate direct access to the restricted area of HKIA by transfer passengers from the

Mainland and Macao via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge after the security check for outbound flights, without the need to go through Hong Kong's immigration clearance. The Terminal will come into operation next year.

Maritime Development

To consolidate Hong Kong's status as an international shipping centre and boost its development, we will continue to implement various measures to attract more high value-added maritime enterprises to establish a presence in Hong Kong: providing tax concessions to eligible shipping enterprises; proactively promoting the development of "smart port" by setting up a port community system to facilitate the flow and sharing of data; implement by phases the use of electronic certificates/licences/permits by ships/vessels with a view to enhancing maritime services; promoting the development of "green port" by exploring the feasibility of providing liquefied natural gas bunkering for ocean-going vessels to strengthen the competitiveness of the Hong Kong Port. Meanwhile, the Government will launch a Maritime Services Traineeship Scheme next year for nurturing more home-grown maritime lawyers in support of the development of high value-added maritime services in Hong Kong.

Logistics Development

To promote the development of high value-added modern logistics in Hong Kong, we will join hands with the Hong Kong Logistics Development Council and the trade to formulate logistics development strategies next year. Our target is to reinforce Hong Kong's existing strengths and devise strategies and measures to be adopted by various stakeholders in the short, medium and long term for the sake of sustainable and healthy development of the industry. Taking forward multiple initiatives, we will also give full play to Hong Kong's unique edge of sea-land-air intermodal logistics transport to become the world's largest sea-land-air intermodal logistics centre.

Regarding cross-boundary logistics, the SAR Government has been working closely with the Mainland to actively improve the arrangements of cross-boundary land cargo transport through various channels. We will keep following up on this in the hope that the Mainland authorities will allow Hong Kong's cross-boundary goods vehicles drivers to drive directly to the operation points to pick up goods as soon as possible so as to further increase the cargo volume and improve the efficiency of cross-boundary land cargo transport.

In respect of the manpower issue that concerns the transport and logistics sectors, we will review the latest manpower situation of these sectors and lend an ear to their needs and duly heed their advice. The Government will, with an open mind, work with the sectors to explore feasible solutions for the promotion of sustainable development of human resources.

Concluding Remarks

President, transport is closely connected with people's daily life. While endeavouring to turn Hong Kong into a city of greater convenience and accessibility as well as enhance people's sense of well-being by taking forward various initiatives all along, the Government will continue to work jointly with different sectors to consolidate Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub and international shipping centre in accordance with the National 14th Five-Year Plan for better integration into the overall development of our country.

With these remarks, I implore Members to support the Motion of Thanks. Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE (in Cantonese): President, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Members for their valuable comments on welfare and labour policies. More than that, I am grateful to Members for the kind reminders given in their speeches and for their absolute sincerity in spurring the Government on to keep moving forward. I will listen with a humble heart and dedicate myself to the effective resolution of livelihood concerns and challenges.

Social welfare

(1) Targeted poverty alleviation

The current-term Government is committed to building a caring and inclusive society and implementing the targeted poverty alleviation strategy, with a view to directing resources towards those most in need. The Strive and Rise Programme, led by the Chief Secretary for Administration, was launched through tripartite collaboration among the Government, business sector and community. The Programme, which officially kicked off in October this year, targets 2 800 junior secondary students (particularly those living in sub-divided units).

Upon programme evaluation, we will chart the way forward. The Government will also restructure the Commission on Poverty to study and identify any other target group for implementing the policy direction of targeted poverty alleviation.

(2) Protecting children

The Government is taking forward at full speed the setting up of a mandatory reporting mechanism for child abuse cases and has consulted relevant sectors on the implementation details. We consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services on the legislative proposal on Monday and would introduce a bill into the Legislative Council in the first half of 2023. The Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) is actively preparing for the provision of training for relevant practitioners to facilitate their early identification and reporting of child abuse cases.

The Government has already completed the First Phase Review of Residential Child Care and Related Services. It will improve service quality and planning in a holistic manner and strengthen law-enforcing inspections, including engaging independent persons to conduct unannounced inspections.

The Government will also continue to strengthen child care services, including providing additional child care service places, re-engineering the Mutual Help Child Care Centres to provide After School Care Programme for pre-primary children in phases and reviewing the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project.

(3) Elderly and rehabilitation services

The Government will improve elderly services with due emphasis on quality and quantity and adhere to the policy objective of promoting “ageing in place as the core, with institutional care as back-up”. SWD will regularize the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly in the third quarter of 2023, increasing the number of beneficiaries in phases to 12 000. SWD will set up 16 new neighbourhood elderly centres in the next five years and expand the services to cover areas such as retirement planning and promotion of gerontechnology. In addition, we will expand the Hospital Authority’s Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients in the third quarter of 2023 by increasing the number of beneficiaries by one-third to 45 000 per annum.

The Government is making its greatest effort to increase the number of subsidized residential care service places with the target of providing an additional 6 200 subsidized residential care places and an additional 900 subsidized day care service places by end-2027, of which 2 600 residential care places and 300 day care service places will commence service in 2023.

To alleviate the manpower shortage in residential care homes for the elderly (“RCHEs”) and residential care homes for persons with disabilities (“RCHDs”), and on the premise that local workers’ priority for employment will be safeguarded, the Government will launch a special scheme in 2023 to allow the importation of care workers on an appropriate scale, relax the ratio of care workers to be imported and streamline vetting procedures for applications. In addition, the Government will subsidize an additional 1 700 or more students to enrol in nurse training programmes. These students will be required to work in the social welfare sector for at least three years upon graduation. The Government will also undertake a holistic review of the skill and qualification requirements of RCHE and RCHD staff to establish a career progression path and create quality jobs for local labour while attracting and retaining talents for RCHEs and RCHDs.

The Government will enhance support for carers of elderly persons and care of persons with disabilities by regularizing carers’ allowance and increasing the monthly rate from \$2,400 to \$3,000 with effect from October 2023, providing a one-stop information gateway and a designated support hotline for carers, increasing the number of places of respite services, etc.

Labour force

The Labour and Welfare Bureau (“LWB”) will introduce a number of new initiatives to safeguard labour and promote employment.

(1) Employee protection

The Government will invite the Minimum Wage Commission to study how to enhance the review mechanism of the Statutory Minimum Wage rate, including the review cycle, how to improve efficiency, and balancing a host of factors such as forestallment of excessively low wages and sustained economic development, and make proposals to the Government.

The Labour Department (“LD”) has further enhanced the application procedures of the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund (“PWIF”), including the provision of free legal services, so as to expedite the disbursement of ex-gratia payment to affected employees. This new measure was just implemented this month and it is estimated that the PWIF application procedures can be shortened by up to 12 weeks.

(2) Employment support

The Government launched the pilot Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme in 2021, and the feedback was very positive. LD will launch the regularized Scheme in the first half of 2023 to encourage enterprises to employ Hong Kong university graduates and deploy them to work in cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

LD will regularize the Racial Diversity Employment Programme to provide one-stop employment services for ethnic minorities and will recruit more ethnic minorities starting from the first half of 2023 to enhance their employment opportunities.

To encourage the public to enrol in training and enter the workforce, the Government has invited the Employees Retraining Board to consider raising the daily rate of retraining allowance and providing allowances for half-day courses, which are expected to be implemented by the first quarter of 2023.

(3) Occupational safety and health

In order to enhance the deterrent effect of occupational safety and health legislation and to further protect workers, LD proposes legislative amendments to increase the overall fines. I am grateful to Members for their serious scrutiny of the relevant bill and hope that the Legislative Council will pass it as soon as possible.

LD is actively drafting legislative amendments to include construction works with shorter durations and engaging fewer workers but carrying relatively higher potential risks (including truss-out scaffolding) into the scope of the notification mechanism so as to enable timely inspections. LD is also developing more specific guidelines requiring employers to take preventive measures under extremely hot weather to reduce employees’ risk of heat stroke.

In September this year, LD launched the Pilot Rehabilitation Programme for Employees Injured at Work to provide timely rehabilitation treatment and case management services for injured employees of the construction industry. We expect that by 2023 the Pilot Programme will help at least 50% of the participants recover within five months after commencement of rehabilitation treatment.

(4) Ongoing initiatives

Apart from the above mentioned new initiatives, the Government will continue to actively take forward the preparatory work for implementing the abolition of the offsetting arrangement under the Mandatory Provident Fund System. LD will review the “continuous contract” requirement and consult the Labour Advisory Board on this matter.

Closing remarks

The Financial Secretary gave an account of the initiatives pertaining to competing for talents and manpower in the second debate session, so I will not repeat it here. This is one of the work priorities in this year’s Policy Address and an important driving force for Hong Kong’s post-epidemic economic recovery and long-term development. Being responsible for manpower policy, LWB will surely make an all-out effort to take forward the relevant initiatives.

The Policy Address contains 26 key performance indicators pertinent to the welfare, labour and manpower portfolios, with the aim of providing protection in the workplace and community with a multi-pronged approach and joining hands with the public to build a caring and inclusive society.

President, with these remarks, I implore Members to support the Motion of Thanks.

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese):
President, I am truly grateful to Members for giving their views on the Policy Address.

Striving towards Carbon Neutrality

In moving towards carbon neutrality and aligning with the national “dual carbon” targets, the HKSAR Government strives to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050 and reduce the total carbon emissions in Hong Kong from the 2005

level by half before 2035. We will tackle the carbon emissions problem at source through four major decarbonization strategies, namely “net-zero electricity generation”, “energy saving and green buildings”, “green transport”, and “waste reduction”. The Environment and Ecology Bureau will set up a new Office of Climate Change and Carbon Neutrality to strengthen coordination and promote deep decarbonization works. The Council for Sustainable Development will be restructured to become the new Council for Carbon Neutrality and Sustainable Development to offer advice on decarbonization strategies and promote participation by different sectors of the community.

In moving towards carbon neutrality, cost-effectiveness is very important, so we will choose the most cost-effective method from different options to promote carbon neutrality.

We are also committed to implementing the green transport initiatives in the Policy Address, including the commencement of trials of hydrogen fuel cell electric double-deckers and heavy vehicles within the next year and the provision of an additional 7 000 parking spaces with electric vehicle charging facilities in newly completed government premises by 2025. We will put at least 180 electric commercial vehicles under trial in the next few years to announce a road map for the promotion of electric public transport and commercial vehicles by 2025. We will also formulate long-term strategies for applying hydrogen energy in road transport and introduce around 700 electric buses and about 3 000 electric taxis by end-2027.

On waste reduction and recycling, we fully strive to engage the entire community in waste reduction and waste separation for recycling. To tackle the problem of plastic pollution, we will speed up the regulation of disposable plastic tableware and other plastic products, apart from actively preparing for the implementation of municipal solid waste charging. We consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Environmental Affairs on the legislative proposals in late October and would like to thank members for their support. We are pressing ahead with drafting the legislation and aim to introduce the bill into the Legislative Council early next year for phased implementation starting from the fourth quarter of 2023 at the soonest. Moreover, we will explore the possibility of proposing legislation to require property management companies and owners’ organizations of major housing estates and single-block buildings with a relatively large number of flats to collect separated recyclables and pass them to recyclers for processing by 2024, and ensure that sufficient recycling facilities are set up in residential buildings and the recyclables collected are properly handled.

To achieve the vision of moving away from relying on landfills to dispose of municipal solid waste by 2035, the Government is committed to developing a network of advanced and highly efficient modern Waste-to-Energy (“WtE”) incinerators. We are building the first modern WtE incinerator (I•PARK1) adjacent to Shek Kwu Chau at full speed and planning the development of the second one (I•PARK2) at Tsang Tsui, Tuen Mun. We are also working closely with the Development Bureau (“DEVB”) to identify suitable sites to build more similar advanced facilities in the Northern Metropolis, in the hope of working properly on design and peripheral planning. We will also engage with the industry and contractors to explore feasible measures to expedite the development of I•PARK2.

The Government launched a trial scheme on food waste collection at public rental housing (“PRH”) estates in late October. In the first phase, smart bins are installed in a total of about 30 PRH blocks in five PRH estates to collect food waste, and the trial scheme is to expand to a total of 100 PRH blocks in 2023-2024. The trial scheme, which started in the past few weekends in the relevant estates, has gone very well. We will step up education and publicity to encourage more residents to participate actively in food waste recycling.

Promoting the Sustainable Development of the Agriculture and Fisheries Industry

Regarding promoting the development of the agriculture and fisheries industry, we will work hand in hand with the agriculture and fisheries industry to formulate a blueprint for the sustainable development of agriculture and fisheries to promote the upgrading and transformation, modernization and sustainable development of the industry. We strive to brief the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene on the blueprint within 2023.

We plan to roll out an array of measures in phases to raise the quality and value of local produces, as well as the productivity of the industry. As for the fisheries industry, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (“AFCD”) will commence statutory procedures in the first quarter of 2023 for the designation of new fish culture zones in four sites. It is expected that the setting up of the first batch of new steel truss cages for renting to fish farmers will be completed by 2025. We expect local mariculture production to double in five years. AFCD will also develop modernized and sustainable pond fish culture by introducing advanced culture techniques to some fish ponds by implementing the Wetland Conservation Parks System under the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy.

In addition, AFCD will prepare for the designation of fisheries protection areas to conserve fisheries resources and assist the fisheries sector in developing recreational fishing projects. DEVB, AFCD and the Fish Marketing Organisation are working on the revitalization of the Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market by adding new elements such as food and beverage, and plan to consult stakeholders on the development project in the first half of 2023.

On the agriculture front, the works of the Agri-Park Phase 1 in Kwu Tung South in the New Territories will be completed in phases from the fourth quarter of this year to 2023, and preparatory work for Phase 2 has commenced. Agri-Park Phase 2 will demonstrate new production methods to nurture agro-technology and knowledge of modern farm management and set up organic farming areas, public education facilities and farmers' markets. We are conducting a consultancy study on agricultural priority areas ("APAs") with DEVB to explore the feasibility of conserving quality agricultural land through the designation of APAs and facilitate the use of such areas for active farming through suitable measures. The study is expected to be completed by 2023-2024.

To be in step with the urbanization of Hong Kong, we will explore the setting up of multi-storey buildings for hi-tech hydroponic farms in suitable New Development Areas ("NDAs") and introduce urban farming elements in the planning stage of NDAs. We will also provide funds to the trade for conducting a consultancy study on building design guidelines for multi-storey livestock farms to facilitate the livestock trade to develop and adopt modernized and environmentally friendly operations in multi-storey buildings. The consultancy study is expected to be completed next year.

We will continue to communicate with the agriculture and fisheries industry and Members who are concerned about the development of the industry to explore whether there are more effective measures to facilitate the industry's sustainable development.

President, with these remarks, I implore Members to support the motion.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): The third debate session ends.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): We now proceed to the fourth debate session.

Members who wish to speak in this session please press the “Request to speak” button.

The debate themes of this session are “Work Together to Safeguarding Harmony and Stability (II)”, “Hong Kong will Prosper Only When its Young People Thrive”, as well as “Combat the Epidemic Together, Tell Good Stories of Hong Kong and Scale New Heights”. The policy areas covered in this session have been set out in the Script for Members’ easy reference.

Dr David LAM, please speak.

DR DAVID LAM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. It is encouraging that the Policy Address discussed primary healthcare development at length.

Primary healthcare

The overall layout we wish to see is a web of community healthcare networks. On this web, many different service providers can maintain close communication through interconnected networks. For example, when a family doctor turns on his system, he can see the locations, business positions, scheduled appointments and waiting time, services on offer, and the professional qualifications of professionals. All such information will be clear at a glance to facilitate mutual communication among healthcare workers and referral of patients. Each such network should have different health professionals to achieve cooperation and complementarity. In addition to doctors, dentists and Chinese medicine practitioners, it is necessary to have nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, dieticians, psychologists, etc. Indeed, we also hope to see the provision of laboratory testing services (collection of samples at least) and scanning centres (not necessarily in every district, which is understandable).

In addition to intranet connection, a community healthcare network should enable seamless dovetailing with public hospitals on the next upper tier so that patients can be discharged early and receive in-community rehabilitation treatment. The objectives of community healthcare networks should be: first, disease prevention to prevent the incidence of illnesses and promote healthy living. In

other words, it means minimizing the incidence of illnesses; second, should incidences really happen, it is hoped that patients can receive treatment early and as much as possible in the community, thus nipping diseases in the bud to reduce the incidence of complications and serious illnesses and minimize the need for specialist outpatient services of the public hospital system; third, to establish between family doctors and specialists a co-care system for patients under which the latter can receive appropriate treatment in the community; and fourth, to bring the rehabilitation services of hospitals to patients whereby the latter can be discharged early for rehabilitation in the community. We have to utilize better the healthcare manpower resources of both the public and private sectors by bringing their respective strengths into play and fostering their collaboration in the community. In this way, doctors, nurses, pharmacists and rehabilitation professionals can effect cooperation and complementarity, hence ameliorating the manpower pressure on individual professions.

District Health Centres (“DHCs”) would have been in place in each of the 18 districts territory-wide by the end of the year. Charged with diversified responsibilities, DHCs will form the hub of community healthcare networks. We hope to see that discharged patients can, through the assistance of DHCs, be each assigned a case manager to arrange for their rehabilitation treatment until they can revert to their family doctors. DHCs should also function as the executive arm of the Department of Health (“DH”) in the communities to promote healthy living and assist in the provision of medical and health information. They should also take forward DH’s work in the community, e.g., organ donation registration or handling questions concerning elderly healthcare vouchers. DHCs should also provide preventive care for the elderly, including measurement of blood pressure, blood glucose tests, and assessment of mobility and balance. Moreover, they should provide physiotherapist services for balance training and muscle strengthening in addition to promoting and providing health screening to the people. We hope to see nurses stationed in DHCs to provide health consultation services to the public—this is already in place currently as a matter of fact—and answer questions about medication. We also hope to see in DHCs a registration service for “family doctor for all” for people who have no access to a family doctor and assistance for other people with a need to update their information.

The needs of individual communities are invariably different from those of other communities, so when a particular type of healthcare workers is lacking in a specific community, we hope the DHCs can make up for such deficiency by providing relevant services to the public.

I very much welcome the policy initiative of “family doctor for all”. It is necessary to establish a mechanism of collaborative care (i.e. co-care) between family doctors and specialists in public hospitals. Consideration should also be given to opening up the relevant access rights, such that patients who have previously sought consultation in the specialist outpatient services of public hospitals may book such services directly when necessary without having to wait for the listing of appointments.

Development of public dental services

The World Health Assembly passed in May 2021 a resolution on oral health, establishing the close relationship between oral health and overall health. The World Health Organization recommends the governments of its members to attach due attention to the management and prevention of oral health risks, emphasizing the importance of prevention over treatment.

The existing oral health policy of the Government originated from the report of a dental sub-committee of the Medical Development Advisory Committee in 1991. It has been more than three decades since. The three-year Jockey Club Children Oral Health Project will soon come to a close. May I ask the Government if it plans to regularize the project? The Hong Kong Dental Association Ltd. has proposed that the School Dental Care Service of DH should be extended to secondary schools so that teenagers can understand better the importance of oral health and form the habit of dental care.

The government dental clinics have all along provided minimal services to the public. This outdated service concept falls short of the needs of modern-day society. I hope the Government can provide more public dental services to the people. In the short term, the procurement of dentists’ services in private practice may best solve this urgent problem.

The Elderly Dental Assistance Programme of the Community Care Fund and the Outreach Dental Care Programme for the Elderly of DH provide decent but limited services to the elderly. Just the day before yesterday, members of the public reflected to this Council that since elderly people have only one chance of crowning removable dentures before the age of 75, they would rather wait for the decay of more teeth before going to a dentist for dental prosthetics. We do not wish to see this happen again as it is evident that there is enormous room for improvement in this service.

Elderly healthcare vouchers should be used where their purposes are fulfilled. For this consideration, many colleagues and I have proposed the introduction of specified purposes for the vouchers. For example, a “dental scaling voucher” should automatically become void if not used. Such a specification will incentivize the elderly to have a scaling yearly and form the good health habit of going for an annual dental checkup.

The collaborative development of Chinese and Western medicine is the general direction, premised on an evidence-based approach complemented by specialist experience. We hope to see the formulation of a set of guidelines on integrated Chinese-Western medicine treatment, according to which Chinese and Western medicine practitioners can be clear about the mode and mechanism of collaboration. We also suggest that the Government should consider making funding provisions to universities for the conduct of relevant studies and also consider setting up an expert panel to take charge of the formulation of these guidelines.

In respect of the primary healthcare administration system, I understand that the Government will soon establish a Primary Healthcare Authority. We hope the Authority will be independent of the Hospital Authority (“HA”) and charged with responsibilities in the development of a territory-wide primary healthcare system; coordination of the services in community healthcare networks and inter-network complementary cooperation; and formulation of the service types needed in individual community healthcare networks, evaluation of workload and manpower requirement.

The provision of certain services, as mentioned earlier, remains lacking in our communities. In the future, the Primary Healthcare Authority should assist in developing these services, which are invariably professional services sorely absent in the communities, e.g., community care (private care services are sorely lacking in the communities) and community pharmacists. As regards the services which are yet to be provided, the Government should consider introducing a pilot scheme or examining with HA the launch of a contract-based cooperative programme to ensure patronage and effecting coordination with the Housing Department to identify suitable shop spaces in public housing estates for placement of these services.

In respect of policy promotion, we hope to see the policy help the development of professional sectors at the district level. Particularly, micro- and small-sized enterprises and individual professional practitioners should be given incentives in order that benign competition can be fostered and syndicated monopolization forestalled.

The Primary Healthcare Authority plays a very important role, that is, making operation rules for community healthcare networks, codes of service conduct for service providers, or probably a standard fees scale and administrative requirements for financial statements. We hope the Authority can provide some degree of administrative support for individual professionals.

The Primary Healthcare Authority may also assume the strategic role of procuring healthcare services for people in the communities and put a reimbursement and payment platform in place. Moreover, we hope to see cooperation between the Authority, the universities, and the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine in developing, promoting and implementing the Hong Kong Reference Framework. It is hoped that this Framework can be used in the community healthcare networks to iron out problems of continuity of care between specialists in public hospitals and family doctors in handling chronic diseases. The Authority should also draw up a territory-wide disease screening programme, for example, the existing Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme. The Authority may also consider carrying out regular tests of blood pressure/glucose/cholesterol, cervical smears and breast cancer screening for the people. Of course, the practical implementation should be left to family doctors or DHCs. But a territory-wide screening programme is lacking in Hong Kong. The Primary Healthcare Authority should also be responsible for consolidating existing societal resources, including some overlapped ones. For example, there may be overlapping in the roles played by DHCs and Elderly Health Centres. There are also many facilities and personnel of non-governmental organizations in the communities, not to mention the general outpatient clinics of HA, government dental clinics, polyclinics, and healthcare practitioners in private practice. As much as there is overlapping of roles, there is cooperation though. It is thus hoped that there could be consolidation in the future.

Coming to manpower resources, the brain drain is certainly a problem, and the loss rate of doctors, nurses and radiographers is so great that hospital operation is under severe stress. But the brain drain is not exclusive to the public healthcare system. Actually, social welfare agencies, RCHEs and residential care homes for persons with disabilities are similarly beset by a serious manpower shortage.

Likewise, many wards in private hospitals have remained closed over the past several years, and the listing of operations spans two to three months, not because there are too many patients but just because of the shortage of nurses. The patients of private hospitals are in fact Hong Kong citizens who similarly need care. The manpower problem of the public healthcare system surely warrants due attention and resolution, but any strategy formed for this purpose must not aim only to compress the room of survival of the private healthcare sector.

I believe the next 10 years will see a war of fighting for talents. The world will be embroiled in a war of “competing for talent”, particularly nurses, radiographers, physiotherapists, etc. The problem of brain drain of doctors is not as serious because they have to sit for licensing examinations in all parts of the world—except Singapore—and the passing rate of such examinations is relatively low.

As regards the training, admission, optimal utilization and retention of talents, I welcome the initiative to enhance the training of local healthcare workers, and I also welcome overseas healthcare workers meeting the relevant standards to come to Hong Kong for practice, especially those returning Hong Kong residents or experienced experts from overseas. The Government has stated that it will study amending the Dentists Registration Ordinance (Cap. 156) and the Nurses Registration Ordinance (Cap. 164). Its approach may be to draw reference to the Medical Registration Ordinance of adding a new type of registration to provide for non-local professional practitioners. This I welcome, but subject to one bottom line, i.e., the professional standard of such healthcare workers.

Developing primary healthcare is actually one of the strategies, indeed an important strategy, to alleviate the pressure of manpower shortage. The conventional mindset of the Government neglects the manpower of the private-sector healthcare system, which is a fallacy. The right way is to optimize the utilization of talents in Hong Kong, fully utilizing every medical and health profession, hence bringing their strengths into play. For example, pharmacists can answer quite many questions of the public about medication, explaining to them the side-effects, raising the latter’s compliance and dispelling their many worries about drugs. These are all very significant roles of pharmacists that must be enhanced. However, it must be stressed here that the development in our mind is the development of the professions, not commerce. So the counterpart of any such policy initiative must be professionals rather than businessmen or bosses.

The Secretary for Health has indicated that studies will be conducted on imposing mandatory public service on healthcare workers. In this connection, I have carried out a questionnaire survey in the medical and health sector. In fact, the vocation of most of the doctors and nurses surveyed is long-term service in the public healthcare system. The median number of years of service of resigned healthcare workers is 15, and they have left for different reasons. The findings of the survey indicated that co-workers treasure the handling of urgent and serious illnesses ... opportunities of looking after patients with urgent and serious illnesses, opportunities of serving the poor and suffering masses, opportunities of receiving training and on-the-job training, as well as opportunities of nurturing new hands in the sector. Yet they have voiced strong dissatisfaction with HA in such aspects as governance, workload, administrative duties, performance appraisals and the promotion system. I hope the Government can address the practical challenges and problems faced by co-workers in public hospitals. Granting this, their tendency to resign from their posts will naturally diminish. As a matter of fact, more than half of the nurses and 40% of the doctors surveyed do not object to time-limited mandatory public service. The Bureau is earnestly requested to attach importance to the good intentions of co-workers.

President, promoting the reform of Hong Kong's healthcare system (*The buzzer sounded*) ...

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Dr David LAM, please stop speaking.

Dr Priscilla LEUNG, please speak.

DR PRISCILLA LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, when I was a professor at the School of Law ("SLW") of the City University of Hong Kong ("CityU") two decades ago, a total of 10 SLW professors, all of whom Asians, were not offered contract renewal by SLW of CityU at the same time. Within two months, they were all purged by Professor Michael McCONVILLE, a Briton who had assumed the office of the Dean of SLW for just two months. At that time, I led them to present their cases to the Legislative Council ("LegCo") on several occasions because the governance of CityU's management seemed to have failed. Therefore, we could only seek assistance from LegCo. As SLW professors, we lacked the financial resources required to take legal actions against CityU for defamation because CityU could use public funds to employ lawyers. Within one

year, in addition to filing complaints with the United Nations, the 10 professors came to LegCo to voice their views on five occasions. As a result, all universities in Hong Kong sent representatives to LegCo to discuss the issue of university governance in Hong Kong. In the end, these professors won the case. An independent committee on the incident appointed by CityU established that Professor Michael McCONVILLE had committed an act of indirect racial discrimination. However, he soon changed job to become the founding Dean of the Faculty of Law of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (“CUHK”). CUHK seemed to have turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to what had happened at CityU. The then Chairman of the Council of CityU was Mr Norman LEUNG Nai-pang.

Today, 20 years later, the person arousing governance problems at CUHK is Mr Norman LEUNG Nai-pang, again. Two decades ago, he came to LegCo to explain how the CityU incident had come about. As a result of the incident at SLW of CityU, the Education Bureau and UGC submitted the Lord SUTHERLAND’s Report in 2002, and the incident at CityU was also well known in the international arena. After all, it was uncommon to dismiss 10 law professors within such a short period of time.

After a lapse of 20 years, what is the situation in various universities? In 2016, the ratio of external members in CityU’s Council was revised to 68%, while the corresponding ratios for the Councils of EdUHK and HKUST were revised to 65%, and for HKBU, the ratio was revised to 51%. Contrary to what is expected, in CUHK, even putting together the six CE-appointed Council members and all external members, they only account for 17% of the total number of Council members. It seems that CUHK management has put everything on hold out of fear of its students’ objections, and the sequelae are obvious.

I declare that I am an alumna of CUHK. During the “Occupy Central” movement in 2014, I witnessed a student of my alma mater calling his Mainland counterparts “zhi-na people”¹ in front of the Democracy Wall, and worse still, with the use of lots of expletives. At that time, I really wondered what had happened to this university. Had the students completely forgotten the motto of CUHK, i.e. “Through learning and temperance to virtue” or “博文約禮” in Chinese? Education is about “teaching the rights”, not “condoning the wrongs”. It is the goal of education to lay equal emphasis on intellectual and moral aspects. If the people we nurture are talents without virtue, we are victimizing our community.

¹ Translator’s note: “zhi-na” (支那) is a slur that has been linked to the Japanese invasion of China.

In 2014, I predicted that these people were in fact jumping off the political cliff or acting like children sticking fingers into the electrical sockets. They thought that there was no consequence after their first-ever action. When they attempted the second one, they “blew up” the entire society together with themselves, as if walking into a kitchen with “matches”—many of them are now in prison. What have the universities done? In 2019, CUHK, with its motto “Through learning and temperance to virtue”, was ironically dubbed “the Rioters’ University”. At that time, CUHK’s management remained silent, which was tantamount to “condoning” the violent acts. If we keep condoning such acts, all our future talents will become talents without virtue. So, what is the point even if they are outstanding scientists? If they teach people to break the law, the whole society will sink. There were governance problems at CUHK. The incumbent Vice-Chancellor and President of CUHK may have forgotten what happened in 2019 and prior to 2019. A simplified version of CUHK’s emblem was proposed earlier for use in electronic publications and social platforms. It is ubiquitous to use an electronic version today, but the simplified version of the emblem no longer has CUHK’s Chinese motto on it. The incident speaks for itself what is wrong with the governance of CUHK.

In the 1994 case of *Hong Kong Polytechnic University v Next Magazine Publishing Ltd*, the Court’s judgment made it clear that all publicly-funded universities in Hong Kong were subject to public scrutiny because they received public funds and acted for the public benefit and that parents, society and the country were all stakeholders. In respect of the so-called university autonomy and academic freedom, the 10 law professors and I brought all relevant case law and relevant United Nations conventions to LegCo for discussion two decades ago. University autonomy is not an excuse for the failure of university governance, nor should it be used as a shield.

Today, no matter how much money CUHK can raise, “money” is not the only factor that we will consider. Other universities know very well how much has been spent on each publicly-funded university. Please take a look at the development history of universities in Hong Kong. Recently, CUHK has quietly changed its emblem, and in the course, even the Council of CUHK was kept in the dark. While LegCo has three representatives sitting on the Council of CUHK, they have actually been treated as “quails”² by the management of CUHK. I have been silently observing the situation for four months, and the Panel on Education

² Translator’s note: The Chinese expression used by Dr Priscilla LEUNG is “鶴鶩”, which describes people who are timid and draw away in fear.

has not yet held a meeting on this issue. They have no idea that two decades ago, it was I who led 10 law professors to stage petitions here in LegCo, and the Education Bureau, at that time, defended its position on the pretext of university autonomy. Today the Secretary for Education responded likewise. I would like to tell the Secretary for Education that this problem was resolved long ago, and university autonomy is not a shield for defending against all incidents involving the wastage of public funds. UGC should also be held accountable. Twenty years ago, UGC representatives came to LegCo to give explanations on five occasions. Today, UGC representatives should also give LegCo an account of the situation. Regarding university governance, the Education Bureau is not the only party that should be held accountable. Apart from conducting research, have UGC-funded universities nurtured talents with virtue?

President, education is the foundation of a country. If young people are wise and intelligent, the nation is full of talent. In Singapore, KPIs have been set for schools with distinct themes for different academic levels, namely “Love Singapore” (primary level), “Know and Believe in Singapore” (secondary level), and “Lead Singapore” (post-secondary level). Has Hong Kong set similar KPIs for our children? Does the Education Bureau have such aspirations? I urge the Secretary not to beat around the bush. This is an issue that I have been following up on for two decades. Today, I must reiterate my point: education is about “teaching the rights”, not “condoning the wrongs”.

President, I so submit.

MR LAI TUNG-KWOK (in Cantonese): President, Hong Kong is now faced with the problems of rapid population ageing and inadequate medical resources. Attending a hospital in person for medical appointments may not be too difficult for the general public, but it can be daunting for senior citizens who are more advanced in age or restricted in mobility, especially for the elderly folks in residential care.

A way to help them, other than provision of outreach medical services, is telemedicine. Although the Hospital Authority (“HA”) began as early as 1998 to provide clinical services via video-conferencing to a small number of patients in residential care homes for the elderly (“RCHEs”), the information available to me shows that at least until 2008, this practice offered nothing but a video

communication channel for doctors to talk with nurses in elderly homes and check on patients' conditions without any transmission of other diagnostic or pathological data of the patients. This is a far cry from the emerging telemedicine practices.

In recent years, telemedicine has developed so fast that it goes far beyond telephone or video consultations to include dispensing and delivery of medicines, as well as issuance of medical referral letters, sick leave certificates, electronic prescriptions, etc. If put in the context of elderly homes, its use even enables requests for in-home nurses to take blood samples or give other initial treatment to residents. With more frequent use of telemedicine in RCHEs, it is believed that the residents no longer have to suffer a long wait for outreach consultation and, instead, can more readily receive initial assessment and treatment from doctors, which also helps saving valuable medical resources and reducing the frequent need for RCHEs to send elderly folks to public hospitals, particularly accident and emergency departments. Therefore, telemedicine is definitely worth implementation.

The COVID-19 pandemic marks a turning point. The unprecedented pandemic has compelled us to adopt more countermeasures, including technological developments in various areas, one of which being smart healthcare. In the midst of the pandemic, we have seen HA experiment with the use of telemedicine to provide remote consultations to suitable patients. I am also pleased to see the Health Bureau mention, as a policy initiative in this year's Policy Address, that HA will make wider use of telehealth services. I request that RCHEs be included in the scope for wider use of telehealth services. Ideally, all hospital clusters in Hong Kong should join in to provide telehealth services to the elderly in RCHEs for follow-up consultation and treatment. The result of so doing is arguably a triple-win situation as it reduces the manpower requirement of RCHEs for outpatient escort services, alleviates the burden on the public healthcare system, and even benefits the elderly living in RCHEs at the same time.

Certainly, there are intrinsic challenges to telehealth services or telemedicine. For instance, no legislation is yet in place to regulate telemedicine. Although the Medical Council of Hong Kong ("MCHK") has issued the Ethical Guidelines on Practice of Telemedicine ("the Guidelines") in relation to telemedicine, it contains no description of specific standards and requirements for the use of telemedicine. The Guidelines also remind doctors that they are fully responsible for the decisions on whether telemedicine is an appropriate means for

diagnosing and treating the patient. This has led to reservations among some members of the profession about the provision of telemedicine services.

I noticed that upon the introduction of the Guidelines in March this year, the authorities invited the Chairman of MCHK to explain the content of the Guidelines, as well as MCHK's position, to representatives from healthcare professional bodies, medical and nursing schools of tertiary institutions, medical organizations, healthcare institutions and non-governmental organizations in order to allay their concerns about the provision of telemedicine services to COVID-19 patients. This is a good start, but while the use of telemedicine is being expanded, are the Guidelines adequate? Or do we need legislation to clarify some responsibilities? Regarding the aforesaid questions on telemedicine, I look forward to hearing the Secretary for Health's response later.

Apart from healthcare, President, I would like to discuss another issue related to district environment, and that is tree management. In recent years, Hong Kong has seen a succession of tree failures causing casualties from time to time. It is necessary for the Government to examine what exactly has gone wrong from the perspective of the system itself.

First of all, in my view, tree management under the Government's current system epitomizes a mishmash of policies from multiple authorities. As many of our colleagues with district experience well know, whenever a tree problem of any kind arises in the district, it is most likely necessary to work the phones hard with many departments before being able to find one willing to take responsibility for dealing with it. According to my understanding, the departments dealing with tree work include at least the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Architectural Services Department, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Drainage Services Department, the Highways Department, the Housing Department, the Lands Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") and the Water Supplies Department, each working on its own. Sometimes it is exhausting just to figure out which is responsible for maintenance.

From another angle, even if we just look at the arrangement of policy areas for the debate on this Motion of Thanks, we can see that tree management is indeed not given much importance. I originally intended to discuss this issue in the third debate session, considering that the Tree Management Office ("TMO") is currently

under the Development Bureau and the Secretary for Development herself will only attend the third debate session, but despite trawling through the policy areas listed for the third session, I cannot find any suitable for me to talk about tree management. President, I wish to point out that with many trees planted in every district of Hong Kong, members of the public walking down a street may easily come across a tree over their heads. As tree management is a big issue, which is also intricately related to district environment, I have opted to share my views on tree management in this session.

Speaking of TMO, to be honest, the Head of TMO is like a commander without soldiers. Though a directorate civil servant, he holds only a D1 post, overseeing a limited number of staff members and having no authority to order the staff of other departments to work, so it is a tough call for him to “advocate the adoption of a professional approach to tree management among tree management departments and in the community at large”, as the Bureau puts it. As far as I know, it was exactly due to the aforesaid reason that some tree experts were unwilling to take up the post of Head of TMO in the past. In fact, most of the former Heads of TMO did not serve long, and one even promptly quit in a short six months. Moreover, the post of Head of TMO was held by an acting civil servant for a long time due to utter failure in recruitment.

President, my view is that the authorities should consider gradually integrating staff with practical experience in tree care into TMO and let them focus on tree management. For example, there is currently an Amenities Assistant grade in LCSD, which is tasked with not just the management of recreational venues and sports facilities but also tree management in parks and green belts. Some staff have accumulated practical experience in tree care, but it is common for them to be regularly transferred to other workplaces, such as swimming pools, beaches and sports centres, so they can hardly bring their masterly skills to bear.

In addition to integrating staff with practical experience in tree care into TMO, the authorities should consider the feasibility of establishing a professional grade in tree management in the long term to increase the opportunities for upward mobility for tree management personnel, thus attracting more people to enter this career.

Lastly, I suggest that the Administration consider conducting a round of territory-wide tree inspections and surveys. Recently, a tree failure occurred on Perth Street. This time the Development Bureau acted swiftly, instructing LCSD the next day to carry out an investigation. Upon release of the report, I noticed

that among the 34 trees at Perth Street for which re-inspections were conducted, three were found to have decayed inside their trunk bases and had to be removed as soon as possible. This ratio is really alarming. In response to my enquiry, the Administration has admitted that the percentage identified during regular tree inspections is only 0.6% to 0.8%. What exactly is the problem leading to such a great discrepancy in figures? We have no answer. I hold that the authorities should consider conducting territory-wide tree inspections and systematically compiling statistics (*The buzzer sounded*) ... to have a full grasp of the data.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LAI Tung-kwok, please stop speaking.

Mr YANG Wing-kit, please speak.

MR YANG WING-KIT (in Cantonese): President, Hong Kong's healthcare system has two bottlenecks—it is both “difficult” and “expensive” for members of the public to have access to medical treatment. I am very pleased that the current-term Government has shown its determination to ease the two bottlenecks. The turnover rate of doctors and nurses in public hospitals can be described as “bleeding”. In the past year, the turnover rate of doctors was about 8.3%, and that of nurses was about 10.1%. This year's Policy Address exerts to “stanch the bleeding”. I absolutely agree that healthcare professionals should be required to serve in public healthcare institutions for a specified period of time. After all, the Government has invested so many resources on training them. I hope that the Secretary can expeditiously specify the required service period and draw up an implementation timeline for this initiative. However, the Government also needs to improve the working environment and remunerations of Hospital Authority (“HA”) staff to enhance their job satisfaction; otherwise, they will all leave after the specified period.

Meanwhile, I am happy to see that the Government is willing to take a step further to admit non-locally trained dentists and nurses. Bringing in dentists is a good policy as the Department of Health (“DH”) suffers a severe shortage of dentists. It is truly heartbreaking to see citizens queuing overnight for dental treatment quotas. Only by bringing in non-locally trained dentists will it be possible to expand public dental services, such as increasing the number of quotas of general public dental sessions, launching a dental care plan for the elderly, and operating mobile dental clinics. In the long run, the Government needs to construct a dental hospital.

Concerning the hiring of external support, the special registration system is an “imperial sword”, yet the power of the sword is unfortunately impaired by the requirement that programmes leading to recognized medical qualifications (“RMQs”) must use English as the medium of instruction. I suggest that the Secretary should take the initiative to propose legislative amendments to the effect of relaxing the requirement on the medium of instruction so as to include more medical programmes offered by top-notch universities, especially those offered by Mainland universities, into our RMQ list. At the same time, non-locally trained dentists should also be brought in.

The right direction merits a long journey. Today, I again urge the Secretary to solve healthcare problems with a target-oriented approach by specifying a doctor-to-population ratio and a target waiting time for each outpatient specialty service. He should also promote cross-border medical cooperation with the Mainland by triaging patients to Hong Kong-invested hospitals or “Grade 3A” hospitals in the Mainland so as to reduce the waiting time for receiving medical treatment.

To ease the problem of soaring medical fees, the Policy Address emphasizes “cooperation with the Mainland to facilitate registration of pharmaceutical products in Hong Kong”. It is expected that the current market monopoly enjoyed by foreign pharmaceutical companies will be broken, offering patients more choices and triggering competition-induced price cuts, especially for cancer drugs. Regarding the next step forward, the Government should seek participation in the Mainland’s mechanism for centralized procurement of drugs and high-value medical supplies, which will significantly alleviate the financial burden of the Government and the patients, minimizing the possibility of tragedies in which “patients are denied drug treatment due to lack of means”.

President, regarding the anti-epidemic policy and resumption of quarantine-free travel, I thank the Government for having accepted the proposals put forward by the “A4” Alliance, including standardizing the arrangements under the Come2hk and Return2hk Schemes and launching the “Test Registration Code”. Regarding the “pre-departure quarantine” measures, I hope the relevant task force can swiftly finalize the details and implement “pre-departure quarantine” measures soonest possible. Should this gate be opened, the Government may then discuss with the Mainland to extend quarantine-free travel arrangements to Dongguan, Guangzhou, Taishan, etc. via high-speed rail and sea travel. Moreover, when the epidemic situation in Shenzhen stabilizes, I hope the Government can actively

discuss with the Shenzhen authorities so that the quotas in quarantine hotels can be resumed to 2 000 or even more, facilitating north-bound travels by the people of Hong Kong.

President, as the Government successively relaxes immigration policies and social distancing measures, the number of confirmed cases has recorded a significant increase recently. This will surely increase the pressure on the public healthcare system. Hong Kong currently uses COVID-19 oral drugs from Pfizer and Merck Sharp & Dohme (“MSD”). Research teams from the respective Faculties of Medicine of The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong found that, compared to general treatment, for every patient treated by the drug from Pfizer, the associated medical cost saving is HK\$43,000, while the corresponding figure for MSD is HK\$20,000, proving that these drugs are very cost-effective.

However, the treatment costs of these two drugs are around HK\$5,000. In fact, our country has also developed reasonably-priced COVID-19 drugs with comparable efficacy. The drug developed by Bii Biosciences, which is administered by intravenous injection, as well as Azvudine, an oral COVID-19 drug, have been used in many provinces and municipalities in the Mainland. As DH has already approved the application for clinical trials of the COVID-19 drug developed by Bii Biosciences, I would like to know whether the Secretary has requested clinical data from the drug company, the National Medical Products Administration and Mainland hospitals. Among these drugs, one bottle of Azvudine (35 tablets), equivalent to one treatment course, is priced at HK\$300. If Azvudine is purchased, the Government is well-positioned to dispense the drug to patients aged below 60 across the board. With the availability of COVID-19 drugs, Hong Kong may truly resume normal, no longer vulnerable to the health threats posed by COVID-19.

Finally, I would like to mention the Accident & Emergency (“A&E”) service in Wong Tai Sin. One of the districts with the largest ageing population, Wong Tai Sin, is also the only one without A&E service among the 18 districts in Hong Kong. The redevelopment project of Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital is now underway. While its outpatient service will be extended to the small hours in future, it still cannot cope with the demand for A&E service in the area. We hope that it will operate around the clock in future. In the long run, the sites at Diamond

Hill, upon relocation of service reservoirs, should be used for the expansion of the Wong Tai Sin Hospital to establish a new acute hospital to meet the demand for A&E service by the 400 000 residents in Wong Tai Sin District.

With these remarks, President, I once again express my support for the Motion of Thanks.

MS DOREEN KONG (in Cantonese): President, I notice that the Policy Address has not put forth any specific measures to enhance building management. In Hong Kong, there are tens of thousands of private buildings and buildings under the Home Ownership Scheme, which are in diverse conditions and sizes. However, the existing building management regulations and measures cannot keep pace with the times. Moreover, as building management invariably involves complex legal issues relating to deeds of mutual covenants of buildings, etc., minority owners, in general, are not in a position to handle building management problems. A few years ago, the Property Management Services Authority (“PMSA”) was established to regulate property management practitioners. I propose drawing on such experience to establish a “Building Management Authority” under the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau to help owners’ organizations of buildings tackle building management issues and provide precise and appropriate resources for building management. Alternatively, the terms of reference of PMSA can be expanded to cover building management because building management and property management are closely related to each other, and both should be well-regulated by the Government.

As for combating the epidemic together, in February this year, the Government formulated several rules under the Emergency Regulations Ordinance and Cap. 599, rolling out a number of anti-epidemic measures. There is no doubt that timely measures could address the emergencies at hand and relieve the worries of the public under various situations, ensuring the normal functioning of society. However, no policy can last forever, and there is always an optimal scope for any policy. A policy can bring the most benefits to the people if it is confined within a reasonable scope. If it fails to respond to the realities of society in a timely manner, it can be counterproductive.

Considering the current social conditions of Hong Kong, the word “emergency” is no longer an apt term for us. The policies formulated under the state of emergency should be adjusted or even abolished; otherwise, the inappropriate measures will become a stumbling block on our way to resuming

normalcy. Drawing from the experience of other places in the world, we can see that in the face of situations which are not specified as “emergencies” under the Emergency Regulations Ordinance, both the executive authorities and the legislature have the responsibility and power to perform a gate-keeping role when addressing specific circumstances.

Since the assumption of office by the new-term Government, the Hong Kong community has undergone encouraging changes and progress in various aspects. In particular, the timely relaxation of some anti-epidemic measures has restored the glamour of Hong Kong and boosted the confidence of the public. However, some existing anti-epidemic measures fail to keep pace with the needs of society, resulting in “formalities prevailing over substance”, constituting varying obstacles to the development of our community. Looking forward, I hope the Government can review whether the existing anti-epidemic measures are commensurate with the realities of society. It should be more far-sighted and courageous in adjusting anti-epidemic measures in the future.

The Policy Address has put forth various policies and set out many strategies. I would like to point out that there are good and bad strategies. A bad strategy is all about vision, while a good strategy seeks to understand the core problems and explore ways to overcome problems with the allocation of appropriate resources. President, I hope the Government not only tells the Hong Kong story well but also dares to identify and address the deep-seated problems and be determined to find solutions.

President, I support the motion moved by Ms Starry LEE. I so submit.

DR CHOW MAN-KONG (in Cantonese): President, if we want the “one country, two systems” principle to bring hope, we must first do a good job in the areas of education and youth development. If we want to tackle the problems of nurturing talents and brain drain in Hong Kong, we must start with improving education. I support the Member’s motion under debate today.

Hong Kong is facing four major population challenges, namely declining birth rate, brain drain, manpower mismatch and ageing population. The first three challenges are closely related to education. The authorities should actively expand the source of overseas students for the higher education sector and create a favourable and sustainable environment to ensure an abundant supply of talent in Hong Kong.

As a matter of fact, I raised a relevant written question to the Secretary for Education in May this year. In his reply, he stated that the number of students from the Mainland, Macao and Taiwan admitted by the eight University Grants Committee (“UGC”)-funded universities and the self-financing post-secondary institutions in each academic year was respectively subject to a quota of 20% and 10% of the total approved student number targets, but there was no quota restriction on the admission of other students to self-financing sub-degree and undergraduate programmes. The authorities must understand that such unreasonable restrictions are tantamount to closing the doors to high-quality talents and stifling the development of tertiary institutions, especially self-financing institutions.

Let us take a look at Guangdong Province, the most vibrant area in the neighbouring regions. There are about 770 000 potential university students in the area per year, and not all of them can enter Peking University or Tsinghua University. If 1% to 2% of such potential students come to Hong Kong to pursue further education, Hong Kong will be in a better position to “compete for talents”, and the local institutions will be able to fully utilize their strengths and make better use of their teaching resources.

Therefore, I strongly urge the authorities to formulate appropriate policy initiatives as soon as possible to support the development of self-financing institutions. The overly-stringent Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance should be further amended to keep pace with the times and abandon protectionism. The Government should also, with reference to the measures adopted by Macao and other regions, strengthen its efforts in encouraging self-financing institutions to operate undergraduate programmes without imposing restrictions on the admission of non-local students to self-financing sub-degree and undergraduate programmes.

I also urge the authorities to review the distribution of student places in the programmes offered by the eight UGC-funded universities so that the distribution of school places can expeditiously correspond to the industries which are experiencing acute shortages of manpower. On the other hand, it is necessary to streamline the administration by removing excessive and unreasonable restrictions, enabling self-financing institutions to promptly offer programmes in appropriate disciplines to replenish the reserve talent pools for emerging industries in Hong Kong.

President, I so submit.

MS NIXIE LAM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. The Chief Executive has earlier delivered his first Policy Address, which covers many issues that are of great public interest, demonstrating the new-term Government's governance acumen and its determination to meet obstacles and difficulties head-on, especially on how to step up efforts in economic development and improve people's livelihood. Many people, especially young people, have told me that they can envisage hope for a promising future and are willing to pull together to give new impetus to the future of Hong Kong.

In the important speech delivered on 1 July, General Secretary XI Jinping particularly stressed that "Hong Kong will prosper only when its young people thrive" and called on the Hong Kong community to show more care for young people. In the report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, it was also emphasized that the work concerning young people should be regarded as a matter of strategic significance. I believe all these have brought out a message that youth policy, which has seen bottleneck in the past, will undergo dramatic changes fundamentally. Looking at this year's Policy Address, youth policy is not merely mentioned in one paragraph but elaborated comprehensively. The Youth Development Blueprint ("Blueprint"), which is scheduled to be announced at the end of this year, is even a milestone that I have long been looking forward to earnestly since I have engaged in youth work. Recently, I have attended quite a lot of youth sharing sessions, where everyone has exchanged views frankly and communicated freely, from their own development to their expectations for the future, from sharing the problems they have encountered to offering suggestions sincerely on how to make improvement and pave a better and smoother path for other young people. I believe their heartfelt opinions will be well reflected in the Blueprint, and we can better outline the ideas, goals and actions for youth work with this Blueprint in place.

I hope that by making the best use of the opportunity of the Blueprint, the SAR Government can strengthen interdepartmental connections and genuinely coordinate issues falling under separate policy areas in the past so as to promote the implementation of youth policies more effectively, enable young people to develop positive values, enhance their national pride and sense of being the masters so that each of them can truly "take up the banner and do great things" for our country and for Hong Kong.

Young people will have confidence in future if they can see opportunities and hopes. We must first re-examine the meaning and positioning of education and then align it properly with industries and talent cultivation. Young people have spent their youthful years in exchange for professional knowledge, so there

should be channels for them to apply what they have learned to unleash their potential. For many years in the past, I have been strongly advocating the need to conduct manpower projections so as to better anticipate manpower shortage and grasp the realities, which would then be conducive to solving the problem of local talent mismatch through education reform. I am glad to see that this Policy Address has responded by undertaking to commence a new round of manpower projections for the purpose of diagnosing problems and identifying the best solutions, which will provide a more scientific basis for decision-making on education and talent training. While thanking the SAR Government for its positive response, I would also like to suggest that the Government should strengthen its cooperation with stakeholders in different sectors to deepen the development of Hong Kong by deciding on the types of core industries to be developed in each of the “eight centres” more precisely and specifically. Only in this way can our young people avoid going astray and have a clear direction for career development.

The Policy Address has also mentioned that the Government will promote vocational and professional education and training by adopting the strategy of fostering industry-institution collaboration and diversified development so as to nurture multi-skilled talents. I think this initiative is commendable and effective in bridging the gap between education and the job market. As a matter of fact, many students in Hong Kong are not exposed to too many job types during their school years, which may amount to only 10-odd job types as observed, thus undesirably limiting their vision in exploring their personal development potential. Moreover, the Government should give some exploratory introduction on occupations and job types to students during their primary and secondary school years so as to enhance their knowledge and broaden their job choices.

Take the shipping industry as an example. Although it is currently one of the four pillar industries in Hong Kong, it may have been labelled as a “sunset industry” in the eyes of many parents, who always advise their children to refrain from acquainting themselves with this industry. I have recently discussed the prospects of the shipping industry with members of the trade. In fact, the industry encompasses high value-added job types as well, such as maritime law, marine insurance, ship finance, dispute resolution and “Smart Port”. All these job types require a large number of legal, insurance, accounting and technology professionals. In recent years, the Government has allocated additional resources to the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund on many occasions to support the shipping industry in training high-end talents. Yet, many young people are not aware of this policy at all, reflecting that there is still room for improvement in the

promotion and publicity of the policy. I suggest that the Government should actively collaborate with industry stakeholders and academic institutions, make good use of historical and public education resources, and take the initiative to visit schools and explain the development prospects of the industry to students so as to address the phenomenon of information asymmetry and ensure students understand the industry's different scopes of work as early as possible. At the same time, the Government needs to be more open-minded in formulating the industry blueprint and explore ways to strengthen the linkages among various industries in order to provide young people with more career ladders.

In addition to young people studying in schools, the authorities should also attach importance to the development needs of young working talents. Taking the emerging fintech industry as an example, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau has released the Policy Statement on Development of Virtual Assets in Hong Kong, which shows an open and friendly attitude towards virtual assets. However, do existing financial talents in Hong Kong possess cross-disciplinary capabilities, especially professional skills in the area of technology? Having said that, not only do young people need to actively develop their own capabilities, but the Government also needs to work with the industry to develop a broad strategy to upgrade and restructure the working population, as well as a mechanism to encourage continuing education, so as to motivate working youth to actively prepare themselves to catch up with the development trend of the industry and equip themselves with diversified skills to enhance their competitiveness.

I would also like to talk about ethnic minority (“EM”) youth in Hong Kong. According to the 2021 Population Census, the population of EM youth in Hong Kong exceeds 270 000, of whom nearly 40 000 are aged between 15 and 34, reflecting that Hong Kong's young people are characterized by their multicultural backgrounds. If the community makes good use of their cultural strengths, it will bring new impetus to the development of Hong Kong. Although EM youth has long treated Hong Kong as their home, many of them still face manifold difficulties and challenges in getting themselves integrated into the local community, especially in the areas of education and employment. I very much welcome the strengthening of counselling support and services on employment for EMs, as mentioned in the Policy Address, which I believe will provide them with more career choices. It is hoped that the Government will work with more large enterprises to actively promote cultural diversity and inclusiveness as well as related measures so as to create an even more friendly working environment for EMs.

Meanwhile, given that the current education policy cannot meet the learning needs of EM youth, their further studies and career development are often limited since they are unable to master Chinese well. I suggest that the Bureau should continue to review the education policy for EM schools and strengthen the provision of support for these schools while encouraging employers to provide more job vacancies suitable for EM applicants by relaxing the requirement on Chinese language proficiency so as to enhance their employment opportunities.

In order for young people to show commitment to the community and Hong Kong, it is necessary to build up their sense of belonging and engagement, as well as mutual trust between them and the Government. The SAR Government has launched the Youth Participation Initiative to engage more young people to participate in public affairs so that they can better understand the operation of the Government on the one hand, while the Government can better gauge the pulse of young people on the other. I believe that it will become an incubator for Hong Kong to cultivate talents to participate in public affairs, thereby nurturing more successors and advocates who will uphold the policy of “one country, two systems”.

To nurture successors to uphold the policy of “one country, two systems”, we need to establish a correct sense of nationhood and global perspective for young people, guide them to understand the development trend of our country and the rest of the world and enhance their national pride and sense of being the masters. The Policy Address has devoted considerable coverage to national education and education on the Constitution and the Basic Law. While the policy direction is commendable, we need to examine the details of policy implementation if we have to ensure the faithful implementation of the policy.

In the past, the SAR Government did a good deal of work in promoting national education. However, given that Hong Kong and the Mainland differ significantly in understanding and interpreting some of the terms used in national education, it may not be easy to grasp the meanings of some theoretical and conceptual political terms, and there even arises the problem of “explaining concepts with concepts”, so that many people sometimes do not understand what is being said, and the effectiveness of national education is thus greatly undermined. Therefore, when promoting national education, the Government needs to explain national issues in a way that the general public can easily understand. Meanwhile, it should also capitalize on the rich historical and cultural resources in Hong Kong by incentivizing students to go out of the

classrooms to visit historical monuments. By immersing in the historical settings, students may experience and learn by themselves, realizing that they are intertwined inextricably with the national history and culture. In so doing, our national education can be more effectively conducted among students.

We are now in the face of profound changes unseen in a century, and the international political environment is intricate and volatile. As an externally-oriented economy, Hong Kong has the distinctive advantages of enjoying the strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world. As Hong Kong enters the post-epidemic period and gradually resumes its connection with the outside world, we need to tell good stories of Hong Kong more proactively, ride on its soft and hard strengths and precisely manifest Hong Kong's current situation to reshape its image. In order to promote Hong Kong's advantages to the outside world, getting the community involved is very important too. Apart from urging relevant departments and overseas offices to step up publicity, the Government should also mobilize community groups, especially outstanding youth from different sectors, to publicize Hong Kong's achievements to the world. Moreover, the Government should empower young people to develop broader international perspectives so that they may stand taller and see further, firmly uphold national pride and have stronger confidence in "one country, two systems".

Lastly, in response to my long-standing concern about the odour nuisance at the Tsuen Wan waterfront, I would like to thank the Bureau for setting an improvement target in the Policy Address: reducing the pollution load at identified highly polluted outfalls along Victoria Harbour, including Tsuen Wan, by 50% by end-2024. I think the Government's commitment to the public deserves our recognition.

President, 2022 is an extraordinary year for Hong Kong, during which we usher in the 25th anniversary of its return to the motherland. Over the past 25 years, Hong Kong has gone through an unusual journey. With the backing of our country, we continue to forge ahead and ride out the storm, only for the sake of leaving our footprints in history when its giant wheel advances by contributing our strengths to our country. I believe that we, be it the governing team of the sixth-term SAR Government or each and every one of us in this Chamber, have a sincere heart to strive unremittingly to unveil a new chapter for Hong Kong as we advance from stability to prosperity. I believe the whole range of initiatives in the Policy Address can boost the community's confidence in the future of Hong Kong.

I sincerely hope that the various proposals put forth in the Policy Address can be expeditiously implemented so as to continuously fuel the development of Hong Kong, injecting new impetus and bringing new hopes to Hong Kong.

With these remarks, President, I support the Motion of Thanks on the 2022 Policy Address.

MR DENNIS LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, this debate session covers the policy area of education. I notice that the Secretary for Education, on various occasions, has used a four-character Chinese phrase (“科教興國”) (meaning “invigorating China through science and education” in English) to explain her education policy. The Chinese character “科” refers to promoting STEAM education. The Chinese character “教” refers to enhancing the professionalism of teachers. The Chinese character “興” refers to nurturing talents by promoting vocational and professional education and supporting post-secondary education. The Chinese character “國” refers to strengthening national education.

With this vision before our eyes, it is most important that we reform our school curricula. At present, our primary school curriculum includes mainly Chinese, English, mathematics and general studies. Science education is subsumed under general studies. If we want to push forward the development of Hong Kong into an international Innovation and Technology (“I&T”) centre, it is of utmost importance to nurture local talents. Therefore, our primary school curriculum should include popular science and innovative technology subjects. The education sector generally agrees that science should be a separate subject. Scientific knowledge should be taught systematically in primary schools and then promoted and continued in secondary schools and universities. Only then will the present situation of the I&T talent shortage be remedied. There will then be no need to rely on help from outside. In an international environment that is changing so tremendously, self-sufficiency is the safest and most stable thing for us.

Next is value education, which includes life education, national education and national security education. I notice that, at present, we have moral education and civic education committees set up in most of our schools. I expect the Education Bureau to review the names of the relevant working groups or committees in primary and secondary schools and change the word “civic” to

“national” in order to strengthen our identity as Chinese nationals and further strengthen Hong Kong people’s knowledge of and identification with our nation.

The Chinese culture has a history of over 5 000 years. There is an inseparable link between Chinese culture and the geographical environment of China. I suggest that the Education Bureau should take a further step and consider how we can incorporate Chinese geographical history into the subject of Chinese history so that students will learn about Chinese culture and history from a more holistic and comprehensive perspective. This will be conducive to advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and better telling the stories of China and Hong Kong.

As for vocational and professional education, our country pays close attention to the progress of global development and the actual development needs of the Mainland. Actually, in order to do our youth work well, it is necessary to find “openings” for them. “Openings” are not necessarily academic. Vocational and professional opportunities are also good openings. In this connection, the revised Vocational Education Law was introduced by our country on 1 May exactly for the purpose of securing development openings. This is also in line with the theme of “better serving our people and better developing Hong Kong” of the Policy Address. Therefore, I expect the Education Bureau to strengthen the development of vocational and professional education and review the Diploma of Secondary Education Examination. When implementing national education or Liberal Studies education, the Education Bureau should also strengthen the training of specialists in the vocations and professions and further strengthen the nurturing of talents in science, arts and commercial subjects. Only then shall we have good human resource policy planning in Hong Kong.

All occupations and trades need young people. They all need new blood. There should not be a manpower shortage anymore when wages in all occupations and trades are driven up to high levels by generous offers from desperate employers. Moreover, all primary and secondary schools need to strengthen the development of parent-teacher associations and strengthen parent education. We shall be on the right track if we can thoroughly change our citizen’s perceptions of vocational and professional education.

For some time in the past, we were all concerned about the developments of the universities. I notice that the compositions of the councils/courts of different universities in Hong Kong are all different. Universities are where specialist

talents are trained. Besides knowledge, moral education should be given more emphasis. Universities should, of course, enjoy autonomy in management. However, as they use public funds, monitoring and management are major issues. I hope that the Government could examine and revise the compositions/structures of the councils/courts of all universities. As President XI Jinping says, we need to carry out self-reform and make continuous improvements in order to meet the goals of our work and achieve the anticipated results.

Hong Kong practises the policy of “one country, two systems” under which “Hong Kong people administer Hong Kong” with a high degree of autonomy. In view of this, should we carry out timely reviews of the compositions of the high-level management of various organizations? Should these organizations be managed by people of Hong Kong and Chinese nationals to fulfil the principle of “Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong”? For example, the University Grants Committee (“UGC”) and the Research Grants Council (“RGC”) over-emphasized internationalization and linking up with the world in the past. To a certain extent, foreign nationals make up the majority of these two organizations. However, we must firmly guard the safety bottom line. I also believe that there are enough capable and experienced scholars from our Chinese community to sit on UGC and RGC, making sure that the developments of the universities are completely in line with the safe development and interests of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong has transited from chaos to order and is now in the new stage of advancing from stability to prosperity. I expect the Government to be able to speed up the development of a modernized team of civil servants to carry out the Chief Executive’s tasks, bring new opportunities and new hopes to Hong Kong citizens from all walks of life, and give them a sense of gain, a sense of security and a sense of well-being.

For some time in the past, the Policy Bureaux have come to the Legislative Council to explain their policies. In particular, I would like to thank the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer for accepting the suggestion put forward by me and the education sector on the setting up of an innovation and technology learning centre to bring new training opportunities to primary and secondary school students.

With these remarks, President, I support the Motion.

DR TIK CHI-YUEN (in Cantonese): President, our years-long education reform

aims to achieve happy learning. This is both our ideal and goal. Let us imagine the beautiful learning conditions and environment we shall have if our children can go to school happily every day, if they can participate in various extra-curricular activities, finish their homework, come home and do some revision in the afternoon, and if, in the evening, they can enjoy parent-child time with their fathers and mothers after dinner and listen to stories from the Bible before going to bed.

However, the reality is that our children have to attend classes at school the whole day. They have to go to tutorial classes after school. When they come home after the tutorial classes, their parents have to check their homework and ask them to improve their work and correct errors. In the late evening, they are still reviewing learning materials to prepare for dictations and tests on the following day. The next morning, the parents and the children will all be very tired, but the children still have to go to school. Is this happy learning?

Once, when we discussed this issue at a meeting of the Panel on Education, the Secretary for Education remarked that parents were probably too demanding if they required poor homework to be erased and re-done. There are indeed many “helicopter parents” (or “monster parents”) in Hong Kong, but why have they been turned into “monsters”? This is because they are in a highly competitive education environment. When their children’s homework is poor, they will receive phone calls from the teachers to draw their attention to the matter. When their children fail in dictation, they will also receive phone calls asking them to push their children to work harder because their performance is unsatisfactory. Under such circumstances, all parents are turned into “monster parents”. The only solution to this is to leave Hong Kong and study abroad. In fact, I find that many of my friends have done so. When the children studied in Hong Kong, the parents and the children were all with mournful faces. Once the children had gone overseas for their studies, they found themselves in a different world. Is the environment the cause of the problem? Or, are the “monster parents” the cause of this kind of environment?

All of us, including the Under Secretary for Education, are parents and guardians. I believe we all have a good understanding of this kind of situation. I hope the Under Secretary and the Secretary can have more empathy in this matter. We have discussed this matter in the Council and on many other occasions, but we have not found a way to improve the situation. I hope the Under Secretary can bring this message back to his bureau and ask all of his colleagues to bear this

matter in mind, try their best to deal with this matter, and create an educational environment in which our children can go to school happily every day.

The Policy Address proposes many education measures. I do not know how much these measures will help our children. If, one day, you can help the children and let them finish their homework in less than an hour, I believe the children and their guardians will all be very happy because they will then be able to throw off the shackles of their homework.

With these remarks, President, I support the Motion.

MR YIM KONG (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. In his first Policy Address, Chief Executive John LEE has devoted up to 2 896 words to outline a clear direction for youth development, including as many as 46 practicable measures, and put forward a number of forward-looking development strategies in respect of youth education, employment and home ownership. It fully demonstrates that the current-term Government attaches great importance to the sustainable development and upward mobility of young people so that they can see the upward mobility opportunities as well as a bright outlook for the sustainable and stable development of our society. This Policy Address can show the whole community, especially the young generation, the opportunities for development, which deserves our recognition and support.

On 1 July this year, President XI Jinping pointed out in his important speech at the meeting celebrating the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland that "we must give special love and care to young people" so that "all of Hong Kong's young people will devote themselves to building Hong Kong into a better home, writing a rewarding chapter of their life with impassioned youth".

In the Policy Address, the Chief Executive stresses that young people are Hong Kong's future. The Government attaches great importance to education and youth development and will create opportunities for young people to develop and flourish, as well as nurture a new generation of young people with an affection for our country and for Hong Kong and equipped with global perspectives and who would contribute to the country and the city. All sectors of society hope that the Hong Kong Youth Festival to be launched annually starting next year, will invite different sectors of the community to jointly organize a wide spectrum of activities for engaging and inspiring the youth and helping them develop their potential,

enhance their knowledge, and strengthen their exchanges for collaborative development. Moreover, it is hoped that the Government will regularize the Great Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme and encourage participating enterprises to recruit university graduates to work in the Greater Bay Area (“GBA”), and will continue to provide the young people of Hong Kong with entrepreneurial support and incubation services in GBA through the funding schemes under the Youth Development Fund, helping them to address initial capital needs for their business. In this regard, Chinese enterprises in Hong Kong can provide a good platform for Hong Kong youth to develop in GBA. Chinese enterprises are willing to continue to provide more career development opportunities for Hong Kong youth aspiring to develop in the Mainland and are willing to work together with Hong Kong youth to help them realize their youthful dreams amid their integration into the country’s overall development.

The next five years are important for Hong Kong to advance from stability to prosperity, break new ground and achieve another leap forward, as well as the best time for Hong Kong youth to ride on the “high-speed train” of national development. The Policy Address advocates the adoption of a multi-pronged and coordinated approach in schools to step up the promotion of national education so as to strengthen students’ sense of national identity and national pride and raise their awareness to safeguard the national security of our country.

The Government should promote national education so that Hong Kong youth can bear in mind and care about our motherland and interweave their destiny tightly with that of our country. Hong Kong youth are sturdy only when our country is strong; Hong Kong youth will prosper only when our nation thrives. The Government should actively provide guidance for Hong Kong youth to develop a sense of belonging towards the country and an affection for the Chinese people, and to realize the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation through continuous learning and advancement.

As Hong Kong is still focusing its efforts on combating the epidemic, the Chinese medicine (“CM”) culture, which is deemed to be the Chinese cultural legacy, should be promoted on all fronts. The important role of traditional CM in preventing COVID-19 has been widely recognized by Hong Kong people and the Government. Therefore, the SAR Government should capitalize on the opportunity by promoting CM culture more extensively in Hong Kong, attracting CM talents to work in Hong Kong, and promoting integrated Chinese-Western outpatient service. It should provide more CM outpatient services in communities

where many elderly people reside, especially in the old districts, such as Wan Chai, Kwun Tong and Sham Shui Po. In so doing, more CM practitioners can reach out further to the community, thus laying a solid groundwork for the resumption of quarantine-free travel arrangements with the Mainland.

President, “a steed can run a thousand miles, but without a rider, no direction is in sight; a man’s ambitions can be high like the sky, but without fortune, nothing is achievable”. The “rider” that a steed needs is our national policy, the support rendered by the central authorities and the law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, while “fortune” refers to the huge opportunity presented to Hong Kong by the Chinese nation’s great rejuvenation in the course of Chinese modernization. All sectors of the community should make concerted efforts to seize the “fortune” together and act as a good “rider” so that the “steed” (i.e. Hong Kong) may run faster and serve the public and the country better. Together, let us start a new chapter for Hong Kong’s development.

With these remarks, I support the Motion of Thanks. Thank you, President.

MR TOMMY CHEUNG (in Cantonese): President, I would like to express my views on three issues in this debate session, namely the teaching profession, the healthcare profession, as well as youth development which is a current hot topic in the community.

Firstly, regarding the teaching profession, I have earlier suggested that a three-step roadmap be adopted to enhance the quality of teachers. The first step is to ensure the compliance of textbooks. Then, as a second step, the current permanent registration system for teachers should be abolished as it takes away their motivation to seek continuous improvement. Finally, the third step involves the installation of CCTVs in classrooms to ensure that teachers teach their students according to textbooks.

Ensuring textbook compliance is relatively easy. As I have suggested earlier, all teaching materials (including textbooks) on the national education subject involving sensitive political issues, such as our nation’s development, national security and the Basic Law, should be coordinated by the Education Bureau to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the relevant contents. Regarding the suggestion on renewal of teacher registration, it is never meant to be disrespectful to the teaching profession. Instead, the aim is to encourage teachers

to pursue further studies and help weed out those so-called teachers who do not seek improvement but teach perfunctorily or worse still, instil bad values in their students. We must stop these “swindlers” and avoid putting more students under their harmful influence. President, not many professions in Hong Kong adopt a permanent registration system. In other words, obtaining registration does not mean that no further renewal of registration is required. In fact, not many countries around the world have the same permanent registration system for teachers as in Hong Kong. Hence, I consider that this system must be changed.

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

The third step is about installing CCTVs in classrooms. In fact, whenever I make this suggestion, I would always repeat the same argument. When it comes to monitoring the performance of teachers, it would be useless to simply rely on inspections made by the Education Bureau or the school management because once a teacher spots the inspectors coming from a distance, he will become vigilant and stop making inappropriate remarks. Therefore, if we have good textbooks and we want to ensure that teachers teach according to textbooks, I think it is only natural to have CCTVs installed in classrooms. The intention is never to challenge the teaching profession.

In fact, how can such a move infringe on teachers’ professionalism? All class recordings are open data, and most schools with some sort of video playback system on campus could probably comply with the requirement. Moreover, the recordings can be used as evidence to protect the teachers if they become a subject of false accusations or a complaint due to misunderstanding. A similar practice has already been adopted as early as in the 1960s in the last century. When I studied in the United States back then, all classes were recorded, and students could borrow the clips from the library for review. Similarly, class recordings can be a useful learning tool in Hong Kong as parents and tutors can have a better understanding of the students’ learning progress and help them review the lessons taught.

Secondly, regarding the healthcare profession, the Liberal Party and I have always demanded that more competent doctors be attracted to practise in Hong Kong through the “importation” of talents and relaxation of registration requirements. Over the years, our calls never stop because we firmly believe that

it can genuinely help resolve the chronic and acute manpower shortage faced by the healthcare sector in Hong Kong as a result of increasing population growth and social needs. I have some figures to share. As we may often hear, there are only 1.9 doctors per 1 000 population in Hong Kong, while the figure is 2.4 in Singapore. In the Mainland, a target of 2.9 doctors per 1 000 population was set in the National 14th Five-year Plan, with the hope of further raising it to 3.4 by the end of the Five-year Plan. All these figures show how serious our manpower shortage is. I would like to remind Members that back in the 1990s when we could admit doctors from Commonwealth countries, private hospitals had a hard time maintaining their operations because doctors in public hospitals were providing good and fast service at a low cost.

Therefore, we are very glad that the Government finally amended the legislation last year, which has resulted in the first batch of overseas doctors coming to practise in Hong Kong without taking a licensing examination. Thereafter, we scored another success as the list of recognized medical qualifications eventually included those awarded by renowned medical schools in the Mainland. As a result, their graduates can also come to practise in Hong Kong without taking a licensing examination. For the sake of rationalizing the arrangements to further improve the people's well-being, I am actively seeking the Government's agreement to include professorial doctors serving in these Mainland medical schools in the relevant list so that they can also come to practise in Hong Kong. Given that these professorial doctors are well-experienced teaching staff in the selected renowned medical schools in the Mainland, it would be most unreasonable if their students, or even the students of their students, can come to practise in Hong Kong while they are excluded and their expertise ignored.

Finally, let me say a few words about youth development. The Liberal Party supports all the Government's ongoing and planned programmes to promote youth development, including the Strive & Rise Programme. This programme, which is also supported by the Liberal Party, represents a milestone in the tripartite collaboration between the Government, the business sector and the community. But unfortunately, I do not know if we were late in enrolment or what, but we were not allocated a quota. But that exactly gives us the opportunity to consider the need for a similar programme for senior secondary students. In this connection, the Liberal Party is working with a non-profit-making organization to see whether the same benefits offered by the Strive & Rise Programme can be provided for senior secondary students. We will try to work with three or four mentees and

identify ways to share our experience with them. Moreover, as they are older students, we can make arrangements for them to work in different sectors as summer interns so that they can explore their personal interests while contributing to the community.

Deputy President, I so submit.

MR TANG FEI (in Cantonese): Deputy President, as pointed out in the report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, we must “[develop] education that meets the people’s expectations. Education is of critical importance to the future of our country ... What kind of people we should cultivate, how, and for whom—these are the fundamental issues that education must address. The most basic aim of education is to foster virtue.” For the Hong Kong SAR, ultimately, it means developing education in accordance with the principle of “one country, two systems”. Incidentally, this is what we at the Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers have always advocated.

All in all, education is about nurturing talents with both virtue and ability. In Hong Kong, cultivating “virtue” starts with value education, and developing the “ability” of our talents means enhancing their competitiveness. In this regard, our values must be rooted in “one country”.

To be fair, the Education Bureau of the SAR Government has been working tirelessly and diligently to promote national education, national security education, the rule of law education, etc., in order to make up for time lost in taking forward these initiatives. This is commendable. I hope the Education Bureau can expedite the implementation of various measures, especially the deployment of necessary teaching resources, because good teachers are pivotal to the teaching of good teachers. As other major subjects are taught by specialized teachers, specialized teaching must also be implemented for the rule of law education, national security education and national education. We must ensure the provision of professional teachers for these subjects.

As education is an important indicator of and testimony to national soft power, Hong Kong SAR, being an international metropolis under the rule of “One China”, should and deserves to have world-class education. To this end, Hong Kong must develop into an international and regional education hub. Rather than something new, such a direction for education development has been advocated

time and again in the past. To a certain extent, the same spirit is also embodied in this year's Policy Address.

Deputy President, Hong Kong's basic education, which is fraught with problems like an increasing shortage of students, as well as the resulting merger and reprovisioning of schools, cannot buttress the development of a robust higher education sector with world-class universities. We should open up our education system, and I mean not only in respect of the admission of non-local university students by a ratio of 8:2 or 9:1, and so on and so forth. I mean, we should proactively consider the same course of action for our basic education. Singapore, our friendly competitor, not only provides quality education services for the teaching of local students and the training of local talents but also formulates a set of comprehensive and complementary policies for the admission of students from Southeast Asian countries and the Mainland. It is truly a case of "attracting the brightest students from all over" and "attracting the brightest talents from all over".

Even in the faraway United Kingdom ("UK"), a policy entitled "International Education Strategy: global potential, global growth" was formulated in March 2019 to provide explicitly for incorporating education exports as an integral part of its economic and trade policy, while designating ASEAN countries as a key market for education exports. The policy, underpinned by comprehensive supporting measures, as well as requirements for regular review and reporting on an annual basis regarding its implementation progress, is not only bold but ambitious. Obviously, with its education exports, UK's values are spread globally to help nurture elites that can benefit the UK as a whole.

Given Hong Kong's relative geographical proximity to the ASEAN countries, as well as its long-standing assertion to be the "super-connector" for the Belt and Road Initiative, how can it lose out in the important policy area of education? Developing a good education sector in Hong Kong and promoting its international standing so that Hong Kong SAR's education services can take off and go global is, in itself, the best way to tell a good story of China. Lest we forget, education is one of the most important indicators of a nation's soft power.

Let me now turn to our vocational education. The recent launch of a project by the Education Bureau to offer career-oriented applied degree programmes is a pleasant surprise. Though just a pilot project representing a small and cautious initial step forward, it remains a novel attempt with ground-breaking significance

and is worthy of commendation. This is exactly what should be done to put things on the right track so that, once again, equal emphasis is placed on both academic and vocational education. The initiative is hence worthy of further promotion and support, especially when Hong Kong is striving for economic restructuring with the development of innovation and technology (“I&T”), and many industries and sectors are facing severe manpower shortages. It would be most important to expedite the revival of vocational education throughout the education cycle and across different levels of the Qualifications Framework ranging from secondary to post-secondary education to cover secondary curriculum, as well as both degree and non-degree courses extensively.

Moreover, the Education Bureau should proactively seek closer collaboration with the industrial and commercial sector, the I&T sector and the labour sector so as to accurately grasp the technical training needs of different kinds and levels of talent in various industries and sectors. On the one hand, it will bring benefits to the community, not only in terms of spurring I&T and economic development but also formulating more targeted manpower training programmes to support Hong Kong’s re-industrialization. On the other hand, young people can also benefit from a more diversified career path. We must strive to change undesirable social norms and conventions that constrain youth development, in particular, the outdated concept of “blue-collar workers not having a bright future”.

Deputy President, I so submit.

DR HOEY SIMON LEE (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. It has been 20 years since the first Chief Executive, Mr TUNG Chee-hwa, put forth the concept of a Chinese medicine (“CM”) port, which shows his foresight.

Today, I would like to talk about the findings of research on CM development undertaken by my policy research centre. Chinese herbal medicine is one of the keys to CM development. In recent years our country has been striving to develop CM. In the Development Plan for Traditional Chinese Medicine during the 14th Five-Year Plan Period promulgated in June, it is mentioned that “we will promote the modernization and industrialization of Chinese medicine, and promote its quality development and globalization, so as to provide strong support for comprehensively promoting the development of a healthy China and better protecting people’s health”. As for Hong Kong and Macao, the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao

Greater Bay Area also mentions that the two special administrative regions should give full play to their strengths in the CM industry, deepen cooperation in various fields, and work with Mainland research institutions to establish internationally recognized quality standards for CM products.

The vision of a Greater Bay Area trading platform for Chinese herbal medicines is exactly to build a Chinese herbal medicine trading centre with international influence and credibility and, through Hong Kong's international vision and strength as a global platform, support the national strategy of developing the CM industry and promote its internationalization and standardization. The functions of the trading centre and platform should cover the traceability, testing, verification and settlement of Chinese herbal medicine products and technological applications such as the Internet and blockchain to enhance the security, convenience and trading efficiency of the Chinese herbal medicine platform. The trading of Chinese herbal medicines, accreditation of relevant organizations, product testing and traceability, trade settlement, international publicity and exchange, etc., should be brought together to achieve the goal of “being based in Hong Kong, relying on the Mainland, and going global”.

Hong Kong is a fertile ground for the development of the Chinese herbal medicine industry. Hong Kong's dynamism and economic freedom, its open and transparent business environment, and its internationally compatible legal and regulatory systems are all conducive to its development as an offshore trading centre for CM products. Hong Kong also has a solid business foundation in CM research and testing, and this, coupled with the fact that the Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards (“HKCMMS”) are closer to international standards, enables it to have the potential to develop CM testing and certification services for the international market.

However, the fertile ground needs to be cultivated as well. At present, there are some problems in Hong Kong, such as the lack of professional talents, inadequate policies, inadequate capital and management systems, and limited scale of the overall market. For this reason, regarding the trading platform for Chinese herbal medicines, we should seize the development opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and support the Belt and Road Initiative, with “fairness, independence, integrity and cooperation” as our belief and “promoting the standardization, modernization and internationalization of the CM industry” as our objective. We will leverage the advantages of Hong Kong in the CM industry chain to create a reliable, safe and efficient trading environment

and build a hub and one-stop trading platform for the CM industry in the Greater Bay Area.

Nowadays, the varying quality of Chinese herbal medicines used by various pharmaceutical companies—I am certainly referring to CM companies—has greatly increased the overall production cost. A trading platform for Chinese herbal medicines would be an entry point and contributes greatly to the development of the CM industry in Hong Kong. The value of CM is becoming more and more visible to the world, and in the face of the epidemic, many countries and regions have developed a number of standards. In addition to Chinese national standards and HKCMMS, the United States, the European Union, and Japan have also set standards for Chinese herbal medicines, thereby promoting the development of the CM industry.

Countries around the world are now competing for the right to set standards and prices for Chinese herbal medicines. If you have a chance, visit Kew Gardens in London to see the depth of work being done on CM there. Only when you have the right to set standards can you have the right to set prices. Since Hong Kong has favourable conditions, we should work together with our sister cities in the Greater Bay Area to set standards and prices for Chinese herbal medicines, for the development of CM and for the inheritance of the treasures left to us by our ancestors.

I support the promotion of CM development. With these remarks, I support the Motion of Thanks on the Policy Address.

MR KENNETH LEUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, youth gives rise to infinite hope, and young people are the creators of a bright future. The vitality of youth has always been the strength of the Chinese nation to stride forward bravely. Every young person is as good as our treasure, so it is of utmost importance to help young people achieve upward mobility.

I am very grateful to Chief Executive John LEE for placing great emphasis on youth development. In this year's Policy Address, there is a specific chapter on youth with a series of youth policies formulated, covering STEAM education, vocational and professional education and training, youth housing needs and their participation in community development, demonstrating the SAR Government's determination to nurture young people for them to develop and flourish. The Youth Development Blueprint ("Blueprint"), which is to be announced at the end

of the year, will serve as the SAR Government's first major guiding document concerning youth development work, outlining the vision, directions and major work areas of youth development work.

In order to assist the Government in formulating the Blueprint, over the past month or so, the Youth Development Commission met with young people from different sectors and also stakeholders engaged in youth work to listen to their views. I am honoured that I have been able to participate in these meetings. During this period, I came to know the teachers and students of the Lutheran School For the Deaf, which deeply impressed me. It is the only special school in Hong Kong that provides education for Primary 1 to Secondary 6 students with hearing impairment. In the school, there are two STEM activity rooms designed for secondary and primary students respectively, and a computer room being converted into an e-sports room. The school has been promoting STEM vigorously as early as six years ago, and its students have reaped numerous awards. There is also a home economics classroom with professional coffee shop equipment and a Western-style bakery counter, and its library is a de facto high-end bookstore. The school has organized coffee-making and floral arrangement classes, aiming to equip students with skills that are conducive to their career development. Although the school principal joined the education sector halfway and does not come from an educational background, he has devoted great efforts to unleashing students' potential and helping them find a way out so as to facilitate students' career planning. The hearing-impaired students are equally well-positioned as their able-bodied counterparts in terms of their knowledge of and preparation for life planning.

In his important speech delivered on 1 July, President XI Jinping reminded us that "we must give special love and care to young people". In the report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, he advised us to "become young people's confidants, advocates, and guides for the future". The Policy Address and the forthcoming Blueprint will launch a broad spectrum of policies to support youth development. Government officials and service providers engaged in youth work should have not only the competence and ability to deliver the targeted results but also a caring heart for young people, just like the principal and teachers of Lutheran School For the Deaf. Only by putting ourselves in students' shoes, understanding the needs of every young person and doing a good job in youth work can we facilitate the diversified development of young people, giving a full play to their strengths, and helping the youth contribute to Hong Kong and our country.

I welcome the proposal in the 2022 Policy Address to deepen the

participation of government departments and civil service grades in youth work, encourage various departments and professional grades in the Government to form youth groups and organize activities regularly and enhance life planning and internship opportunities for members of youth uniformed groups under the disciplined services. I hope that various departments would complete the tasks, not for the purpose of “fulfilling a quota” or doing so in a superficial manner, but would organize in-depth exchange activities by thoroughly understanding young people’s needs in career development in order to achieve a win-win situation. This will not only enhance young people’s understanding of the Government’s many departments and professions but also provide guidance for them to explore their career paths. Meanwhile, it can also become a communication channel between various government departments and young people, helping the Government grasp young people’s views on its policy implementation.

We help young people identify their goals in life first and then provide greater support and assistance to prepare them well to achieve their goals. Hong Kong is facing an ageing population and a declining birth rate. Over the past two years, the workforce has dropped by 140 000, which has affected the economic development of Hong Kong. Under such circumstances, it is all the more vital for us to regard youth work as a strategic task. Only with greater efforts in nurturing young people to flourish can we consolidate and enhance Hong Kong’s competitiveness.

From a macro perspective, the Government has to be aware of the shortage of manpower and skills in Hong Kong, analyse the supply-demand gap of human resources in future, and formulate short-, medium- and long-term strategies more precisely to nurture talents. As to nurturing local talents, the Government should promote cooperation between schools and enterprises to jointly study the training objectives, manpower requirements and teaching content based on the requirements of industrial structure, market demand, etc. For schools, it is essential for them to connect with the market through school-enterprise collaboration and to enhance the calibre of talents in a targeted manner to cope with future development, while students should be given the opportunity to go beyond the classrooms to reach out to different enterprises in helping them to explore their personal interests.

As for working youth aspiring for career transformation, the Government can review various retraining programmes in a timely manner to help them acquire the skills or relevant qualifications required by emerging industries through further education so as to maintain their competitiveness.

Innovation and technology (“I&T”) have become a powerful driver of

today's economy. Technology is the fifth factor of production and has a multiplier effect. The National 14th Five-Year Plan clearly supports Hong Kong's positioning as an International I&T Centre. Hong Kong's next generation must be equipped with digital skills and innovative thinking to meet the job market's future demand for talent. I strongly support this year's Policy Address which stated for the first time to vigorously promote STEAM education in primary and secondary schools by incorporating more learning elements of I&T into the curriculum to build a solid foundation for students. In future, the Government should also strengthen the research and development, application and popularization of educational technology. This will help enhance the efficacy and efficiency of STEAM education and undoubtedly complement the nurturing of I&T talents. It is hoped that the Education Bureau will consider launching more projects and policies on educational technology to enhance its overall usage.

Other than paving the way for I&T, the Government should also provide young people with more development pathways in the Mainland so that they have more options for career development. Over the past decade, our country has made great strides in various development aspects and attained a series of record-breaking achievements. This has provided a lot of opportunities for young people and attracted an increasing number of Hong Kong youth wishing to put their own strengths to the test to go to the Mainland for education, career pursuits, and entrepreneurship. Yet regrettably, the SAR Government's care for them seemingly vanishes once young people cross the border of Hong Kong. For example, the Government often does not have a clear picture of how many Hong Kong youth are living in the Mainland, which cities they have settled in, what they are doing and which industries they are engaged in. The Government knows little about all these. These young people often have to struggle on their own, and even those seeking development in the Mainland by enrolling in government programmes inevitably encounter headwinds.

Take the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme ("the Scheme") as an example. The Scheme mainly looks to enterprises to provide employees with information on working and living in the Mainland. Young people participating in the Scheme told me that some small and medium enterprises simply lack the resources to organize orientation sessions, or the information they provide tends to focus more on work, and the provision of day-to-day assistance is overlooked. Therefore, young people often run into problems before they can settle down.

Speaking of working in the Mainland, many associations of Hong Kong

residents in the Mainland, youth organizations and enthusiastic persons with similar experiences from Hong Kong are actually willing to answer the questions, share experiences with and introduce people they know to young people, but are often unable to reach out to them extensively. I suggest that the Government should, in organizing youth projects on seeking employment, entrepreneurship and education opportunities in the Mainland, allocate more resources for associations of Hong Kong residents in the Mainland and youth organizations to facilitate the provision of youth services. This concept is the same as recruiting “orientation camp facilitators” (commonly known as “Joba” and “Joma” in Cantonese) in universities, which can strengthen the support network for Hong Kong youth in the Mainland. In the long run, the Government should establish contact with participating youth through associations of Hong Kong residents in the Mainland and later invite them to tell good stories by sharing their personal experiences of employment, entrepreneurship and internship from various sectors and trades in different cities, which should be more effective than the current hard-selling approach.

Besides caring for local youth and nurturing them to develop and flourish, the Government should also extend its care and concern to the young people whom we wish to attract to Hong Kong. In the Policy Address, the SAR Government mentions the need to compete for talent. Meanwhile, in an effort to attract more enterprises, investment and talent to Hong Kong, the Government will establish new institutional setups. As we all know, bringing in overseas talents is one of the fastest ways to plug the gap in manpower. Attracting relevant talents with specific skills, knowledge or experience in keen demand in Hong Kong can surely help boost Hong Kong’s competitiveness in a short time. Yet, there are many factors dictating talents’ preference for working location. Some studies point out that on top of remuneration, quality of life also plays a crucial role. Moreover, overseas talents will also take into account the employment and educational needs of their spouses and children, yet the quality of life in Hong Kong and the living support provided to them are inadequate. Compared with our neighbouring regions, the Hong Kong Government indeed has much to do in enhancing its support for overseas talents by catering for their needs in housing, settlement, children’s education, medical care and so on. All such needs should be catered for at the very beginning. High-end talent is an important factor for Hong Kong to maintain its competitiveness, so the Government must increase Hong Kong’s attractiveness in this regard.

Housing is the other difficulty that faces young people, which is also a key

issue for both local youth and overseas talents. The Policy Address has taken care of the housing needs of local young people by providing more land for the Starter Homes projects and expanding the Youth Hostel Scheme (“YHS”), including subsidizing non-governmental organizations to rent hotels and guesthouses for use as youth hostels, thus greatly increasing the number of hostel places to benefit more young people. I hope the Government will launch the second phase of YHS as soon as possible so that young people do not have to wait until they become middle-aged. I also hope it will attach greater importance to the value-added elements of YHS so that it will not only meet the housing needs of young people but also enhance their competitiveness.

As for overseas talents, the Policy Address mentioned refunding the extra stamp duty paid by eligible incoming talents in purchasing residential property in Hong Kong. I further suggest that the Government should draw reference from the InnoCell concept and build a greater variety of talent apartments so as to reduce the living costs of overseas talents.

Lastly, I would like to mention here that we should not leave behind those young people who, having admitted making mistakes, have been penalized. In the past, the learning and employment support provided by the Correctional Services Department mainly targeted inmates with secondary education level. However, at present, many young inmates have attained academic qualifications higher than that, with many even having obtained post-secondary or degree-level qualifications. Thus, I would like to thank the Security Bureau for attaching great importance to the rehabilitation work of young people and for its efforts in helping them pursue post-secondary education, as well as strengthening the psychological and counselling services for prisoners and ex-prisoners so as to guide them back to the right track to make contributions to society.

With the improvement of the electoral system and the full implementation of “patriots administering Hong Kong”, a good executive-legislature relationship has been established in Hong Kong. The governing team of the new-term SAR Government adopts a pragmatic approach to governance, and Members of the Legislative Council are proactive in expressing views. They are all very concerned about youth development and are working together to overcome the hurdles in education, employment, entrepreneurship and home ownership to create opportunities for upward mobility for young people at large. Against the new chapter of good governance, I have full confidence in the development prospects for youth in Hong Kong. I also believe that every young person can play a part

in building a better Hong Kong.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the Motion of Thanks.

DR JOHNNY NG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. Young people are the future of our society. Chapter VII of the first Policy Address of Chief Executive John LEE is entitled “Hong Kong will Prosper Only When its Young People Thrive”, highlighting his concern for the future of the young people of today. General Secretary XI Jinping mentioned his requirements for youth work in the report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. He pointed out that “China’s young people of today are living in a remarkable time. They have an incomparably broad stage on which to display their full talents, and they have incomparably bright prospects of realizing their dreams”. He also pointed out specifically that the Party “should regard our work concerning young people as a matter of strategic significance”, and become their confidants, advocates, and guides for the future. I think the new Policy Address is in line with the requirements of the General Secretary regarding youth policy.

I have always been concerned about youth issues in Hong Kong, and housing is a stumbling block to the upward mobility of young people. I hope that in the next decade, there will be no more children growing up in subdivided units in Hong Kong. The SAR Government should compile statistics on the number of children currently living in subdivided units and build more housing units for these families so as to alleviate the housing difficulties of young people and help address inter-generational poverty.

In the final analysis, the youth problem is closely related to the deep-rooted conflicts in Hong Kong over the years, and it is also a key to Hong Kong’s progress from stability to prosperity. In my opinion, the most fundamental pain point of the youth problem in Hong Kong is that most of the young people in Hong Kong do not have a sense of ownership in integrating into the overall development of the country and building Hong Kong society, and they indirectly feel that the development of the country is irrelevant to them, which over time has led to a sense of ideological alienation and even resistance to the country.

If we were to do a good job in youth work, apart from solving the housing problem, promoting diversified industries, enhancing the motivation for upward mobility and enhancing the sense of social achievement, it is more important to encourage young people to understand the strengths of the country’s system and

the true picture of its development, so as to enhance their sense of identity for participation in building our society.

The SAR Government should let young people know that the Central Government is concerned about Hong Kong and what supportive policies it has provided so as to dispel past misconceptions about the country and enable young people to take the initiative to participate in the overall development of the country, grasp the development opportunities brought about by the 14th Five-Year Plan and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and excel in their own lives and careers.

At the same time, the SAR Government should make use of different platforms to provide more learning opportunities on our country's strengths and international status, including organizing learning and business exchange tours and allowing more young people to participate in various international conferences and activities so that they can tell the good stories of Hong Kong.

In fact, as Hong Kong enjoys the unique advantage of “one country, two systems” and has strong support from the motherland, there is an incomparably broad scope for promoting the upward mobility of young people in Hong Kong. For example, our country has earlier announced the selection of payload specialists in Hong Kong and Macao, giving the young people in Hong Kong the opportunity to fulfil their aerospace dream so that they will not only participate in the astronomical endeavours of the country but also share the pride and achievements of the Chinese nation.

I was so excited to hear the news that I immediately recommended a physically fit young person in my office, aged in the early thirties with a PhD, to apply. I believe that these opportunities will not only enable Hong Kong youth to participate in the astronomical endeavours of the country, enhance the atmosphere for the development of innovation and technology in Hong Kong, and strengthen the motivation of young people to move upward but also help cultivate their patriotic sentiments. The SAR Government can ask our country for more opportunities of this kind to allow the participation of young people and enhance their sense of ownership in the participation process.

Thank you, Deputy President. With these remarks, I support the Motion on the 2022 Policy Address.

MR TONY TSE (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. Deputy

President, I have always been concerned about the environmental hygiene and cityscape of Hong Kong. The current-term Government has, soon after its assumption of office, launched the Government Programme on Tackling Hygiene Black Spots. I, of course, offer my support for the Programme. However, it is inadequate to “clean the streets” only. It should seek to beautify the cityscape as well. Having taken on board my views, the Policy Address has stated that the Government would liven up public space and improve streetscapes.

Regarding the implementation of district minor works projects, I propose that more participation opportunities should be offered for young people, including young professionals from the architectural, surveying, planning and landscape sectors, so that they can give full play to their strengths, thereby enhancing their sense of belonging to the community and to Hong Kong as well. In response, the Policy Address proposes the launching of the “Youth Participation Initiative”, encouraging young people to offer views on community development. This is also praiseworthy, but I hope the relevant projects will be launched soonest possible.

To achieve the goal put forward by President XI, namely, “Hong Kong will prosper only when its young people thrive”, it is essential to bring hope to our young people. Ten years ago, for the purpose of providing hostel units at below-market-rate rentals for young people, the Government funded non-governmental organizations to construct youth hostels. However, the pace of construction is slow, and the supply of these hostel units is also limited. The Government now proposes to rent hotels for use as youth hostels, which is another new attempt. But can it be more creative and consider directly purchasing these hotels under the current market condition? (*The buzzer sounded*) ... Thank you.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Tony TSE, your speaking time is up.

Mrs Regina IP, please speak.

MRS REGINA IP (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. I rise to speak in support of the Motion of Thanks moved by Ms Starry LEE.

This Policy Address, as I already pointed out after its announcement by the

Chief Executive, is very comprehensive in scope and able to answer both the Central Authorities' expectations about Hong Kong and also people's demands on the Government. We also note that ever since its announcement, the heads of different government departments have all been actively pressing ahead with the Chief Executive's policy blueprint, making strenuous and continuous efforts to move forward on their respective tasks so as to tell good stories of Hong Kong about its finance, innovation and technology, youth work and housing. All these efforts merit our commendation.

But, today, I will mainly discuss the part on education. I would think that the attention given to education in this Policy Address, as usual, is rather scant and skin-deep. Like all its predecessors in the past, this Policy Address only gives a mere enumeration of education initiatives, without ever elaborating on the educational rationale behind them. I have been serving the Legislative Council for 14 years. One thing that I find rather disappointing over all these years is that both government officials and Members like very much to talk about resources. This was especially the case with one certain representative of the education sector in the past, as the Deputy President also knows. This representative would talk about resources on every occasion, and in case of any resource reduction, he would keep chiding the Government. He talked as if the allocation of resources would always yield success and enhance the quality of education. But the truth is that money may not necessarily yield success, nor can it always enhance education quality. During the riots in 2019, large numbers of youngsters were misled into breaking the law and even opposing the state, showing that our education system has indeed gone astray or even followed the wrong path. Please let me do a recap here, in the hope of enabling us to avoid any similar mistakes in the future.

First, I think the gravest mistake must be the policy introduced in 2009 by the then government to develop the six industries which Hong Kong enjoys clear advantages. Education was one of these industries, and it has since been developed into an industry. I think this very policy simply puts the cart before the horse because if education is turned into an industry, profits will certainly come to determine what should or should not be done, right? In that case, our society will surely belittle the importance of basic arts and science subjects that cannot yield immediate benefits, right? So, as we can see, only very few DSE candidates take Chinese Culture and basic science subjects. As the Secretary also knows, only 2 000 or so candidates take Chinese Culture. Fortunately, in the aftermath of the 2019 riots, the Education Bureau has finally conducted some serious self-examination in a bid to right the wrongs and make improvements in different

areas. I note that certain changes have been made to our curricula. After browsing through the website of the Bureau, I can notice some corrections to the various curriculum frameworks. I am especially pleased to note that when it comes to students' skills, they no longer keep talking about the "nine generic skills" as they did in the past. I am especially pleased with this, not least because I have long since pointed out that "批判性思考能力" is actually a wrong translation for "critical thinking", one of the "nine generic skills". After my election to the Legislative Council in 2008, I wrote a paper to the Panel on Education (LegCo Paper No. CB(2)222/08-09(01)). In this paper, I point out that "critical thinking" is wrongly translated and that the incorrect translation will mislead young people into thinking that to criticize (批判) is to think (思考), and to think (思考) is to criticize (批判). The new senior secondary academic structure introduced in 2009 eventually produced a whole batch of young people who would hasten to criticize and raise objections without first doing any serious thinking, much to our regret. At the time, the Education Bureau simply turned a deaf ear to my advice. Fortunately, my analysis was supported by Professor Leonard K CHENG of Lingnan University, an educator who maintained that the rendition should be "明辨思考". Yet, for fear of losing face, the Education Bureau officials at the time refused to admit their mistake and simply said that "明辨思考" and "批判性思考" could be used in combination to denote critical thinking. How can they be so muddled? They simply mix up the concepts totally.

When I browse through their website these days, I am glad to see that they have formally recognized the need to promote careful contemplation and discernment among young people. These are precisely the very Confucian virtues that we have been reminded to pursue over the past several thousand years. Dr CHOI is a learned person, so she must also know that the Analects contains quite a few discourses and dialogues on learning. What qualities do we need? The answers are the abilities to discern clearly, inquire probingly, practise sincerely, study broadly and contemplate carefully. Why didn't we teach our students all these abilities much earlier? We should have done so much earlier, right? The "nine generic skills" have turned our young people more and more individualistic, right? Fortunately, at the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, our State President gave us his important words on education: in respect of education, we must consider its goals or the fundamental issues that education must address: what kind of people we should cultivate, how, and for whom. The most basic aim of education is to foster virtue, so the cultivation of people must be rooted in moral training. We will fully implement the Party's educational policy, which has been pursued by our country ever since

Confucius first started to preach his ideas on how to learn. The prevailing educational policy aims to carry out the basic task of fostering virtue through education and nurture a new generation of capable young people with sound moral grounding, intellectual ability, physical vigour, aesthetic sensibility and work skills, who will fully develop socialism and carry forward the socialist cause. Sound moral grounding, intellectual ability, physical vigour, aesthetic sensibility and work skills are very important.

In the past, our education simply laid too much emphasis on individualism, and as we can see, there have been various happenings in society recently, many of which were appalling industrial accidents like the collapse of a giant video panel onto the stage in a concert, or other industrial accidents that should never have happened. I suspect that many such accidents, or even those related to tree inspection, were in fact caused by negligence. And, even in the case of the two recently convicted air crew members, their respective defences were very self-centred in a sense. One claimed that he just wanted to collect a mobile phone for his father, while the other said that he was in a bad mood and needed to chat with his colleagues. Both completely ignored the need to abide by the law. First, they were totally without any law-abiding awareness. Second, they never considered the impact of their individual acts on society. There was no awareness of “being part of society”, nor was there any sense of responsibility. Most importantly, there is no element of encouraging “labour”. Well, as the Secretary said in her reply to me that day, the word “labour” here is in the sense of physical work, not art and craft. And, as I once said, though I am already an older person, I still very much enjoy doing grass-roots manual labour. To me, doing such work is quite rewarding, and I think it is only through “labour” that one can really integrate closely with society.

That is why I am so happy that when mentioning the youth hostel policy, the Government makes it very clear that while youth hostels are provided to young people as material support to help them cope with their problems, the tenants will be required to commit themselves to providing volunteer service. I think in all its future discourses on education, the Government must put greater emphasis on students’ personality development and the enhancement of their moral conduct; otherwise, all will be in vain no matter how academically brilliant they may be. I actually quite appreciate certain parts of the Policy Address, one example being the strategy of fostering industry-institution collaboration and diversified development to promote vocational and professional education and training and to nurture talents with diversified skills.

The Government has been talking about the promotion of vocational

education for many years, but no obvious results have been achieved so far. The Secretary should also know that many industries, such as vehicle maintenance, aircraft maintenance and lift maintenance, are all facing a manpower shortage, or a severe manpower shortage, to be exact. But many young people still think that entering university is the only avenue and thus refuse to receive vocational education. The promotion work in this regard has not been very successful, and the Government now wants to do it earlier in schools. Yet, I notice that the subjects of Applied Learning (“ApL”), I mean the ApL Subjects of the Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (DSE), are ... My findings about some ApL subjects are kind of funny—Deputy President, please let me check the statistics first as there have been some updates—Well, for certain ApL Subjects under Category B, there are either no or just very few candidates, and I am going to read out some figures to the Secretary. Looking at the numbers of secondary students taking the ApL Subjects in DSE, we see that Medical Laboratory Science, for example, recorded 27 secondary school candidates. In the case of Business Data Analysis, the number was 10. As for Entrepreneurship for SME and Display and Jewellery Design, the numbers were 14 and 16 respectively. One must thus ask whether these subjects are far removed from students’ needs. Also, Constructing Smart Cities and Creative Advertising both recorded no candidates at all. These figures should not be surprising at all. Deputy President, unless a secondary student’s family is in the jewellery business, why should he or she take Display and Jewellery Design? If you want to encourage secondary students to take such vocational training subjects, you must consider whether their course designs should be reviewed and even abolished. And, you must also consider how best to answer the vocational needs nowadays. That is why I have always felt that education reforms are needed, and I think the right policies have been introduced in several areas since 2019. I actually think that our education needs reform in five areas.

The first is the curriculum. The second concerns textbooks/teaching materials. The third is teacher training. The fourth is the method of examination and assessment. The fifth is school-based management. Actions have already been taken in three of these areas, and curriculum reform has started. I have long since been critical of Liberal Studies, and I did also ask the former Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin YEUNG, why Liberal Studies could not adopt pass/fail assessment or become an elective. Politics aside, I still need to say that nothing much can be learnt from this subject. The requirements for students are far too low. Classes are just mere talk shops where students simply chat on and on without learning anything. I frankly fail to see why there can be a core subject

without any textbooks. At the time, the Education Bureau was so evasive that it even refused to accept the idea of requiring the vetting and approval of teaching materials. It simply gave a free hand to everybody, thus leading to the grave mistake later. I am glad that they have finally replaced Liberal Studies with Citizenship and Social Development, a subject with much richer content. Their vetting of teaching materials, on the other hand, is also much more meticulous than before, and so is its supervision over the training, discipline, behaviour and conduct of teachers.

I think they also need to look at examinations and assessments. The reason is that out of very practical considerations, people seeking university admission to or enrolment in their desired programmes will find marks and grades very important, so they will naturally focus wholly on the things required by the questions set by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (“HKEAA”). In the case of Liberal Studies, a question involving a political topic used to be set every year in the past. This induced all young people to study political parties and partisan conflicts or to give answers that could please the examiners. Another issue is school-based management, and in this regard, I note that they now want to implement school accountability. When the Government first introduced school-based management, I frankly suspected that the Education Bureau was just being evasive. I suspected that it was trying to push everything to schools and wash its hands of it. They now want to implement school accountability to strengthen school-based management and to introduce the enhanced School Development and Accountability Framework. Are they trying to push all responsibility to schools? Have they provided schools with any feasible guidelines? They must not only give resources to schools without doing anything else because, in that case, schools will just receive heaps and heaps of resources that they do not know how to use. Wastage may even result in the end. Also, in respect of examination and assessment, they must check whether the designs of subjects and examination questions can really induce students to pursue the knowledge vital to the development of our society, technology and the whole person in the future.

The Secretary has so far failed to touch upon one question. This is quite a specific topic—the financial sustainability of HKEAA—and the Secretary, of course, does not need to give any response in the current debate on the Policy Address. I want to raise this question because I know that the Government has taken quite a bold move to turn HKEAA into a trading fund and even require it to

be self-sufficient. But as the student population has been declining, HKEAA has come to this Council to apply for funding several times. I understand that HKEAA has been making many streamlining efforts. When it comes to examinations, I just wonder whether it is necessary to offer so many subjects. This is because a greater number of examination questions to be set will mean the input of more resources. How is HKEAA going to develop in the future?

There is also the need to enhance parent-school cooperation—an issue I also consider very important. I have contacts with many young people who are willing to tell me of their unhappiness. One problem I have noticed is that their fathers and mothers mostly do not know how to be a parent. They do not want to listen to their children, or they may shout at their children when they are unhappy. I note that these days, many young people have chosen the path of self-destruction. So, parent-school cooperation should be used as a means of guiding parents on how to raise their children. This is very important. I hope that the Secretary can follow up on the various issues I have mentioned.

Thank you, Deputy President.

MS LAM SO-WAI (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. In this debate session, I would like to focus on the issues of youth development, community governance, as well as healthcare and hygiene.

Deputy President, young people are the core driving force of Hong Kong's future development, and youth work tops the agenda of the new-term Government. However, the current unemployment rate of young people stands at a high level. From June to August 2022, the unemployment rate of the age group of 20 to 24 stood at 11.2%, and that of young people between the ages of 15 and 19 was even higher at 18.7%, far exceeding the overall unemployment rate of about 4%. In other words, a staggering 412 000 unemployed persons are between the ages of 15 and 24. Despite the Youth Employment and Training Programme, as well as "Youth Employment Start" launched by the Government to facilitate youth employment, the current situation of youth unemployment is still critical, and the number of participants in the above programmes falls short of expectations. The Government should review the effectiveness of these programmes, heed more the views of young people, fine-tune the programmes to meet the needs of young job seekers, ensure continuous follow-up on the employment situation of young people

after they complete the programmes, and regularly review and enhance the contents of the programmes to ensure that they can match the demand of both the job market and the employers.

Moreover, the Government launched the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme (“the Scheme”) earlier to encourage young people of Hong Kong to develop their careers in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. However, there are many problems with the Scheme. Some young people who joined the Scheme had relayed to me that when wage subsidies were no longer provided by the Government, the participating enterprises would only agree to continue their employment with a monthly salary of less than \$18,000 or even cut their posts right away. As such, they were forced to either accept a huge wage cut or become unemployed again. Here, I would like to call on the Government to review the Scheme as soon as possible, step up monitoring the implementation of the Scheme by participating enterprises, actively follow up on the situation of participants and adopt measures to ensure the Scheme’s effectiveness in helping young people stay employed in the long run.

Separately, I suggest that the Government should enhance the development of vocational education. Apart from introducing additional courses on artificial intelligence, automation technology and big data application to promote technology and innovation, the Government should attach greater importance to the development of the healthcare and nursing care sectors through vocational education so as to help cope with the increasing problem of an ageing population in Hong Kong. The aim is to establish a positive image for the nursing care profession and develop young people’s interest in nursing care work by providing them with relevant work placement opportunities so that eventually, more aspiring young people will join the profession.

Apart from helping young people in the four areas of education, employment, entrepreneurship and home ownership, I hope the Government can also strengthen family support for young people. Although the Government has yet to give a clear age definition of “young people”, most young people who are, say, under the age of 35 or 40, would have already started their own families. The family is the foundation of society. With a stable family, young people can strive for better development. Therefore, I hope the Government will attach greater importance to the provision of family support for young people. In this regard, I suggest that the Government should implement various family-friendly policies, such as legislating for parental leave and child care leave, extending the maternity

leave period, and establishing breastfeeding-friendly community and workplace environments. Moreover, the Government should increase the number of subsidized child care places and promote child care awareness in the community in order to help alleviate the child-rearing burden of young families.

Deputy President, community governance is a key to good urban governance in Hong Kong. Since 1982, the District Councils (“DCs”) have been serving as a channel for collecting public views. DCs also play a role in coordinating with various government departments at the district level, providing a mechanism for passing messages between the Government on one end and the people on the other, and even encouraging public participation in district affairs. With DCs morphing into some sort of defective consultative organizations after 2019, a district administration reform is imminent. Such a reform can only succeed if it is contemplated with a people’s perspective from the top level and geared towards addressing small details of people’s livelihood problems. I hope the Government can establish a mechanism with long-term effectiveness to function as a bridge closely connecting the Government to the hearts of the people. Meanwhile, the system of district administration in Hong Kong has been working well in the past, and we should not abandon it completely. As all reforms should have their own distinctive features, the Government must separate the wheat from the chaff and adopt good practices from different district administration models. Moreover, the new system can only achieve steadfast and successful implementation with participation from talents with different capabilities.

In the same vein, I note there is a proposal in the Policy Address for setting up District Services and Community Care Teams (“Care Teams”) in all 18 districts. I have been swarmed with views from many residents who are highly concerned about the role of these Care Teams. They suggested that the Government should diversify the functions of Care Teams to meet the needs of local residents, especially elderly persons ageing in the community. In addition to conducting general visits, the Care Teams can also provide suitable support services to the elderly as and when necessary, such as outreach healthcare services, community care services and emergency support services.

I am also pleased to note the proposals in the Policy Address to allow the shared use of Elderly Health Care Vouchers between spouses and to roll out a three-year pilot scheme to encourage the more effective use of primary healthcare services by the elderly, increasing the annual voucher from the existing \$2,000 to \$2,500. The additional \$500 will be allotted automatically to the elderly persons’

accounts upon their claiming at least \$1,000 from the voucher for designated primary healthcare services such as disease prevention and health management. The additional amount should also be used for those designated services.

We often come across cases about how difficult it is for the elderly to see a doctor. Many elderly persons do not know how to access the Internet, so they have to queue up at the clinics in the small hours. For fear of being queue-jumped, they must also stay in the queue and refrain from going to the toilet. The situation is indeed heart-wrenching. Over the years, many people have called for the introduction of elderly dental care vouchers. When primary school students can receive annual dental care services, no dental subsidy is provided for the elderly at all. As we all know, dental treatment can be costly in Hong Kong, with the fee for routine scaling and polishing ranging from \$500 to \$1,000. The fee for dentures is even more shocking. Recently, I heard an elderly person complaining that a denture had cost him some \$18,000. While all \$8,000 of healthcare vouchers that he had a hard time saving up was used in one go, he must also pay an additional \$10,000 for the shortfall. For needy elderly persons who are not recipients of CSSA, they can only rely on subsidy from the Elderly Dental Assistance Programme under the Community Care Fund (“CCF”) for dentures. However, other dental services, or, for that matter, dentures, may involve treatment in multiple visits. For the elderly, as the local saying goes, a toothache is indeed much worse than a major illness. Many elderly persons only apply for the CCF subsidy as a last resort until almost all their teeth have fallen out. As a result, they cannot even enjoy a meal properly. Given the high cost of dental care services, many elderly persons can hardly afford them.

Last but not least, I hope the District Health Centres can play their role of enhancing focus on disease prevention in the future so as to encourage the elderly to manage their health as early as possible. I also hope that the case management approach can be improved to provide better assistance to elderly persons in the community while ensuring the optimal use of social resources. In order to provide proper medical treatments to those who are ill, the Government should do proper planning for the provision of primary healthcare services, including the introduction of dental care vouchers, addressing the shortfall of District Health Centres, and incorporating the above views into the primary healthcare development blueprint.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the Motion of Thanks.

MS JOEPHY CHAN (in Cantonese): The report to the 20th CPC National

Congress emphasizes “implementing a people-centred philosophy of development”. A paragraph in Part IX mentions “people’s access to employment and elderly care”. All are welcome to read it. That part also mentions the other two aspects, namely “social assistance” and “medical services”, which I would like to share with Deputy President in this session.

Deputy President, relevant to people’s access to social assistance are policies to alleviate and reduce poverty and support ethnic minorities. However, I feel that as far as people’s access to social assistance is concerned, the SAR Government should focus on helping disadvantaged youth out of cross-generational poverty. This is not just a poverty alleviation policy but also a youth development policy. For such reasons as backgrounds and financial abilities, quite a few grass-roots young people have the feeling of “having lost at the starting line” even before joining the workforce, and that is without mentioning their wish to pursue and realize their dreams. Since I entered politics, I have been serving the grass-roots community and hence coming into contact with many grass-roots young people. What I wish to point out is that sometimes they do not mean to “lie flat”, but they have no opportunities whatsoever to stand up, let alone climb up the social ladder. Sometimes it is not that they do not want to do well in their studies, but they do not even have a desk and hence have to do their homework on a bunk bed. Sometimes it is not that they do not want to do an internship, but they cannot land a good one in the absence of any referral or recommendation. Sometimes it is not that they do not want to participate in politics and policy debates, but their credentials may not be good enough to secure such an opportunity. The mentorship programme steered by the Chief Secretary for Administration, as mentioned in paragraph 95 of the Policy Address, is one of the solutions.

However, in my view, there should be priorities in the Youth Development Blueprint. Deputy President, I wish to give notice here that I will move an amendment to Mr Benson LUK’s motion on “Formulating a policy and a blueprint on facilitating young people’s upward mobility” at the Council meeting of 23 November, stressing the need to assist young people (especially those with grass-roots background) in overcoming their difficulties in education, career pursuits, entrepreneurship and home ownership; enhancing dual-track academic and vocational education; developing the “eight centres” backed by the Outline of the National 14th Five-Year Plan (e.g. an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange), with a view to offering multiple pathways for young people; and strengthening education on patriotism, enhancing the sense of nationhood and awareness of the rule of law among young people and cultivating their national

pride, so that young people can serve the country irrespective of social strata. I hope that Members will support my amendment by then.

Deputy President, as regards people's access to medical services, at present, for many cancer and rare disease patients, it is not that their diseases are incurable, but drugs are not available to them. Despite the obvious existence of cheaper drugs with fewer side effects, the patients are deprived of access due to administrative procedures and geopolitics, or otherwise have to pay a high price to use them or even postpone using them, hence a delay in treatment.

With constant concerns about the rights and interests of patients, we in the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions ("HKFTU") have been pushing for the improvement of the drug registration system in the hope that someday, China-made drugs will be available for use in Hong Kong and effective drugs are affordable, thus enabling patients with cancer and rare diseases to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Earlier on in September this year, I held a press conference with my fellow party member Mr TANG Ka-piu, as well as a seminar with representatives from patient groups and the pharmaceutical sector to explore the methodology and feasibility of promoting the use of China-made drugs in Hong Kong, their development potential and so on, with a view to making effective drugs affordable to patients and reducing their burden of medication costs.

I am pleased to see the Government, having adopted the proposal put forward by HKFTU, patient groups and the pharmaceutical sector, indicate in this Policy Address that it will make reference to the registration approvals made by the National Medical Products Administration and other suitable drug regulatory authorities, allowing pharmaceutical products registered in the Mainland and relevant places to be registered in Hong Kong, which signifies a smooth transition across the river. However, the devil is in the details. As a matter of fact, the current drug registration system in Hong Kong adopts mainly a "secondary evaluation" approach, where two or more Certificates of Pharmaceutical Product must be obtained from 32 scheduled countries or regions before a new drug can be submitted for registration in Hong Kong and put to wide use across the territory.

The report to the 19th CPC National Congress proposed "carrying out the Healthy China initiative" for our motherland. Fast forward to the report to the 20th CPC National Congress, and there is a big leap to "advancing the Healthy China Initiative". Although our motherland has already built the world's largest healthcare system, raised the average life expectancy of Mainlanders to over 78

years, and surpassed many medium-high income countries and regions in key health indicators, the registration system in Hong Kong still leans towards European countries and the United States. Even though these countries mostly fall behind the Mainland of China in terms of deployment of resources towards pharmaceutical research and development (“R&D”) and do not base their R&D on the body constitutions of us Asians, they are given preferential treatment just because they are European countries. Deputy President, I hope that the Government can truly enable people’s access to medical services, break the monopoly of European countries and the United States, and treat our China-made drugs equally.

One of the themes of this session is “Tell Good Stories of Hong Kong”. Deputy President, how can we best tell good stories of Hong Kong so as to show to the outside world that “one country, two systems” is being steadfastly and successfully implemented? One of the best ways is to enable people’s access to social assistance and medical services. The disadvantaged youth receiving help and the patients having access to inexpensive drugs are the best spokespersons for Hong Kong. They can become KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) to help with telling good stories of Hong Kong.

Deputy President, I support the Motion of Thanks. I also look forward to further steps to be taken by the Government to share the fruits of economic development with grass-roots young people and let patients fairly enjoy the fruits of scientific research in the country. I so submit.

DR TAN YUEHENG (in Putonghua): Thank you, Deputy President. Regarding national education, I suggest introducing a one-year “intensive learning programme on national education for teachers”. Against the backdrop of “patriots administering Hong Kong”, the prospect of “patriots administering education” has basically been realized, but is it also the case for “patriots delivering education”? Do those delivering education, such as teachers carrying out national education and national security education, have personal experience with and profound knowledge of the country and national security? The implementation of “patriots administering education” must, moreover, be backed by “patriots delivering education”, which is the key to the successful implementation of national education and national security education. To this end, I suggest that the Government introduce a one-year “intensive learning programme on national education and national security education for teachers”, providing standard learning materials and

organizing a dedicated team of instructors to arrange monthly system-wide learning sessions for teachers for one year so that all teachers can fully and accurately master the content of national education and national security education and teach their students accordingly.

Deputy President, I so submit.

MR HOLDEN CHOW (in Cantonese): Deputy President, the debate themes of this session are around healthcare, public health and youth policy.

Here I would like to first thank the Secretary. I have followed up on the issue of dental services in Tuen Mun before. As the Secretary knows, I deliberately went to a dental clinic in Tuen Mun in the late-night and early-morning hours to visit those in the queue, who were actually waiting overnight. Certainly, it was a very undesirable situation and a very pathetic sight. I am grateful to the Bureau for fine-tuning the arrangement for issuing queue tickets in response to received advice so that at least members of the public do not have to wait overnight.

Deputy President, frankly speaking, it does not mean that the problem has been solved just like that because so far, the long queue for public dental services is still a bugbear for many people. The Secretary has also heard me repeatedly mention, on the issue of dental services, that it is certainly my hope that the 11 dental clinics currently in operation (including the one in Tuen Mun, of course) can release more time slots for public use, as that clinic is only open to the public one day a week.

Leaving aside this method, we are aware of another phenomenon, namely an acute shortage of dentists in Hong Kong. We have looked up the figures and found that there are 2 000-odd dentists in Hong Kong. However, one can identify the problem by simply looking at the ratio—there are only 30 dentists per 100 000 people. In comparison, other countries such as Canada and France have a ratio of 60 dentists to 100 000 people, which is double ours. From this, it is evident that the overall shortage of dentists in Hong Kong is already a problem. We have often asked the Bureau to expedite the importation of qualified dentists from overseas for practising in Hong Kong or working in the public dental system, and in this regard, the Bureau responded earlier that it was going to work on it.

However, I think that distant water cannot put out a nearby fire. I have an

idea of a short-term measure, but is there any chance that the authorities could make an adjustment? In the past, when there was a genuine need for cheaper dental services, many people had the option of going to the Mainland. Unfortunately, since quarantine-free travel has not yet resumed, these services are unavailable for the time being. Given this situation, would the authorities consider making more efforts in the near future to designate an amount in the Elderly Health Care Vouchers for members of the public to use on dental services, even though, as I know, the voucher value has already been increased? In fact, this is only a short-term temporary measure because as long as there is sufficient manpower, or as soon as quarantine-free travel resumes between Hong Kong and the Mainland, I believe that many members of the public will opt for dental services of the Mainland again, which is why I say it is a short-term temporary proposal.

Of course, there is another point involved. If there is a desire to recruit more dentists into the public healthcare system, I believe that the Bureau may have to examine the relevant remuneration packages or the promotion ladder in the public dental system. In my view, all these may warrant examination because, in the long run, even if we manage to recruit dentists, both the remuneration packages and the promotion ladder are incentives to attract them into the public dental system. Therefore, I consider it necessary for the authorities to look into this aspect.

Deputy President, on the youth issue, I would like to cite a simple example for illustration. Earlier, I had the honour of being invited to attend the Hong Kong Legal Week 2022 (“Legal Week”). This year’s Legal Week saw the participation of not just UNIDROIT (International Institute for the Unification of Private Law) as a co-organizer but also representatives from the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law. On that day, I had the privilege of conversing with them and learning that they had been collaborating with Hong Kong’s judiciary for mutual secondment of staff, also involving a number of young legal practitioners, which I think is very positive. In addition, we will ask our counterparts for more vacancies to enable the participation of young legal practitioners in these secondment collaborations, with a view to making contributions to our country by the furtherance of Hong Kong’s favourable role in external liaison.

Deputy President, I so submit.

IR GARY ZHANG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. The theme of

the Policy Address this year is “Charting a Brighter Tomorrow for Hong Kong”. On this occasion today, I wish to focus on “improving the quality of life of our people’ and share with the government officials present here the various views and suggestions on the Policy Address that I have gathered all this time from different people in my street counters, ward offices and social media platforms. I hope all of us can do some thinking together so as to find out how we can increase people’s happiness and sense of belonging and how we can retain talents.

Overall, many of the initiatives set out in the Policy Address are indeed forward-looking. I do appreciate these initiatives, but some people have told me how they wish they could see policies that have a more direct impact on them. They, for example, want to know whether the Policy Address can offer any immediate and appropriate solutions to the difficulties they face in daily life, whether it can increase their sense of gain, and whether it can offer any earnest response in those areas where people ask for improvement. They also want to know how the Government can do more to address people’s pressing needs, how it can listen more broadly to the views of different people in the course of governance, and how we can restore people’s confidence in the future of Hong Kong.

In respect of education, my concern is how we can balance teachers’ pressure, school administration and teaching work. The Policy Address puts forward the promotion of STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) for all. Coding education and I&T elements will be introduced respectively to the upper primary curriculum and the junior secondary curriculum, and various activities will be arranged. This is worthy of support. But in recent years, the many changes and additions made to the primary and secondary curricula have led to mounting pressure on teachers. Also, the teacher wastage rate has been on the rise in recent years. In the 2021-2022 school year, the teacher wastage rates in public-sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme (“DSS”) schools were respectively 7.5% and 8.4%, both being record-high in five years. Numerically, public-sector schools saw a loss of 3 580 teachers, and DSS schools recorded a wastage of 470 teachers, making a total loss of more than 4 000 teachers. On the other hand, government statistics indicate that a total of 30 000 school children withdrew from school between October 2020 and September 2022. This, coupled with the low birth rate and emigration, has led to a decline in the number of school-age children.

First, I must express my gratitude and appreciation to all teachers and school

staff for their dedication and professionalism. But apart from this, can we do anything concrete to help them? I maintain that in order to cope with the demand/supply changes in school places across different districts and to alleviate the workload of teachers, we should grasp the present opportunity and optimize the use of resources to improve our education quality. For this reason, I advise the Government to consider the implementation and expansion of small class teaching in all public-sector primary and secondary schools. First, we hope that with the expansion of small class teaching, schools can create a bigger learning environment marked by student-oriented teaching. Second, we also hope that teachers can thus have more time to concentrate on their teaching work. I hope that while the authorities explore how to revamp the contents of learning, the Bureau can listen more to the voices of frontline teachers and treasure them so as to alleviate the wastage of teachers and bring stability to the education sector of Hong Kong.

As Hong Kong is an international city we all take pride in, we are also very concerned about how we can provide better support to the ethnic minorities in the field of education. At present, about 3.8% of the permanent residents of Hong Kong are ethnic minorities. They are also Hong Kong people, but under the existing language policy, non-Chinese speaking ethnic minorities are faced with many difficulties—their education opportunities, interpersonal relationship, social integration and even daily life will all depend on their mastery of the Chinese language. In 2014, the Government implemented the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) with the aim of assisting non-Chinese speaking students in learning the Chinese language. In theory, with reference to the Learning Framework, teachers can adjust the school-based curriculum and teaching strategies and then design certain progressive learning objectives specifying the skills expected to be acquired. Yet, many ethnic minority students have told us that the effectiveness of this measure still leaves much to be desired. The existing pedagogical system still poses many difficulties to them, and they must still face the huge gap between the Learning Framework and reality. I hope the Government can do a more detailed study and then tell us what actual measures have been introduced since 2014 to assist ethnic minority students and provide adequate training to their parents. I also wish to know the timetable for review.

The Policy Address also mentions the employment of more ethnic minorities as Employment Assistants and General Assistants in the Labour Department (“LD”) as a means to strengthen the provision of employment services for ethnic minorities. This measure, of course, merits our support, but I must add that the

employment of ethnic minorities should not be restricted to Employment Assistants. LD and even other government departments should continue the momentum and increase their employment of qualified ethnic minorities. On the one hand, this can facilitate ethnic minorities' utilization of the many different types of services and support offered by the Government. On the other hand, this can also manifest Hong Kong's pluralism and inclusiveness as a cultural metropolis that allows people from different backgrounds to give full play to their abilities.

When it comes to healthcare and public health, I am concerned about people's mental health. One survey conducted by an organization shows that for three years in a row, the Physical and Mental Health Index of Hong Kong people again ranks bottom in the Asia-Pacific Region. In this survey, 97% of the respondents admitted having experienced overexertion at work, and 33% said that they planned to change their jobs in the following year. People in need of emotional support say that the mental health support hotline is not manned adequately, especially at night. It is hoped that the bureau concerned can note the problem and increase the provision of resources to tackle the problem. But in the long run, we need to consider the provision of more publicly-funded degree places in psychology so as to cope with the proposals of the Policy Address to increase the quotas for psychiatric day hospitals and outreaching services. At the level of primary healthcare, the 17 District Health Centres already established should be strengthened to act as outreach platforms in the area of mental health. Cooperation with NGOs must be sought so that people with mental health needs can be identified as early as possible for prompt assistance and referral.

According to government statistics, there are currently some 25 671 registered social workers, 603 clinical psychologists and 422 psychiatrists. But given such levels of manpower, some patients will need to wait for as long as two years, which is hardly acceptable. For this reason, the Policy Address says that the Mental Health Initiatives Funding Scheme will be continued for the purpose of funding mental health projects in the community. I hope that in the Budget to be announced later, the Government can put forward a concrete scheme for investing more resources in community mental health services so as to achieve both monitoring and prevention at the community level, and patients with mild symptoms can be identified for referrals. That way, people's health and happiness can be enhanced.

Recently, there have been many controversies over the proposal to introduce

a compulsory service period for healthcare graduates in the public healthcare sector. I personally think that when seeking to address the imbalance of the healthcare system, we must make sure that we can “see both the forest and the trees”. Speaking of the system itself, we must, of course, seek to strengthen its very foundation, that is, primary healthcare. The concept of family medicine must be firmly established to achieve a division of labour and an even distribution of workload. But in the long run, we must improve the promotion mechanism in order to retain medical doctors at middle to high levels in the public healthcare system so that more healthcare personnel can be trained. At the same time, attention must be paid to the morale of frontline healthcare professionals. Hence, I propose that non-locally trained medical doctors should be permitted to practise in the public healthcare system for a specified period of time. This can enable them to get to know the healthcare system of Hong Kong. In this way, non-locally trained healthcare professionals can be recruited to alleviate the manpower shortage faced by the public healthcare system of Hong Kong. More importantly, this can give local healthcare professionals the required support, thus helping to restore their morale.

As one of the new generation of Members, I am naturally very concerned about youth development in Hong Kong. Quite a few sections in the Policy Address are devoted to youth development, including Youth Development Blueprint; Launch the Youth Participation Initiative; Deepen Participation of Government Departments and Civil Service Grades in Youth Work; Broaden Young People’s Horizons, Housing for Young People; “STEAM” Education; Post-secondary Education; Vocational and Professional Education and Training; National Education; Teaching Profession; and Handle Declining Student Population in a Pragmatic Manner. But very little treatment is given to young people’s quality of life in Hong Kong and their sense of belonging to the place. Some young people have approached me, saying that they simply do not know how they can be benefited. Therefore, I hope that apart from expanding the Member Self-Recommendation Scheme for Youth to increase the number of participants, the Government can listen more to the young people working in its various departments. The Government can first make young civil servants feel that their voices are being heard. This is the quickest start it can make, and on this very basis, it can proceed to promote various youth participation initiatives at the community level. This can help us sustain our publicity on “Hong Kong will Prosper Only When its Young People Thrive”. Of course, I do very much look forward to the “Youth Development Blueprint” to be rolled out by the Government at the end of this year. I hope we can hear a greater number of practical and

appealing youth policies when the time comes.

This Policy Address of the current-term Government reminds us of our shared responsibility towards Hong Kong. As a Member, I need to remind myself that I must be rational in any policy discussions, playing the role of monitoring the Government on behalf of the general public. With these remarks, I wish to deliver this very message: both the executive and the legislature, as part of the governance team in Hong Kong, must have the courage to self-reform when seeking to resolve the social problems of Hong Kong. In this regard, this Policy Address is only the starting point.

I so submit. Thank you, Deputy President.

MR ROCK CHEN (in Cantonese): First and foremost, Deputy President, I am so grateful that the Policy Address, having taken on board most of the policy proposals on vocational and professional education and training (“VPET”) put forth by the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, advocates the strategy of “fostering industry-institution collaboration and diversified development” for promoting VPET in particular. Given the need for diversified and high-calibre VPET talents, the Government has to “walk on two legs”, that is, to facilitate parallel development of both traditional education and VPET to support society’s development on multiple fronts.

The development of VPET entails the provision of pathways and a blueprint to help young people and the working population understand the directions for personal development, which may then serve as a support pillar to facilitate their development in terms of studies, career and life planning. Fundamental pathways include applied education at the secondary school level, higher diploma and even applied degree programmes, and it is on this basis that the application of micro-credit system can be developed in full swing within the Qualifications Framework. The micro-credit system should be applied for the complete integration of academic careers with professional qualifications and recognition of previous qualifications to form a comprehensive VPET blueprint that allows flexibility and ensures high efficiency.

Regarding recognition, the Government ought to allocate sufficient resources to facilitate VPET development in order to dispel the widespread worries about VPET that prevailed in the past. The Government should work hand in hand with employers, trade associations, professional bodies, schools and parents, etc., to reach out to the general public by widely publicizing and sharing with them

the contribution and achievements of VPET. This will help consolidate the status of VPET and its recognition by society.

Deputy President, I also support the proposal to widely engage local organizations and groups to form Community Care Teams (“Care Teams”) as put forth in Chapter XI of the Policy Address, which I believe will be of help to the Government in enhancing the governance structure of district administration.

Originating among the grass roots to serve the folks in their respective local districts, associations of Chinese fellow townsmen (“townsmen associations”) will, I believe, play a significant role under the new policy. Some of the large townsmen associations have already set up their respective local service centres in various districts to build up local networks for a stronger bond among members on the one hand, while localizing services in a pragmatic manner to provide members with appropriate activities and services tailored to their needs. I am of the view that townsmen associations should step up collaboration with District Officers in the 18 Districts in the future by maintaining communication with the latter on a regular basis while lending them a helping hand to tackle and resolve local problems together. That way, they will become a pillar of support within the Government’s governance structure of district administration and are meant to enhance the effectiveness of district administration.

Looking forward to the future, all townsmen associations may apply to become Care Teams for sub-districts based on the number of members, resources available, organizational structure etc. Alternatively, they can collaborate with selected Care Teams to jointly serve the community. By making all such efforts, I believe the townsmen associations will do a good job of serving as a bridge between the public and the Government, promoting district services, and getting problems resolved effectively so that more people can enjoy the fruits of economic and social development.

Deputy President, Chief Executive John LEE has delivered his first and forward-looking Policy Address, which sets out a number of policy initiatives with substantive contents, timetables and roadmaps. Taking a people-centred approach, he has duly heeded the views from all quarters of society and addressed various social aspirations. His Policy Address brings us hope and is definitely worth our support.

I so submit in support of the Motion of Thanks on the Policy Address.

MR NGAN MAN-YU (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I would like to thank the Chief Executive for adopting the proposals put forth by the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (“DAB”) in respect of expanding the Youth Hostel Scheme (“YHS”) to cover hotels and guesthouses and implementing a private sector participation programme (“PSPP”) on a pilot basis. Youth hostels, with their low rentals charged, allow young people to enjoy independent living spaces while making it possible for them to save money. This is definitely a welcome policy. However, falling under the purview of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau at present, YHS may neither be consistent with the policy objectives nor compatible with other housing projects. We propose that YHS should be administered by the Housing Bureau as part of the “housing ladder”.

In addition, the rentals of youth hostels charged at about 60% of the market level will pose a certain amount of pressure on young people. The Government should not base its determination of rentals charged solely on market rental levels because the primary consideration should actually be the affordability of young people. And also, the five-year tenancy period is deemed too short and should be extended to eight to 10 years to allow young aspiring home buyers sufficient time to save money for making the down payment.

Lastly, the Government plans to put on trial the PSPP for the construction of youth hostels. Actually, through the incorporation of land sale conditions during land sales, the Government can require developers to set aside certain flats and floor area for use as youth hostels. For specific practices, it may refer to the mode adopted for the Starter Homes for Hong Kong Residents (Starter Homes) project in facilitating purchases of starter homes by first-time buyers, i.e. developers can set aside certain floor area for constructing youth hostels in the development of projects so that tenants of youth hostels can use the transport, cultural and recreational, and community facilities of the housing estates.

Deputy President, the public healthcare sector has long been facing problems of inadequate hardware and shortage of healthcare personnel, so improving healthcare services in the short term is really difficult. I welcome the Government’s proposal to strengthen the role of family doctors in primary healthcare and establish a family-based healthcare system with the provision of government-subsidized healthcare services through family doctors (such as the Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme) so as to provide incentives for the public. In my own opinion, the Government has done the right thing and is on the right

track in subsidizing follow-up consultations/treatments at private clinics for the public through public-private partnership to further alleviate the burden on the public healthcare system.

However, many stakeholders are worried that participants must register with a designated doctor in advance and cannot switch to another one at their pleasure. On the one hand, there may not be sufficient incentives to attract doctors to take part; on the other, the shortfall in the supply of family healthcare service may cause the participating family doctors in private practice to charge higher fees, thus denying the public of the choice of suitable healthcare services.

Given the various problems mentioned above, the Government should consider making good use of the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme (which has been in operation for more than a decade) by adopting the “money following the user” funding approach so that people can use suitable private healthcare services of their own choice. As stated in the Policy Address, the Scheme will be enhanced to allow the shared use of vouchers between spouses and extend the coverage to include primary healthcare services provided by audiologists etc., under the Accredited Registers Scheme for Healthcare Professions, as well as medical equipment such as hearing aids. I welcome the Government’s willingness to heed and accept DAB’s views.

After all, we have been striving for years towards better and more flexible use of healthcare vouchers by members of the public and an expanded scope of application of the vouchers. To further reduce the pressure on the public healthcare system, the Government should come up with ways to further expand the scope of healthcare vouchers. For example, the Government may consider launching “family healthcare vouchers”, granting \$1,000 to each adult and \$2,000 to each child aged under 18 in the forms of “family healthcare vouchers” and “child healthcare vouchers” respectively, where both types of healthcare vouchers can be shared among cohabiting family members, thereby establishing a more effective mechanism to enhance primary healthcare service where choices are always there for the public. This way, the overall efficiency and effectiveness of both the public and private healthcare systems will be enhanced.

On the other hand, quite a number of recovered COVID-19 patients (not limited to the elderly) having symptoms of long COVID cannot successfully make appointments for subsidized Chinese medicine outpatient services. If we are provided with healthcare vouchers, then we can further optimize the capacity,

manpower, hardware and resources of the private healthcare institutions to complement the overburdened public hospitals in terms of both manpower and hospital beds.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the Motion of Thanks.

MR EDWARD LEUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. As the spokesman for health affairs for the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, I would like to focus on expressing my views on the Policy Address in respect of healthcare and public health as well as the development of Chinese medicine (“CM”) in this session.

Before the Policy Address was delivered, I had already moved a Member’s motion on the excessively long waiting time for public specialist outpatient services. And I am so pleased with the Policy Address, which has addressed this issue in response, stating that with an ageing population and the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases, public hospitals are overburdened, and change is needed.

Among other things, the Chief Executive expressly showed his concern for the ever-lengthening waiting time for specialist outpatient services. In fact, not only will excessively long waiting time affect patients’ health, but it will also add to the burden of public hospitals, which are already overstretched. Moreover, the efficacy of treatment will be weakened, and the medical and social costs will be higher and higher.

To turn the tide, the Government indicated that it would endeavour to reduce the waiting time for specialist outpatient services. The target is to reduce the waiting time of stable new case bookings for the specialty of Medicine by 20% by 2023-2024. I find it a well-meant target, except that it should be a bit more ambitious. Why is it so? It is because improvement by means of setting a target of reducing waiting time should not only be made for the specialty of Medicine but also for other specialties so as to expeditiously alleviate the current situation in which people’s mild illnesses may become serious due to prolonged waiting.

I suggest, among other things, that the Government should concurrently set targets and place caps on the median waiting time of stable new case bookings for public specialist outpatient services across the board as a basis for re-estimating the

manpower required and making supporting arrangements as necessary so as to avoid indefinite lengthening of the waiting time in hopes of duly addressing patients' urgent needs.

Meanwhile, before the goal can be achieved, I think the authorities have to make better use of the collaborative efforts of public and private sectors under the existing healthcare system and expedite the exploration of public-private partnership (“PPP”) programmes for other specialties, so that patients will be provided with appropriate specialized services through PPP programmes and need not wait endlessly before they can finally see the doctor.

During the fifth wave of the pandemic, moreover, we have witnessed the essential role of CM in the fight against the pandemic alongside Western medicine (“WM”). Therefore, to further promote the development of CM in Hong Kong, the Chief Executive has put forward a number of proposals in the Policy Address. What I particularly agree with is the need for Hong Kong to formulate a blueprint for the development of CM as soon as practicable.

I think, however, there is one thing that the SAR Government must face squarely before embarking on the various tasks: although the Government stated in the 2018 Policy Address that the positioning of CM in the development of medical services in Hong Kong had been confirmed, it seems that up to now (i.e. 2022), the Government has yet to make clear the positioning of CM services in Hong Kong's healthcare development. Under the current situation, both members of the public and the CM sector are perplexed by the situation.

Thus, I suggest that the Government should, in formulating the blueprint for the development of CM services in Hong Kong, confirm the vision for and positioning of CM services in Hong Kong, which should cover the holistic development of CM services with equal weight being given to CM and WM. In terms of positioning, CM should be regarded as one of the pillars supporting Hong Kong's healthcare system together with WM and other professional healthcare sectors. Besides, the development of CM services should cover primary healthcare, specialist and inpatient services, and it should be ensured that no one will be deprived of appropriate CM care and services due to financial difficulties.

Lastly, the call for dental service reform is getting much stronger as the life expectancy of Hong Kong people gets longer. Why is it so? It is because elderly people, in general, have dental problems. Life is not healthy without healthy

teeth. However, the dental services provided by Government dental clinics are scanty both in terms of availability and type—only two types of services are available, namely tooth extraction and pain relief.

Some people may wonder why elderly people are not advised to consult private dentists. Well, it is indeed rather difficult to do so because private dental clinics charge exorbitant fees for their services which are utterly unaffordable for elderly people. As a result, many grass roots are plagued by dental problems.

To remedy the situation in order that elderly people can stay healthy after retirement, we must act now to make an all-out effort to take forward the comprehensive development of public dental services. The shortage of dentists remains the most critical bottleneck.

Therefore, I fully support the Policy Address in proposing that the Government will explore new ways for admitting qualified non-locally trained dentists. I hope that the Government can seize the moment and submit early to the Council its proposal of admitting top-notch non-local dentists for scrutiny by Members and the whole community as well in answer to society's calls in respect of public dental services.

Apart from health, youth development is another essential policy area which should be promoted in response to the remarks made by our State President: A nation will prosper only when its young people thrive. Among the various youth development initiatives, the formulation of the Youth Development Blueprint, in particular, has attracted much attention. We look forward to an early release of the first version of the blueprint.

Yet, I think a rather important issue concerning youth policy has been neglected in the Policy Address, namely the building of a home ownership ladder for our young people. Two schemes are mentioned therein, one being the Starter Homes for Hong Kong Residents (Starter Homes) project and the other the Youth Hostel Scheme. However, given that the number of flats available under the Starter Homes project is too small and young people will become ineligible to apply for places in youth hostels as they grow older, both are unlikely to fundamentally satisfy young people's dreams of having their own homes. Therefore, I suggested earlier that the authorities might adopt the concept of "forward home ownership" and set aside a certain number of existing flats under the Home Ownership Scheme for application by young people so that they can achieve the goal of buying their

own homes. In this case, they have a goal to pursue as there is hope for them to become homeowners and will thus grasp the opportunity to stay focused on doing well at work.

Of course, Deputy President, I will cast my vote of support for the Policy Address without hesitation later on, but I just hope the Administration will understand that there is no such thing as the best policy address because the best has yet to come. Hence, it is hoped that the Administration will not become complacent after the passage of the Motion of Thanks. Instead, the passage of the motion should serve as a spur to better efforts by the Government in implementing the initiatives set out in the Policy Address, making up for the shortcomings, and pondering areas needing improvement. That is to say, it takes concrete action to repay people's support and the Central Authorities' trust while fulfilling its historic mission.

I so submit. Thank you, Deputy President.

MR LAM CHUN-SING (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. As far as youth policy is concerned, I think youth education and employment should top the agenda. In this connection, I moved in May this year a motion on “Promoting the development of vocational education and nurturing talents to establish multiple pathways”. I am pleased to see that this Policy Address has devoted considerable coverage to vocational and professional education and training (“VPET”), making clear that VPET is to be developed in parallel with traditional academic education. This reflects the Government's vision for VPET.

I do support the various measures mentioned in the Policy Address, i.e. studying the launch of more applied degree programmes, expediting the development of the “Vocational Qualifications Pathway”, and replacing the Diploma Yi Jin programme with the Diploma of Applied Education programme by incorporating VPET elements. In my opinion, however, there is still room for the Government to take forward more initiatives in this regard. For example, in addition to launching more applied degree programmes, will the Government consider studying the feasibility of setting up the first dedicated university offering applied education programmes? Will it comprehensively review the publicity approach so that vocational qualifications may fare better in terms of recognition by society? Moreover, as apprenticeship training is an essential part of VPET, will the Government change the traditional apprenticeship system into a “modern

apprenticeship system” that integrates VPET with higher education for nurturing more high-calibre professionals who are good at applying their expertise? An all-round VPET allows everyone to do their best to give full play to their talents so that the supply of talents is well matched to the industries’ demand, thus offering young people more diversified pathways.

As to healthcare, the number of attendances at Chinese medicine (“CM”) clinics in the 18 districts reached 1.28 million last year, 13% up from the previous year. The number of consultations has increased significantly because the Government provides 10 free outpatient consultations for recovered COVID-19 patients. The increase also illustrates the growing demand for and acceptance of CM by the public.

I welcome the initiative of increasing the annual government-subsidized CM outpatient service quotas by 200 000, as set out in the Policy Address. But, will the Government consider adding one or two CM clinics in districts with particularly high demand in future? Besides, given that the fee charged by government-subsidized CM clinics for outpatient service is \$120 while that charged for consultation at general outpatient (“GOP”) clinics run by the Government is only \$50, the grass roots may choose to seek treatment from GOP clinics instead due to financial difficulty. Will there be room for the Government to increase the amount of subsidy in a bid to lower the levels of the fee charged by government-subsidized CM clinics for outpatient service?

In respect of long-term development, the Government should consider incorporating CM into Hong Kong’s public healthcare system to fundamentally enhance the status of CM. Only in doing so can the development and mainstreaming of CM be actually taken forward. At present, public healthcare service is almost overstretched, and there are always long queues at specialist outpatient clinics. The Government should deploy CM resources to enhance primary healthcare, thereby relieving the pressure on the public healthcare system. In formulating a blueprint for the overall development of CM in future, it is hoped that the Government will draw up more concrete policies.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the Motion.

MS MAGGIE CHAN (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. The title of my speech is “Formulating a framework for the White Paper on the Well-rounded Development of Women in Hong Kong for effective fulfilment of women’s role as bridging links”.

Part VI of the report to the 20th CPC National Congress mentions intensifying reform and development of women’s federations, while Part IX mentions remaining committed to the fundamental national policy of gender equality and protecting the lawful rights and interests of women and children. There is a genuine need for the SAR Government to put in place systems, policies, measures and resources to promote the well-rounded development of women, safeguard the rights and interests of disadvantaged women and children, and establish a policy system to boost birth rates.

The section “A Caring and Inclusive Hong Kong” in the Policy Address of HKSAR mentions that a Women Empowerment Fund will be set up, and funding for organizing activities to promote women development will be substantially increased from \$4 million to \$10 million per annum in the next three years to subsidize community projects that support women in balancing job and family commitments, and unleashing their potential. This policy is worthy of support. However, it is really pathetic in my eyes that throughout the 150 paragraphs of the Policy Address, only three short ones are devoted to women affairs. According to the statistics released in July this year, the female population in 2021 was 4.03 million, accounting for 54%, i.e. more than half, of the total population of Hong Kong. Based on this calculation, s even if the funding for the Women Empowerment Fund is raised to \$10 million in the future, each woman will only be allocated \$2.5 per year on average. What can I do with \$2.5? I cannot even afford to buy my favourite pineapple buns. I have to save up the funding for two to three years before I can afford one.

Therefore, I suggest that, firstly, policy measures for women should not be scattered across different Bureaux. The Government should expeditiously formulate a framework for the White Paper on the Well-rounded Development of Women in Hong Kong, create the post of Commissioner for Women as soon as possible, and substantially increase the amount of the Women Empowerment Fund.

Secondly, a female talent pool should be developed to participate in politics and policy debates. The Government should enhance the representation of grass-roots women’s groups in its advisory structure and encourage the business sector

and the community to afford women more opportunities to get promoted to the management level.

Thirdly, the HKSAR Government should collaborate with the local governments in the Greater Bay Area to set up an online and offline Greater Bay Area Women's College for the promotion of high-quality development of Hong Kong women and their comprehensive integration into the overall development of the country, so as to tell the international community good stories of China.

Fourthly, I suggest that the District Offices organize various series of activities to promote love for the country, for Hong Kong and for family, such as a contest to find and appreciate beautiful family stories.

Fifthly, as regards support for women's employment, it is necessary to insist on gender equality, unleash the female labour force and increase women's employment opportunities, thus enabling them to broaden their horizons. The Government needs to develop more community child care services through more means, such as providing schools with encouragement and resources for additional after-school care services, so that there are more service points in the districts.

Sixthly, on women's welfare policy, I suggest introducing gynaecological healthcare vouchers and expanding the existing pilot scheme to provide free screening for breast cancer and cervical cancer.

Seventhly, in order to protect the rights and interests of children and the disadvantaged, the Government should expeditiously initiate consultation and legislation on the offence of "failure to protect" as a rigorous means to combat crimes of child abuse and elder abuse.

Eighthly, regarding the mandatory reporting mechanism for child abuse cases, the Government should adopt simple procedures and easy-to-understand forms to encourage immediate reporting of any suspicions. The agencies concerned should also provide frontline staff with clear guidelines while vigorously reforming the registration and monitoring system for child care centres and compiling a blacklist of child care centres and child care workers.

In addition, it is certainly necessary to allocate additional resources to support such organizations as women's groups in grass-roots districts and initiate a wider variety of community work projects and funds for their exclusive application, thus giving full play to the power of grass-roots women in the districts.

Deputy President, I urge the SAR Government to make good use of the female force comprising representatives of women's federations in Hong Kong and in the provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions across the country, as well as the grass-roots women's service groups in various districts of Hong Kong, to effectively solve the problems of women at large, thus giving our fellow sisters a greater sense of happiness to play a unique role in the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the steadfast and successful implementation of "one country, two systems", because senses of happiness and fulfilment for our fellow sisters are also senses of happiness and fulfilment for men.

Thank you. I so submit.

MR LEUNG MAN-KWONG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. Given the current economic malaise in Hong Kong, bazaars might be a new way to drive the district economy. Apart from being a leisure project or a poverty alleviation policy, the establishment of bazaars can also incorporate women and youth services and even elements of national education. During the past weekend, Wong Tai Sin and Sham Shui District Offices held large-scale bazaars in the communities, which met with a very enthusiastic response from the public. I also personally visited the bazaar in Sham Shui Po. Quite a number of stall owners were housewives or young people living in the district, and many of them were selling handmade food items, jewellery, handbags, and so on. Also, there to give support on that day was Secretary Alice MAK, who was present. I believe that the Secretary also heard these young people and women express their joy in being able to participate in the bazaar, which offered them an opportunity to deploy their handicraft talents, known only to their family members and friends because of the impossibility of working long hours due to the need to take care of their families in usual days, so every transaction was a recognition for them. With the recent bazaars setting a very good example, I hope that the Government will draw on and bring together the experience from the bazaars, as well as use district-level policies as a jumping-off point to encourage women and young people's engagement so as to help more grass-roots families stand on their own feet.

In April this year, I suggested at a Council meeting that the SAR Government should work with clansmen associations to mobilize more grass-roots families to generate productivity with their hometown specialties and develop the community economy through bazaars and cooperatives. In fact, many grass-roots women know how to make home-made food items or handicrafts with hometown

characteristics. Encouraging them to participate as producers not only allows them to live up to their potential and fosters diversified local economic activities but also makes for a de facto form of family education or national education for the people of Hong Kong to learn about the characteristic cultures of our country and various provinces and municipalities through the bazaars.

As regards public environmental hygiene, right after the new-term SAR Government took office, the Chief Executive set up a task force led by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration to launch a scheme to tackle hygiene blackspots. Some of the hygiene blackspots have now experienced real improvements. That said, since the early stage of the scheme, I have noticed the phenomenon of “one street, two systems”, namely that despite being in the same street and in the same community, the areas under the purview of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”) have seen significant improvements in hygiene while those outside FEHD’s purview are in worse conditions. However, the situation has significantly improved since it was reflected in an Ante Chamber exchange session, and officials paid inspection visits to the districts, hence confirming the importance of strengthening interdepartmental communication and collaboration. The Policy Address mentions the need to establish a standard mode of operation through rationalizing the responsibilities among departments and relevant workflow, to handle different environmental hygiene issues in an effective manner. I hope that, with environmental hygiene as a starting point, the standard mode of operation can change the public’s perception of the Government being ideologically hidebound, institutionally ossified and departmentally fragmented and enhance the Government’s work efficiency in performing various policy functions.

Deputy President, I have constantly been pushing for allowing the shared use of healthcare vouchers between spouses. I am so glad that the Chief Executive and his team have listened to the voices of the community and put them into action. While one of the aspects most criticized by the community so far about public healthcare services is the inadequacy of public dental services, this Policy Address has also proposed setting up a working group on the development of dental care services. I suggest that the Government and the working group should carefully study the feasibility of implementing mobile dental services and elderly dental care services and set out a vision for increasing public dental services.

Lastly, I wish to reiterate to the Government the public’s desire for the earliest possible resumption of quarantine-free travel to the Mainland. At present, with the stabilization of the epidemic situation, priority should be given to

gradually relaxing the social distancing measures and speeding up the recovery of people's livelihood and economic activities so as to bring Hong Kong society back to normalcy. Quarantine-free travel will enable Hong Kong to better seize the opportunities of integrating into the Greater Bay Area, though I also understand that quarantine-free travel must dovetail with the Mainland's anti-epidemic policy. Therefore, I hope that the SAR Government will discuss with the Mainland authorities to first relax the restrictions on the cross-boundary movement of enterprise vehicles from both sides (commonly known as "cross-boundary vehicles") and, at the same time, consider resuming point-to-point services of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link in a bid to gradually achieve quarantine-free travel in an orderly and risk-controlled manner, thus enabling Hong Kong to give full play to its advantages of enjoying strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the Motion of Thanks on the Policy Address.

MR CHU KWOK-KEUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. In the Policy Address, it is stated that our education system will be strengthened on three fronts, including "unleashing the potential of students", "improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning", and "creating strong impetus for growth", reflecting the vision of the current-term Government for the development of education and the importance attached to it. As there are so many issues in education, I can only focus on two aspects today, namely national security education and kindergarten education.

First of all, in terms of national security education, our social literacy education has been relatively weak. I appreciate the proposal of the Policy Address to strengthen the education and publicity on national security and the Hong Kong National Security Law. At present, some people are still resistant to the Hong Kong National Security Law, which is clearly a law to protect Hong Kong but has been misunderstood as a policy initiative to cause troubles. It is, therefore, very important to strengthen public and school education. Many teachers have told me that training in national security education is not yet complete and that teaching resources are extremely inadequate. They find it very difficult to teach national security in schools, and they have little confidence in doing so. For this reason, I have the following suggestions.

Firstly, we should introduce dedicated officers to coordinate national education and national security education. At present, there are still many schools where national security education is coordinated by basic-rank teachers. Both the situation and the efficacy are far from satisfactory. The Education Bureau should design a comprehensive training programme and develop a professional ladder for the coordination officers, form a learning community within and outside the school, and raise the level of professionalism in curriculum design and teaching strategies of national security education through a whole-school approach.

Secondly, the Education Bureau can deploy more manpower and recruit more seconded teachers to join its values education unit, inject a lot of resources, and invite industry and multi-disciplinary professionals for collaboration so as to produce more quality and lively teaching materials, reference lesson plans and multi-media teaching videos to increase students' motivation and engagement in learning.

Thirdly, we should provide medium and long-term in-service training courses, and we can also introduce a degree in national security studies in universities. Regarding the training of principals and teachers, we can also include national security education to enable teachers to grasp relevant concepts and appropriate pedagogical methods.

Fourthly, we need to ensure that teachers and students understand why they need to teach and why they need to learn. National security education is meaningless if people do not anticipate the possibility of a crisis in future and do not understand the relationship between national security and themselves. Even though the Hong Kong National Security Law has played the role of stabilizer and restored calm to Hong Kong, the uncertainties caused by the unstable international situation mean that foreign forces can infiltrate the community in varied forms at any time. Therefore, the Government has to inject a lot of resources to nurture invisible hands to wrestle with and fight against invading forces in this smokeless war. It also has to strengthen the counter-propaganda strategy of the Hong Kong National Security Law so that national security can be integrated into our daily life and students can be equipped with basic skills such as “report, stay away and identify” to fulfil their due obligation to protect national security.

In respect of kindergarten education, we are grateful to the Government for providing various resources to support the needs of kindergartens, including assisting kindergartens with e-school administration and efficiency enhancement,

providing subsidies to kindergartens to improve the ventilation of school premises, and increasing the relocation allowance for kindergartens. While it is undoubtedly commendable that the Education Bureau has provided funding to enhance kindergarten education, these subsidies have not been effective in relieving the pressure on kindergarten operations. As a result of an array of factors, such as the epidemic and declining birth rate, kindergartens are facing a shortage of students, which in turn affects their operation and causes distress and worries to the school sponsoring bodies. In view of the financial situation of kindergartens, many school sponsoring bodies have told me that they hope the Education Bureau can remove the red tape so that kindergartens joining the kindergarten education scheme can use the subsidy flexibly.

The allocation of financial resources to universities, secondary schools, primary schools and kindergartens has always been a case of “fattening the top and slimming the bottom” and is very unfavourable to the development of kindergartens. As a result of the epidemic, many kindergartens are in financial difficulties and are even facing closure. In contrast, universities have more money than they can spend. Many experienced teachers in kindergartens have been laid off, and many kindergarten teachers are recruited at 0.6 or 0.7 of their pay rates, which has had a very negative impact on the morale of teachers and the learning of students. In the final analysis, it is because the Education Bureau has not been flexible enough to introduce responsive measures to cope with special circumstances, such as the epidemic, the waves of emigration and the suspension of quarantine-free travel arrangements. Although the Bureau has said that it will not ignore kindergartens, the sector insists that the Bureau has not really listened to the sector’s demands. We hope that the Government will acknowledge the shortcomings, immediately reform its existing policies and introduce new ones, remove the red tape, and provide contingency funding for schools to spend flexibly on purchasing services, hiring additional teachers outside the establishment and subsidizing teachers’ salaries. In the long run, the Bureau must review the unit subsidy mechanism for kindergarten children, including reviewing the calculation of whole-day, half-day and long whole-day rates. In addition, the mechanism for conducting annual adjustments of the subsidy should also be reviewed. More importantly, the allocation of education resources must be reviewed so that kindergartens are given a reasonable amount of resources to ensure that they have sufficient funds to operate.

I hope that the Government can really share the concerns of schools, continue to take care of the needs of kindergartens, adjust and increase the funding according to prevailing needs, continue to improve the various subsidies for kindergartens,

alleviate the dissatisfaction and grievances of the kindergarten sector towards the Government, and help kindergartens tide over the operation crisis, so that Hong Kong can harvest more abundant talents in the future.

Deputy President, I support the Motion of Thanks. I so submit.

MR SHIU KA-FAI (in Cantonese): Deputy President, given the black-clad violence in Hong Kong in 2019, and the fact that some politicians in Europe and the United States keep suppressing the development of our country, there are still many rumours in foreign countries accusing Hong Kong of wrongdoings. Therefore, it is very important to sing the praises of Hong Kong and tell good stories of Hong Kong.

I would like to tell the Chief Secretary for Administration that I went to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre this morning because the Mega Show was being held there, and one of the contractors invited me to go there and listen to the views of the exhibitors. Prior to the epidemic, there were 5 000 exhibitors at the Mega Show every year, but this year there were only about a tenth of them. However, from talking to the exhibitors today, I found that the exhibitors who came from Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, India and Turkey were actually very happy to be able to do business here in Hong Kong. The reason was that the epidemic had brought many events around the world to a halt, but this event gave them a chance to come back to Hong Kong, which was a good start. I, therefore, hope that the SAR Government will continue to work hard.

That said, some exhibitors indicated today that the SAR Government is now providing support to the Trade Development Council by offering a subsidy of \$10,000 per booth to overseas exhibitors. If the subsidy is also applicable to private-sector exhibitions, it will help Hong Kong move a step forward and sing the praises of Hong Kong. Thank you.

MR BENSON LUK (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. “Hong Kong will prosper only when its young people thrive”. In his important speech on 1 July and the report to the 20th National Congress, General Secretary XI Jinping also devoted dedicated paragraphs to young people at the end thereof, which shows

that he has high hopes for them. He further reminded us therein that the Party “should regard our work concerning young people as a matter of strategic significance”.

(THE PRESIDENT resumed the Chair)

The Policy Address continues to devote a dedicated chapter to young people, with the title of “Hong Kong will Prosper Only When its Young People Thrive”, explaining how to help young people overcome the practical difficulties in education, employment, entrepreneurship and home ownership. The number of references to “youth/young people” and related keywords in the Policy Address is over 90, at least. While this number may not be the highest among all policy addresses delivered so far, the priority given to youth in the policies of the SAR Government is unprecedentedly high. The “Youth Development Blueprint” promised therein is so eye-catching that it is typically unparalleled in nature in the history of youth policy development in Hong Kong. It has also raised the attention and expectations of the youth sector and young people in general. We all hope that the policies of the SAR Government will bring tangible and visible dividends to young people. To put it simply, we are all eyes and ears.

I am still a young person, and I have been involved in youth work for over 20 years, but, as I have always said, the youth policy of the Hong Kong SAR in the past seemed to be faintly discernible, as if it was hidden in different policies. It seemed to be intangible and invisible. When we bring up any youth issue, we have to go through three or five bureaux and departments at any one time. Take youth hostels as an example. We have to go through quite a number of departments, including the Home Affairs Department, the Buildings Department, the Lands Department, the Highways Department, the District Councils, the Legislative Council and so on. Many non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”) that were originally interested in participating in the project have been in a spin. Therefore, if we want to follow the previous practice of using the vacant sites of NGOs to build youth hostels, the authorities have to help them go through the government departments so as to enhance speed and quantity.

Fortunately, the authorities deserve credit for introducing an innovative solution to the problem of youth hostels by borrowing the model of transitional housing and introducing an expanded version of the Youth Hostel Scheme in the

Policy Address, promising to provide an additional 3 000 new hostel places in the next five years by subsidizing NGOs to rent hotels and guesthouses as youth hostels, thus doubling the number of places in the whole project to over 6 000.

Certainly, the housing problem is not only a problem for young people but also a problem for Hong Kong people in general. That said, recently, a senior asked me, “Hey, Benson, why do young people always want to buy a flat? In fact, people usually work for many years before buying a flat”.

However, if young people want to buy a home, have a place to live, or have their own little place, is that not a good thing? Many young people in Hong Kong merely want to exert themselves or rely on their own meagre resources to find a job they like, to get a flat, to buy a home, to move upward, to be a better person, and to contribute to society. Is that not a good thing? The aspiration of young people to move upward is precisely a slap in the face for those who often accuse young people of “lying flat”.

I believe that you, the President, will not agree with the public opinion that we have nothing to do during the recess of the Legislative Council. I also believe that many of us Members are too busy during the recess of the Legislative Council to take the so-called summer break.

It was during the recess that I invited some 50 young people to a number of focus group meetings. They generally agreed that home ownership is not only about getting married and having children or having a place to live but also about ensuring that they would have housing security after retirement. They could consider taking out a reverse mortgage even if they did not have enough money after retirement. However, many young people say that they often cannot afford to buy a home even if they can afford the monthly mortgage payments and that the biggest barrier to home ownership for them is the difficulty of putting down a down payment.

Speaking of retirement protection, many young people know very well that the current Mandatory Provident Fund (“MPF”), not counting the investment losses, is definitely not enough to pay for the rent of a flat and daily living expenses when they retire 30 years later. Earlier on, I have repeatedly advised the SAR Government to consider drawing reference from the practices of Singapore and studying the introduction of an MPF Home Starter Loan Scheme so that eligible

young people can use MPF funds for the down payment of their first home purchase by way of mortgage, thereby enabling them to buy their own homes, climb up the housing ladder and genuinely move upward.

President, on the issue of education for young people, we have often focused on the pre-employment learning stage, but when it comes to education, knowledge is very important, especially at a time when our country and the Hong Kong SAR have to achieve quality development. If we talk about the upward mobility of young people, on-the-job training and lifelong learning are even more decisive. Especially for young people who have reached a more mature and experienced stage like me, continuing education is of great benefit.

As we all know, the average cost of a master's degree at a local university is \$100,000 or so, and for a bachelor's degree, it is \$200,000 or so. Improvement has been made to our Continuing Education Fund this year as the Budget proposes to raise its subsidy ceiling by \$5,000. And with \$25,000, one can enrol for about half a semester.

In performing tasks concerning young people, we should not only target young people but also treat their parents as stakeholders. As such, I have recently had parents asking me, "Hey, Benson, can we use the money from our own Continuing Education Fund to pay for our daughter's nursing programme?" I think this proposal is absolutely able to address the problem in terms of policy innovation.

Therefore, I would also like to advise the SAR Government to consider allowing family members to share the subsidy from the Continuing Education Fund among their immediate family members. For example, the parents and an elder brother can use their subsidies under the Continuing Education Fund to pay for the nursing programme taken by his younger sister. This is exactly a genuine story of a young person receiving family support, exerting herself to move upward and contributing to society. I hope the authorities will seriously consider this.

President, young people are never stereotyped, and there are ups and downs in their life. Among the 110 key performance indicators ("KPIs") set by the Chief Executive, I hope Members will pay attention to the last KPI, which belongs to the Security Bureau, that is, the rehabilitation of young persons in custody.

It is stated that the Youth Lab and Change Lab will be launched by end-2022 so as to enhance psychological and counselling services for young persons in custody and those under supervision after release. A memorandum of understanding will also be signed with the Hong Kong Metropolitan University to provide more comprehensive support for persons in custody who wish to continue their studies.

I know that many groups and friends want to give positive guidance to these young people. I also hope that the SAR Government will continue to give positive guidance to our young people in need of rehabilitation and help them so that even if they have different life experiences, they will still have the opportunity to contribute to society in the future as long as they are positive and law-abiding.

President, the first sentence in the text of the Speech at a Ceremony Marking the Centenary of the Communist Youth League of China delivered by General Secretary XI Jinping reads, “Youth gives rise to infinite hope, and young people are the creators of a bright future”. I believe that our country, or the Hong Kong SAR, can thrive and prosper only when it places hope on its youth and maintains its youthful vigour.

I will move my first motion at the Legislative Council meeting next week to give the Council an opportunity to, as far as young people are concerned, debate the motion on “Formulating a policy and a blueprint on facilitating young people’s upward mobility”. I hope that I can work with my colleagues in the Council to inject impetus into the future of young people and cheer them on.

“Everybody is young once in their life. Now is the time for you to make the most of your youth, and the future is a time for you to look back on it”.

Learning from the past and looking into the future, I hope that the SAR Government can create a desirable social environment for young people so that they can work hard for their future, and in the future, when they look back, they will have good memories.

With these remarks, I support the motion “That this Council thanks the Chief Executive for his address”. Thank you, President.

MR CHAN YUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I would like to thank the Secretaries of Departments and Directors of Bureaux who are present at this debate session. Both the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong and the New Territories Association of Societies are in full support of Chief Executive John LEE as well as his Policy Address, hoping that the various initiatives proposed will be passed expeditiously by the Council to benefit and help members of the public, in particular our young people.

President XI Jinping remarked during his visit to Hong Kong that “Hong Kong will prosper only when its young people thrive” and pointed out in his report to the 20th CPC National Congress that “our country will be strong only when its young people are strong”. As we all know, young people are our future for sure, and Chief Executive John LEE has also stated in the Policy Address his wish for “better prospects for the youth in their education and achievements, and more development opportunities in society”. This tells us that young people are our hope, and we constantly work hard in order that the next generation will have better opportunities and happier lives.

The Government’s efforts in formulating the Youth Development Blueprint, as portrayed in the Policy Address, have been given particular emphasis. The most important thing I wish to point out is that the money spent on young people accounts for a considerable proportion of total government expenditure. As resources are allocated to different Policy Bureaux and followed up by different bureau secretaries or departments, I hope that the Chief Executive will, together with all Secretaries and bureau secretaries, compile detailed statistics to work out the amount of resources invested on young people by each department and the cost-effectiveness of each respective department. Under the current organizational structure of the Government, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (“HYAB”) is expressly tasked to carry out youth work, and Secretary Alice MAK has been making a strenuous effort to do her job. And also, youth work is very effective under the leadership of Mr Eric CHAN, the Chief Secretary for Administration.

It is certain that additional resources should be allocated to HYAB for its better implementation of youth work. However, if the resources supposed to be allocated to HYAB (a bureau which has the greatest responsibility, commitment and leadership role in respect of youth affairs) are still held by other Policy Bureaux, then reallocation of resources is indeed necessary. The Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary may have to study the overall situation in due course. Given that HYAB bears the greatest responsibility both

nominally and actually in respect of youth affairs, it is hoped that the resources in question—not only money but also venues, relevant personnel and staff of responsible departments—can be pooled together to set up a dedicated task force to help local young people.

Let me take the Strive & Rise Programme led by the Chief Secretary for Administration as an example. The goals of the Programme have been achieved within a short period of time with better-than-expected outcomes just because it manages to focus resources on helping the poorest children at the grass-roots level. We thought at first that the original quota of 2 000 places was already quite fine, but it turned out that more people could benefit. Against this backdrop, it is believed that as long as the Government can proceed with resource reallocation and deal with the issue in a more focused and targeted manner, Hong Kong's young people will be able to get real development opportunities in the near term under the new Government and the Policy Address, which will give them a sense of gain and well-being. We are very supportive of this.

Thank you, President.

PROF LAU CHI-PANG (in Cantonese): President, the people of a country should have a basic understanding of the history and culture of their own country before they can be called the nationals of the country. Hong Kong has experienced various challenges and hardships in the past decade, and the key reason is that Hong Kong society has been lacking effective “national education” and “national history education”. As such, national education and national history education are important and urgently needed to ensure that this 10-year sad history will not be repeated in Hong Kong either today or in future. The Policy Address states that “schools are encouraged to regularly review the primary and junior secondary school curricula and enrich them with learning elements such as the history and geography of our country”, which I think is a forward-looking measure that deserves support.

In the Great Learning, one of the Four Books of Confucianism, it is stated that “[t]heir persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy.” It provides an explanation of the relationship between the individual and the state in an effective and orderly manner and is still of reference value to the reality today.

The nationals of a country start by cultivating their own character, followed by taking care of their families and clans; and after having acquired a certain level of talent and virtue, they enter society to serve the people and contribute to the noble ideal of making everyone tranquil and happy.

“Cultivating oneself, regulating a family, governing a state, and making a kingdom tranquil and happy” can be regarded as key performance indicators for a person’s lifelong pursuit, yet a bit unattainable and out of reach. However, as the old saying goes, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”. National education and national history education in Hong Kong may start from the most basic step, and the first thing that Hong Kong youths need to know is where they come from, that is, to better know their “native places”. From there, they can further understand the history and culture of their hometown, and then they can look at the whole of China and build positive values towards the country.

“Native place” is a key term in Chinese history and culture and the driving force behind the unity and growth of the Chinese nation. Since the inception of Hong Kong as a port, clansmen associations have played a vital role in building a harmonious society, have been actively supporting the implementation of “one country, two systems” since the return of Hong Kong to the motherland, and have continued to assist the Chief Executive in pursuing the policy objective of “starting a new chapter together”.

Hong Kong people of certain age groups have the habit of asking each other about their “native places”. We remember that there was a column of “native place” on student information records for kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools. However, since a certain juncture before Hong Kong’s return to the motherland, the column of “native place” had gradually disappeared from student information records. Regarding my earlier suggestion of adding the item on “native place” back to student information records, the Education Bureau replied that no consensus had been reached regarding the addition of a column on “native places. As far as I can tell from my superficial historical research, there was no “consensus” on the deletion of the column on “native place” back then, and the reasons behind the deletion were unknown. As for the proposal of reinstating the column on “native place”, I have always been serving in the education sector but have never come across any consultation on this issue, so it is really difficult to know where the Bureau’s claim of “no consensus” comes from.

President, in any event, we should draw a lesson from past experience. The late spring will still bring the joy of warm spring to the people. I hope that the Government can put aside the distorted historical burden and accept my humble suggestion of reinstating the column on “native place” to student information records for kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools so as to take a small step towards the big goal underpinning our national education and national history education.

With these remarks, President, I support the Motion of Thanks on the Policy Address.

MS LILLIAN KWOK (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. Our country and Hong Kong will prosper only when our young people thrive. To do a good job in youth work, we need to do a good job in education because “education is of critical importance to the future of our country”. It is time to apply for school admission again. In order to get into prestigious schools, children have to not only attend interview preparation classes but also shoot videos like KOLs. They even have to face several examiners during the interview, which I think is more challenging than interviews for the posts of AO in the Government.

People often say that “education is not about test scores” and that we should have fun learning, but in reality, the whole education system in Hong Kong is still elitist, test scores are the most important thing, and many students feel that they are not happy studying in Hong Kong. I always say that schools should be designed for students, but the situation in Hong Kong is just the opposite, as students are often designed for schools, thus reversing the whole concept of education. I hope that the Government will reform itself, abandon its old mindset and face up to and address this deep-rooted problem of education; otherwise, even though there are many good policies and directions in the Policy Address, they will eventually become deformed and impractical.

President, education is about cultivating virtues and nurturing students. It has been 25 years since the return of Hong Kong to the motherland, and I hope that our education philosophy can also return to its proper place. We should do a good job in parent education to reduce the number of monster parents; implement diversified education so that children can have something to choose from; and do

a good job in character education so that young people can be put on the right track, and that education in Hong Kong can truly be people-oriented.

With these remarks, I support the motion. Thank you, President.

MS STARRY LEE (in Cantonese): President, in an effort to tell the good stories of Hong Kong, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (“DAB”) sent three delegations to visit Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore from 4 to 10 September. The three delegations attended over 50 meetings and visits, reached over 500 local businessmen and professionals, and visited the embassies there. Our story-telling visits were widely covered by Hong Kong’s media. Based on the fruits of our visits, we have already made proposals relating to the Policy Address to the SAR Government. Given the difficult international relations, we believe that enhancing relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (“ASEAN”) is a good direction for Hong Kong to remain closely connected to the world and maintain its status as an international city.

Whilst I am aware that the recommendations of the DAB have not been fully taken on board by the Policy Address, including elevating the strategic importance of the ASEAN region, I do note that there are two paragraphs about “Belt and Road” regions, including ASEAN countries. In paragraph 120, it is mentioned that more students along the “Belt and Road” will be attracted to pursue their studies in Hong Kong and the “Belt and Road” Scholarship will also be introduced, as recommended by the DAB. Considering the acute labour shortage in Hong Kong and ASEAN countries’ proximity to Hong Kong, I am very supportive of this proposal. As we have done too little in promoting Hong Kong’s education, it is my hope that the Secretary for Education can further intensify and enhance publicity efforts in relation to Hong Kong’s education, especially for those interested in pursuing their studies in Hong Kong from ASEAN and other countries.

Moreover, regarding key performance indicators (“KPI”), one of the KPIs is that the Department of Justice will lead delegations of the local legal sector to visit ASEAN member states and other Southeast Asian, Middle East and African countries from 2023 onward. I think not only the Secretary for Justice but many other government officials have also visited other places recently, with ASEAN being a top priority, as the Chief Executive is now having a visit in Thailand too.

To tell Hong Kong good stories and good China stories, in addition to forming overseas delegations led by government officials, it is more important to mobilize the public and all sectors. I believe people from the business sector, including those promoting culture and sports, are the best candidates for telling good stories. Indeed, as Members, especially Members of the Council under the principle of “patriots administering Hong Kong”, we can play a very good role in telling good stories. Therefore, I hope that under the leadership of the Chief Secretary for Administration, more systematic and larger delegations can be formed to tell Hong Kong’s good stories in depth on various areas and present them clearly to places all over the world.

One of our visit-based recommendations turned down by the Chief Executive is to reorganize and promote the functions of offices outside Hong Kong, such as the Economic and Trade Offices (“ETOs”). Apart from sending delegations to tell good stories, attract businesses and talents and identify strategic enterprises, it is more important to engage various overseas ETOs to do so. According to our rough statistics, out of the 14 overseas ETOs, 8 of which are located in developed economies, such as Europe and North America, and only three are in the ASEAN region, that is, Bangkok, Singapore and Jakarta, serving 10 ASEAN countries. With the jockeying between great powers and changing international landscape, we need to explore ASEAN markets and develop the “Belt and Road”. It is, therefore, necessary to reorganize the establishment of overseas ETOs based on the existing strategies.

In addition, not only are overseas ETOs performing their own duties, but InvestHK and other subvented organizations are also playing their various roles overseas. In fact, Singapore and other places have set up joint offices overseas to promote their own advantages in concerted efforts. In doing so, they are attracting businesses and talents, identifying strategic enterprises and telling their good stories. In view of the new landscape, I hope the Chief Secretary for Administration can amalgamate ETOs and overseas offices equipped with other functions in order to achieve better results in telling good Hong Kong stories and attracting businesses and talents.

Apart from telling good stories, I would also like to talk about youth policy. We all look very much forward to the Youth Development Blueprint (“the Blueprint”). But how young are the youth in the context of Hong Kong or other places in the world? I am not quite sure whether the Blueprint will touch on this. But I gather there is no universal definition in the community. The youth can

refer to people under 45 or under 40, while I assume the youth should refer to people under 25. Indeed, many people over 25 have already joined the ranks of the middle class as most of them have already graduated, started to strive hard for their careers, and will consider building their families and even buying their homes. So, in my view, people over 25 should belong to the “marginal middle class”.

It is true that currently, there is no policy for addressing the problems facing the “marginal middle class” in society. No Policy Bureau caters for the middle class in Hong Kong or is tasked with expanding the ratio of the middle-class population. I hope that the Chief Secretary for Administration could take this into account as these “marginal middle-class” people are actually vulnerable. According to statistics, the proportion of those living in rented private housing units keeps rising from 12.2% in 2006 to 16.5% in 2021. Why do they need to live in rented private housing units? The answer is obvious: they want their own space, but perhaps more importantly, they need personal space after marriage but cannot afford to buy homes. I think this group of people should be treated as the “marginal middle class”. Their rent burden is certainly heavier than that of public housing residents. They are the most dejected group of people in society. How can the Government take care of these “marginal middle-class” people, particularly to address their home ownership needs and the current structural imbalance in our industries? I hope that the Chief Secretary for Administration can think about whether any Policy Bureau is capable of helping these “marginal middle-class” people.

Lastly, as Secretary Prof LO Chung-mau is also here, I hope that he can give some thought to the accident and emergency service in Wong Tai Sin district. As I have no time to speak on it today, I will have an appointment and meet with Prof LO later. It is hoped that Prof LO will not forget local residents’ worries about healthcare services when he is engaged in fighting the epidemic. Given the large number of elderly people in Kowloon, we are all very worried about the fact that there will be only one leading hospital, namely the Kai Tak Hospital, in future without any traffic improvement in nearby areas (*The buzzer sounded*) ... I implore Prof LO to pay more attention to this.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Ms Starry LEE, please stop speaking.

Mr SO Cheung-wing, please speak.

MR SO CHEUNG-WING (in Cantonese): President, in the chapter of “Work Together to Safeguarding Harmony and Stability” in his Policy Address, the Chief Executive has outlined an array of wide-ranging, comprehensive and pioneering plans and measures that cover various areas and target groups. I am very grateful that these plans and measures can cater to the needs of society and the public.

But based on my long-term experience in district work and my sincerity in suggesting to the Government ways to improve district administration and governance, I am slightly disappointed with the section of the Policy Address on district-level actions. First of all, the part of “District Administration” only gives states that the future of the District Councils is yet to be decided. However, with regard to improving district administration, I think the roles played by District Councils do not mean everything. In the depth of the fifth wave of the epidemic, the major deficiencies of community support services to handle a severe public crisis in Hong Kong are exposed. As such, the Government must comprehensively collate the provision of regular services to the grass roots.

Setting up District Services and Community Care Teams (“Care Teams”) is a good attempt and a pleasing step forward. Nevertheless, the management structure and operation of the Care Teams proposed in the Policy Address will be determined by the Government, whereas only some of the resources required are provided by the Government, and the Care Teams are subject to the assessment and monitoring by key performance indicators (“KPIs”). So, my questions to the Government are: What does it mean by “providing some of the resources required”? What percentage of the actual resources required will it provide? Are the Care Teams a permanent institution serving the public, or rather, a “piecemeal” service? If the resources allocated are not sufficient, how can they effectively provide services, and how can we undertake comprehensive KPI assessments? By setting up the Care Teams alone, can the Chief Executive fully fulfil his promises about improving district governance as outlined in the election manifesto?

District work has always been the foundation of the Government’s effective governance, while the community is at the front line in shaping the political landscape, venting the public’s emotions, social movements, epidemic crises, etc. Given the incomplete grass-roots network and the obvious disconnection between public services and district services, when implementing its policies, the Government should not neglect the need to maintain good interface and interaction between the administration systems and district service mechanisms to maintain harmony and stability.

With the implementation of “patriots administering Hong Kong”, when traditional non-governmental organizations can enjoy the Government’s provision of enormous resources for a sustained period of time, then why can traditional patriotic and Hong Kong-loving organizations not establish their function of complementing the Government’s policy implementation and enhance the supporting resources in serving the public?

I implore the new-term SAR Government to attach importance to the irreplaceable functions performed by these organizations in relation to serving grass-roots communities.

First, the governance mindset and interests of these patriotic and Hong Kong-loving organizations are in alignment with those of the Government, with strong mobilization power. We will not forget that whenever there are social crises, they always have a key role to play in mobilizing local power, helping out with the rescue and mutual-aid tasks and advocating initiatives.

Second, patriotic and Hong Kong-loving organizations have been deeply rooted in districts both before and after Hong Kong’s return to the motherland. Having a large membership and wide coverage, they have been closely connected to the general public and know what the grass roots think and need. They are proficient in delivering district services and thus can help the Government to more precisely (*The buzzer sounded*) ... focus resources to address the most pressing needs of the public.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr SO Cheung-wing, please stop speaking.

Ms Judy CHAN, please speak.

MS JUDY CHAN (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. Under the epidemic of COVID-19 that has dragged on for years and the serious challenges that it brings, our local health professionals have been totally dedicated to safeguarding public health at the front line every day. When the local healthcare system was facing a huge challenge, thanks to our country’s efforts in coordinating Mainland medical

teams' full support for Hong Kong, we were able to overcome a multitude of difficulties. Thus, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to every health professional for their anti-epidemic efforts at the front line.

I was confirmed with infection earlier on and felt very bad during the process. I believe recovered patients would share my feelings. It was fortunate that I had a sufficient supply of medicine under home isolation to relieve my symptoms, the most important one being Lianhua Qingwen Jiaonang, a proprietary Chinese medicine.

I exhibited symptoms of “long COVID” after recovery, so I have been consulting Chinese medicine practitioners for healthcare and have seen gradual improvements. As a recovered patient, I truly realize the importance of Chinese medicine in tackling the epidemic, and I believe many members of the public would also agree with me. While the epidemic has been rampant across the world for a sustained period, with our motherland's medicine support, many countries get to realize the efficacy of Chinese medicine. The results are there for all to see, especially in some Southeast Asian countries.

President, in my view, as Hong Kong is an important hub for the inheritance, innovation and development of Chinese medicine, the SAR Government must come up with more ideas and blueprints to facilitate the inheritance, innovation and development of Chinese medicine, and should make the best use of our role as an international trade centre to develop a centre for trade and collaboration in Chinese medicine. This will not only capitalize on Hong Kong's role as the bridge between our country and the rest of the world but can also enable the global development of Chinese medicine and foster the internationalization of Chinese medicine soon.

I so submit. Thank you, President.

MS CHAN HOI-YAN (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. In this session, I would like to start by talking about education. It is mentioned in the Policy Address that the Government will, through the strategy of fostering industry-institution collaboration and diversified development, promote vocational and professional education and training (“VPET”) as a pathway parallel to conventional academic education, providing diversified learning and employment opportunities for young people. I very much agree with this direction, but I would like to point out that VPET programmes are now mainly provided by self-financing post-

secondary institutions, and the recognition of such programmes has often come into question. I have looked up data and found that under the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors, almost all places for programmes with good prospects, such as nursing and business, have been taken up. However, most of the other programmes have had low enrolment rates, with some reporting annual student intakes in single-digit numbers. In view of this, when increasing the number of school places, the Government should face up to the problem of insufficient recognition of programmes by self-financing institutions; otherwise, we will not be able to attract students to enrol even with more school places.

In fact, the recognition of programmes can be increased in many different ways, such as by building connections with the industries, providing ample internship opportunities, and even adjusting programmes in response to industry developments to raise the employment rate of graduates. This is the direction adopted by the industries and self-financing institutions, but the achievements are not that remarkable.

Another direction is to change the social perception of VPET programmes. I have proposed in the Legislative Council on multiple occasions that the Government should assist in the transformation of self-financing institutions offering VPET programmes into vocational and professional education and training universities so as to increase the recognition of applied degrees. At the same time, through the provision of subsidies and improvement of programme management and quality of education, vocational degree programmes may enjoy equal status with their academic counterparts in Hong Kong, eliminating the perception that vocational degrees are inferior to academic ones. In the long term, we need to further enhance the articulation pathway of VPET to truly put in place a dual-track system of vocational training and academic education.

With the decrease in the lesson time taken up by core subjects in future, students may take an additional elective subject. In spite of this, under the examination-oriented education system, most of the subjects are academic-oriented. Even if they are particularly interested in enrolling in VPET programmes, they have no choice but to take the subjects first. Only after three years of studies and having taken the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination can students take a step back to take the Diploma of Applied Education or vocational degrees to further their studies. This will not be conducive to young people's life planning and will more or less lead them through a winding path.

I have previously advised the Government to take reference from the Finland or Germany models, where students can receive career-oriented training starting from their senior secondary years. The training focuses on practical skills and offers a large number of internships so that students will be equipped to join enterprises right after graduation, or they can choose to take vocational degrees for further studies.

Overall speaking, VPET should start from elective subjects in secondary schools, followed by training in the senior secondary years and further specialization of skills in post-secondary education, in order to effectively provide young people with alternative study opportunities other than academic education to develop their own talents. Only through this can we effectively bring about a dual-track system of vocational training and academic education.

Lastly, I would, of course, speak on the subject of healthcare. The latest Policy Address finally indicates that the Government will establish the Primary Healthcare Authority and enhance the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme, and also proposes to better utilize multi-disciplinary healthcare services. I certainly support these proposals as they have responded to my recommendations made at the Legislative Council and have further recognized the importance of primary healthcare. Nevertheless, in view of an increasingly ageing population, coupled with a surge in the demand for healthcare services and a sustained increase in healthcare spending, developing primary healthcare will no doubt become the core of future health policies. But I have to point out again that in order to establish a truly complete primary healthcare network, the Government needs to carry out manpower planning properly in addition to focusing on integrating services, as services can only be provided when manpower is available.

At present, healthcare manpower projections are published once every three years in Hong Kong. As expected by the public, the last two projections show that there will be shortages of doctors and nurses in the next decade, while there will be adequate supplies of other health professionals, such as pharmacists and Chinese medicine practitioners. But have we made the best use of the adequate supplies of professionals? The Policy Bureau needs to give further consideration as to how to interpret the data and adjust its policies.

With the forthcoming promulgation of the Primary Healthcare Blueprint, I hope there will be better concrete plans in relation to the future development of primary healthcare in Hong Kong without averting some long-standing and deep-seated problems, including primary dental and ophthalmic services, especially

dental services. Strictly speaking, there are no integrated public dental services in Hong Kong. We should also be aware that to get the job done well, a large number of dentists and an enormous amount of public funds will be involved, but, for the same reason, the Government of every term has neither taken any action nor taken even the smallest step forward. In fact, this will only make the problem worse. If oral diseases are not treated at early stages, patients will end up paying more for dentures. Take the treatment of other diseases as an example, such as gastrointestinal diseases. Delayed treatment will incur extra money and costs in the end. These are perfect examples explaining why it is important to focus not only on treatment but also prevention and promote primary healthcare. It has been pointed out in the Policy Address that a working group on the development of dental care services will be set up to review dental services. Notwithstanding this, members of the public have been waiting for dental services endlessly but to no avail. Now that it is impossible to increase the quotas for emergency dental services (or “general public sessions”), what can they do? When patients with emergency dental problems cannot secure the several dozen general public session quotas or afford private dental services, should they be left to fend for themselves or just resort to folk remedies? It is necessary for us to address squarely the issue of dental services, which is not only confined to the grass roots and the elderly but also the youth and the middle class, who also have difficulties seeking dental services and affording expensive dental services.

I hold high hopes for the current-term Government and really hope that the Government can take a step forward on dental services, no matter how small it is. In the short term, I hope the Government can extend the School Dental Care Service to secondary students and introduce scaling and polishing, and tooth-filling services to general public sessions. After increasing the manpower of dentists and dental therapists, dental services should be provided by the District Health Centres in all 18 districts in Hong Kong.

With these remarks, I support Ms Starry LEE’s motion.

MR DOMINIC LEE (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. Recently, many friends, especially our colleagues in the Council, have said that we should tell good stories of China and Hong Kong. Therefore, I find it very suitable to adopt “Tell good stories of Hong Kong” as the theme of the fourth session. However, how should it be done if good stories of China and Hong Kong are to be told?

Chief Executive John LEE has told us that even though we think Hong Kong society is very good, we should not adopt the attitude of “good wine needs no bush”. Therefore, we should come together to tell good stories of Hong Kong and China. Many colleagues in the Council have already done so earlier, but is this the best way to tell good stories of Hong Kong? If only we do this, it may not be regarded as “good wine needs no bush” but “one boasts one’s product” only.

When I was having dinner with Mrs Regina IP the day before yesterday, she told me that it was not enough to rely only on Chinese people in Hong Kong and China to tell good China stories. We must get foreigners to do so. A big event, the Hong Kong Sevens, took place in Hong Kong some time ago. I bought tickets to watch the matches too. We made a video in which the foreigners present were asked how they saw Hong Kong’s reopening to the world. We also asked them to spend 15 seconds calling on foreign friends to come to Hong Kong. Therefore, I think the best means to tell good Hong Kong stories is to attract more foreign friends to come to Hong Kong so that they can join major events in Hong Kong by themselves. This is the best way to tell good Hong Kong stories.

Large-scale events are mostly arts and cultural activities, as well as major sports events. The Policy Address proposes measures related to these two areas. In terms of arts and culture, the Policy Address proposes establishing the Mega Arts and Cultural Events Fund. From next year onward, four mega arts and cultural events will be sponsored by the Fund. We support this direction very much, of course, but we cannot help asking, “Will it be too few to have four events only? If we want to restart Hong Kong and tell the world that we are back in business, should we not hold more activities? Moreover, the relevant subsidy ceiling is set at HK\$15 million. Although Secretary Kevin YEUNG said last time that HK\$15 million was a big sum, is it really the case? About holding mega-events, I have communicated with many friends in the sector to see whether HK\$15 million is enough. In this regard, I hope that the Government can set a higher amount for maximum subsidy or allocation from the Fund to support more such activities.

On the other hand, when it comes to major sports events, we must mention the “M” Mark system. A very successful event held recently is the Hong Kong Masters 2022 of the World Snooker Tour held at the Hong Kong Coliseum. We have contacted some friends in the sports sector from the sponsor, and they think Hong Kong is very capable of hosting more such large-scale sports events, but it is a pity that the venues are very much limited. I understand that Hong Kong will

have different venues in Kai Tak in the future—next year, the year after, and even further in the future. They will be completed one after another. Hopefully, the problems with venues can be alleviated.

While communicating with government departments, friends in the sector feel that the Government's support for major events is insufficient, including the lack of flexibility in venue requirements and fee arrangements. I believe, therefore, in addition to hardware, we must put in more efforts to strengthen our software if we want to encourage more major events to be held in Hong Kong, and in particular, the thinking patterns of government officials must be adjusted. If adjustments can be made, we can encourage more major events to be held in Hong Kong and attract more foreign friends to come to Hong Kong and experience for themselves what Hong Kong and China are like. I believe that we need not rely only on colleagues in the Council or government officials to tell good stories of Hong Kong. Naturally, many foreign friends will tell stories for us. I firmly believe that Hong Kong itself is a place that deserves admiration, participation and promotion worldwide. Let us work together to tell good stories of Hong Kong and good stories of China.

Thank you. I so submit.

MR PAUL TSE (in Cantonese): President, I have listened to the speeches of many colleagues, and it has almost come to an end now. Thank you for Members' knowledgeable insights. Unlike those from the 18-member political party or 19-member bloc, I can only make a limited speech as a Member of the Legislative Council. I just hope to play the role of a "cobbler" to attract bright ideas by expressing my views. I don't know whether what I say belongs to the criticism or argument that Mrs Regina IP mentioned. I hope there is a bit of both. I would like to talk about a few points at this stage for the authorities' reference.

We have heard many jargons such as "from chaos to governance" and "from stability to prosperity" these days. But in fact, we hear more about emigration when we work on the front line or contact citizens or when we open IG. If not, they talk about their miserable investment failure or brain drain. In the government's official words, we have to "snatch talents". When we go shopping these days, we can see many "outlet shops" everywhere, which is a euphemism for "auction shops", a term we use to refer to shops selling cheap items by means of open bidding. We can also see the popular "two-topping rice" now. The US

Consul General posted a hashtag on Facebook with “This This Rice” when referring to a meal of this. If we view it from these perspectives, the present moment is a hard period, a difficult time.

Our Global Financial Leaders’ Investment Summit held earlier was relatively successful in promoting Hong Kong’s return to the world. However, did the international financial leaders who attended really get what they wanted to hear? Could we provide some information about the financial policies of China and Hong Kong to help investors return to Hong Kong and keep investing confidently? Judging from their response, it seems that they were happy to come together, but in fact the target was missed. They felt that the Summit meeting failed to prescribe the right medicine for them by providing them with the content they wanted precisely.

Similarly, if the Policy Address cannot prescribe the right medicine—although we have not yet reached the point of time when we need to fight a real war, not under wartime administration yet, the war is close. We are being suppressed in various aspects, such as in finance and technology. Faced with economic difficulties, we should adopt a wartime mindset, or even a model for relieving disaster, in all our thoughts, practices and macro planning. We need not say too much about this, I believe.

Viewed from a positive perspective, the Policy Address of this year seems to have included many long-term infrastructure projects or other important items, but many citizens are not at ease in the dire straits, and the Policy Address lacks contents that allow the public to feel that the Government knows what is happening now. I think this is a point deserving everyone’s attention in general. Personally, I think an important feature of this Policy Address is very commendable. It is obviously the result of collective creation and hard work, which has gone through a bottom-up process and is clearly different from the previous top-down practice in which everyone submitted an assignment when the person in the core of the core issued an order. I find this bottom-up culture worth promotion.

In fact, it has been Hong Kong’s long-standing tradition, or even common sense, that “The idea from three cobblers can be better than that of a premier.” By the way, Prof LAU Chi-pang happened to be present, and I want to say that I agree with him. I am a Haka “cobbler” from the Bao’an District. Such a saying was very popular in the past, I think. I especially agree with his opinion on education.

I very much advocate pre-school enlightening education, which is consistent with what he just mentioned. It is mere side-tracking. I hope we can focus on these more important items from the perspective of overall planning.

Another feature of the Policy Address is that there are many places for spending but relatively fewer means for making money. We all know how much our reserves are, and everyone knows that the amount has fallen rapidly from \$1.2 trillion to \$800 billion. I hope that we will not see it “zeroing out” soon. The Policy Address does not say much about how to make money after spending it.

I have noticed an issue over the past few days or recently that everyone may want to ask but dare not do so and want to talk about but feel uncomfortable doing so: what is the current situation of our large-scale infrastructure, whether our high-speed rail is “feeding rats”, and what is happening? Of course, I understand that we are encountering a big problem in resuming quarantine-free travel arrangements and many other things. But have we thought about how to deal with these “half-done” or completed infrastructure projects? How can we minimize the loss, or in our law language, “mitigate” it?

Of course, it is important for us to maintain these large infrastructures, but what can we do to temporarily turn these “waste items”—for the time being, they are waste items—into recycled ones? No matter whether they are the Airport Express, the Hong Kong—Zhuhai—Macao Bridge or the Third Runway, a lot of money has been invested in them over the past few years. Has there been any “mitigation”? Even if we cannot immediately resume the busy situation at the border crossing points for quarantine-free travels, how can we minimize maintenance costs, reduce wear and tear, or even make a little use of these infrastructures? Of course, the authorities have enough resources to conduct such research.

That said, it is my impression that the Chief Executive also nodded his head. His body language showed that he approved of my point. The Government has a lot of manpower and resources for research, but the resources of Legislative Council Members are not enough. Except for those major political parties with 19, 20 or 18 Members, which have party resources, for individual Members—there are especially many individual Members now, although they themselves may be scholars or have backgrounds when compared with Western countries, the

resources of our Council in this aspect are completely insufficient. Therefore, we can only speak very roughly and generally and cannot be very detailed, making it difficult to produce the effect of mutual learning with the Government.

In the United States, no matter whether it is the ruling party, the opposition party or the party at large, each of them has similar resources, and everyone will take turns governing sooner or later. Of course, the Legislative Council has no such chance. Individual Members may have the opportunity, but overall, there will be no swapping effect. However, if we have more resources, relatively speaking, our advice may be better than that offered by “a cobbler”. I hope the authorities will give more consideration to this. No matter whether it is refined words from our officials or speeches from ordinary fellows, suggestions made by the latter can sometimes be good ones.

President, time is running out. I will say one or two points as examples. In the face of the current predicament, I think one of the things that can be considered is tunnel tolls. I understand that the Government will reconsider plans to divert the traffic flow of the three road harbour crossings (“RHCs”) when it takes over the Western Harbour Crossing (“WHC”) in August 2023 or even adopt measures to charge differential toll levels at different periods. Some other policy directions include increasing the tolls of the Cross-Harbour Tunnel (“CHT”) and Eastern Harbour Crossing (“EHC”) while reducing those of WHC.

However, taking into account the current environment, especially those well-remembered measures taken by the previous administrations that cost little but make big profits, those “sawing big trees with a knife”, such as the two measures implemented by Mr Henry TANG Ying-yen when he was the Chief Secretary for Administration. One was the wine tax, and the other was the estate tax. In fact, the Government did not need to spend any money. It only made some policy changes, and then many people still remember these good policies.

Under the current environment, in particular, can the three RHCs charge “zero” tolls? The measure needs not to be implemented for many years. It can be one or two years only. Or they may not be free on all days. They can be free from Monday to Friday, and the tolls are charged on Sunday only. Toll can be waived on weekdays to reduce the operating costs of all transport operators. By easing the pressure of effecting fare increases, the public can be benefited. It is just that the RHCs are free for a short period of time, and the public will feel that they have gained some benefits, which is something different. These are policies

that “saw big trees with a small knife”. I hope that the authorities can think about it because these are things that the public will bear in mind deeply. They are better than the things done by the authorities over and over again that no one will remember.

I don't have much speaking time left. Another point I want to talk about is the issue of brain drain. This is a concern of many friends, and many colleagues have also mentioned it. First of all, I understand that the current-term Government prefers using some more popular words that the public can know and feel, such as “to snatch talents” in Chinese. Everyone knows what this means, but sometimes I wonder whether the Government has suddenly adopted terms that are too vulgar for stating policies. In fact, would words like “attracting talents” or “retaining talents” be better ones? I understand that sometimes it is necessary to use such words for the public to understand certain concepts. By the same token, however, the choice of words is very important for the high-quality and professional management of our society.

I recently came across a short video in which Singapore's LEE Hsien Loong talked to businessmen about the issue of importing foreign labour. He named three songs for the business community and three for the public. This is an example, of course. He named “Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow” for the public. He was joking, but his elegance left a deep impression on everyone.

I have received a lot of feedback from people who say that it would be great if the counterpart of the Hong Kong Government could be like leaders of this kind. I immediately think that in fact, some small things can make a big difference. Excellence, professionalism and elegance have all along been respected in Hong Kong. Why has it suddenly become so vulgar and localized? Sometimes, we front-line Councillors must localize ourselves; otherwise, the public will not understand what we are talking about. If we use law terms all the time, they will not understand us. The same is true for my years-long efforts in pursuing law promotion work.

However, I really have some opinions on the use of “snatching talents” in the Government's official Chinese documents. Why must we “snatch” them? I hope this is just an example, and I hope that while keeping close to the wording used nation-wide as a whole, we will not sacrifice Hong Kong's traditional cultural background, which is relatively elegant and high-quality. In so doing, it is justifiable to sustain the implementation of “one country, two systems” in Hong

Kong, proving that Hong Kong still enjoys some merits that seem worthy of learning by people in the Mainland. If we often talk about snatching, fighting, and so on and so forth, it may come to the stage that Hong Kong is no different from other places in the Mainland. I do not think that is the direction Hong Kong should follow.

However, this is a matter of wording only. When it comes to the real situation, of course, we cannot finish it all at once. However, in terms of attracting talent, even if we cannot do what Shenzhen did a few years ago—it is impossible for us to give RMB5 million to young people graduating from Tsinghua University and Peking University to start a business, nor can we provide such a big discount in housing and education like Singapore—can we remove the barriers for them to work and live in Hong Kong? This is worth considering. Regarding the plan to attract talents with an annual salary of \$2.5 million, frankly speaking, many of the Members present may not have reached that level, except for Members with professional backgrounds. Therefore, is such an annual salary level too high? Is it infeasible? Should it be lowered a bit at all?

A total of 140 000 people have drained from our population this year. Many of them are young people in their prime and in the middle class with a high level of education. We now see many such situations in the legal sector, more in the medical field, and in all walks of life. Under such circumstances, it is undeniable that the country has suddenly tightened its direction. It is also undeniable that Hong Kong has to adapt to it in a short while. It is inevitable that many of those who have differing values choose to emigrate, and this trend will intensify in the coming years.

Under such circumstances, we must see accurately where the problems emerge. We should not lie to ourselves. We must think about how we can boost the sources and reduce the drain, which means retaining talent in Hong Kong. We should not say, “I’m telling you that we’ll vacate the cage for new birds. You’d better go away. As your values are different from ours, you need not care about us. You may go to the UK or the US to make for your hard living.” Of course, some people will not listen to what other people say, and they will leave anyway. But more people now feel as if they were in the water for boiling frogs, which would get hotter and hotter. They are forced to make their choice as they find the situation less and less fitting the traditional values of Hong Kong.

If we do not want these things to happen, we must do more. We should pay attention to our values instead of “following the trend” all of a sudden and rushing to keep abreast with the Mainland. Some of our things should dovetail with the nation, which is necessary. But the value of Hong Kong lies in “one country, two systems”. If we want people to stay behind and make an investment, we must ask this question for every issue: Is there any room, values and ways for us to do something or say something different under “one country, two systems” so that Hong Kong will not suddenly become a second- or third-tier city in the Mainland? This is very important.

No matter how many summit meetings we hold or how many plans we implement, if we keep changing Hong Kong’s “water” too quickly, the “fish” will die or jump away. I hope we will look at the big picture and face up to this problem. To retain talents, the most important thing is to “win their heart”. We should not make the public wonder why Hong Kong’s leaders cannot be like Singapore’s LEE Hsien Loong or why our values cannot be like those of Hong Kong in the past that advocated excellence, professionalism, openness and inclusion. When the Chief Executive recently visited a Sikh temple, he wore a turban. That is a good example, but it is not enough. We should keep doing so and doing more, not only being inclusive in terms of region and race but also maintaining Hong Kong as an inclusive, open, diverse, respectful and excellence-advocating society (*The buzzer sounded*) in terms of values. This is essential.

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

Does any other Member wish to speak?

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): If no other Members wish to speak, I will call upon the public officers to speak.

Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, please speak.

DEPUTY CHIEF SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION (in Cantonese):
President, I now speak on the subject of district environment.

Attaching much importance to district environment, the current-term Government is committed to improving environmental hygiene and street management to protect public health, create a liveable living environment for the public and enhance the city image of Hong Kong. In this connection, the Chief Executive (“CE”) established the District Matters Co-ordination Task Force in July this year to supervise and coordinate the work of 17 relevant Policy Bureaux and departments. With the Environment and Ecology Bureau (“EEB”) as the main driving party and under my leadership, the Task Force aims to enhance the overall hygiene and cityscape of Hong Kong by stepping up cleaning efforts and tackling persistent and difficult environmental hygiene and street management problems.

As the first phase of its work, the Task Force launched the Government Programme on Tackling Hygiene Black Spots in mid-August, targeting 600-odd hygiene black spots in Hong Kong and stepping up the clean-up of some 4 000 public places and dangerous/abandoned signboards. Over the past few months, I have, together with Directors of Bureaux, Heads of Departments and representatives of political parties, made a number of visits to various districts to gain first-hand experience of how the work of combating hygiene black spots is being carried out, with the aim of showcasing a more hygienic environment to the public and demonstrating the Government’s resolve to enhance the cleanliness of the city.

Progress of work

With the concerted efforts and cooperation of various departments, the work of combating hygiene black spots has made good progress, and the cleanliness of various districts has generally been improved. Various departments have stepped up enforcement actions at more than 650 hygiene black spots and strengthened the cleansing of more than 3 600 public places. Joint operations were conducted at more than 100 public back alleys, with a total of 290 abandoned vehicles removed. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”) and the Hong Kong Police Force have conducted more than 160 joint enforcement actions in different districts since October this year to tackle shopfront extension. The Buildings Department has also removed/repaired more than 1 600 dangerous or abandoned signboards. The Task Force also successfully tackled a number of long-standing environmental hygiene cases, such as “the snake lane” in Cheung Sha Wan, “the villain lane” in To Kwa Wan and “the rubbish formation” at Aberdeen Street.

Thanks to the concerted efforts of our colleagues in all the departments concerned, we have been able to attain the above achievements. Working under the new administrative style of the “result-oriented approach”, our colleagues have been actively participating in the establishment of a “standard mode of operation” for clearing abandoned vehicles in back alleys and tackling shopfront extension through rationalizing the responsibilities of departments and the relevant workflow. Following the implementation of the standard modes of operation in various districts, city cleanliness has been enhanced, and the problem of shopfront extension has been vastly improved. The long-lost cleanliness on the street is back.

Solving district environmental hygiene problems is not something that can be done overnight but requires long-term perseverance. In this regard, the Task Force will ensure that all departments will sustain their efforts in maintaining cleanliness and carrying out law enforcement work so as to consolidate the achievements in improving environmental hygiene in all districts. The Policy Address has set a number of clear indicators, i.e. removing at least 75% of some 600 environmental hygiene black spots identified by various departments by end-2023; and reducing the number of priority rodent black spots at least by half by end-2023. The Task Force will do its utmost to achieve these targets.

We are gravely concerned about the rodent infestation problem. Apart from actively following up on rodent infestation reports, EEB and FEHD are trying out and exploring various new rodent control methods. They will announce the launch of a territory-wide anti-rodent campaign by the end of next month.

Policy-wise, the Task Force will work along the following directions in future to consolidate and deepen the improvement of environmental hygiene under a multi-pronged approach.

First, proposing legislative amendments to achieve the goal of improving environmental hygiene in the long term: in coordination with EEB and other relevant departments, I am reviewing environmental hygiene-related legislation to study possible amendments to the statutory powers of law enforcement officers and the penalties for related offences, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness and deterrence of law enforcement. In this year’s Policy Address, CE has also set out a two-step indicator: to complete a review of fixed penalty for littering, waste disposal and street obstruction by end-2022 and complete another review of the remaining environmental hygiene-related legislation by mid-2023.

Secondly, establishing “standard modes of operation” to achieve the goal of eradicating environmental hygiene problems: the “long-standing, major and difficult” environmental hygiene and street management issues, which involve the functions of many departments, have been entangled for years due to unclear delineation of responsibilities. The Task Force tackles these problems at root by identifying a leading department, rationalizing workflow, consolidating efforts and establishing “standard modes of operation” for district-based implementation by departments. As I said earlier, the two “long-standing, major and difficult” problems of shopfront extension and abandoned vehicles in rear lanes have been successfully solved through this mode of operation. In the future, I will continue to lead the Task Force to establish similar “standard modes of operation” for resolving other “long-standing, major and difficult” problems.

Thirdly, strengthening enforcement to achieve the objective of changing malpractices: one of the major directions of the legislative amendments I have just mentioned is to raise the penalties for environmental hygiene offences so that offenders know that their reckless behaviour is socially unacceptable and has consequences. Take the issue of shopfront extension as an example. At the Task Force meeting held in September, I asked all departments to step up inspections and enforcement. Since October this year, FEHD and the Police have been taking territory-wide joint enforcement actions to seize and remove obstructive items on the streets, thereby increasing the costs of shopfront extension and curbing the unlawful and selfish behaviour of shops encroaching on public areas in a more effective manner. The facts speak for themselves that the new mode of enforcement is effective. I have urged all departments to step up the monitoring and enforcement of other environmental hygiene and street management issues.

Fourthly, encouraging all sectors of the community to participate in the campaign to achieve the goal of raising public awareness of environmental hygiene: for the “Clean Hong Kong” campaign to be effective and sustainable, public cooperation is essential. Strengthened enforcement must go hand in hand with strengthened education. In October, we launched a TV Announcement of Public Interest (“API”) and published posters that aimed to urge the public not to litter habitually. Various departments will also step up publicity and education for members of the public and stakeholders. The Education Bureau will organize various clean campus activities, such as the Clean Campus Day and the Clean Campus Video Production Competition, to raise students’ awareness and nurture their habits of keeping the environment clean, with a view to cultivating positive values among them. In addition, various District Offices of the Home Affairs Department will, in tandem with the Department’s environmental hygiene

improvement initiatives, invite local communities, including the soon-to-be-set-up District Services and Community Care Teams, to participate in the publicity activities so as to make full use of the district network to nurture a culture of maintaining environmental hygiene in the community.

In the next phase of work, the Task Force will embark on enhancing the cityscape, including livening up public space, upgrading street furniture, enhancing landscape architecture and streetscape, etc. At present, the planned initiatives include implementing face lifting/beautification works for more than 110 highway structures across districts; replacing aged/dilapidated road signs; conducting facade beautification and landscape improvement works for PRH estates; installing manhole covers with special features in various districts; beautifying river hydrological stations and opening up some river maintenance slopes for public enjoyment of the river scenery. We aim to create a beautiful and lively city both for members of the public and for visitors.

The Task Force met this week to discuss our action plan for the coming six months. All departments will follow the directions and targets I have just mentioned and step up the implementation of all policy initiatives in the area of environmental hygiene.

President, over the past three months, in terms of the overall environmental hygiene situation of Hong Kong, members of the public should have seen real improvements and should have, more or less, felt the fun of a cleaner city. Government departments have also demonstrated their determination and ability to improve environmental hygiene. The current moment is the critical stage for the community to build a new culture of sustaining its efforts in maintaining cleanliness and care for our cityscape. It is time to change our habits and customs. The Government must not, and will not, relax its efforts and strength in combating hygiene black spots and will remain highly vigilant against any resurgence or change of tack by offenders, lest the hard-earned gains and the efforts made by colleagues will become futile.

I urge Members and the community to support the Government's efforts to improve environmental hygiene and street management, including the upcoming legislative amendments, so that we can work together to build a liveable and beautiful Hong Kong that we are proud of.

Last but not least, I urge Members to support the Motion of Thanks. President, I so submit.

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Cantonese): President, I would like to thank Members for their valuable views on the Chief Executive’s Policy Address 2022, as well as their support for and recognition of the Government’s policy direction of education and our efforts. Many Members stressed that apart from stepping up efforts to attract talent, the Policy Address should focus more on enhancing the nurturing of talent for Hong Kong. Their proposals are in line with our policy objectives in the area of education.

Education is the key to nurturing talents. Since Hong Kong’s return to the motherland, the Government has been investing heavily in education to cater for the learning needs of students at different stages and create opportunities for their growth. Our mission is to help them become lifelong learners who are able and virtuous, with a sense of responsibility, visions and love for the country and the city, so that they can give full play to their strengths, pursue their aspirations, meet future challenges and opportunities, and contribute to the development of our country and Hong Kong.

The report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasizes the importance of “Invigorating China through Science and Education and Developing a Strong Workforce for the Modernization Drive”. The Education Bureau (“EDB”) will actively implement a series of policy initiatives to nurture talents and serve our country’s needs with our strengths.

In response to the State President’s address made on 1 July, the Policy Address will promote the development of education in Hong Kong with the objectives of unleashing the potential of students, improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and creating strong impetus for growth. Major initiatives include stepping up efforts to promote STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) education, enhancing the teaching profession, developing vocational, professional and post-secondary education, strengthening national education, optimizing Hong Kong’s education system in a holistic manner, and continuously improving the quality of education in an effort to better educate our younger generation.

I am grateful for Members’ concerns about nurturing innovation and technology (“I&T”) talents. EDB will gradually implement various initiatives that aim to support schools in promoting STEAM education, equip students with the 21st Century competencies in a proactive manner, and nurture top-notch I&T talents along the policy direction of vigorously developing I&T in Hong Kong.

Specifically, we will step up the promotion of STEAM education “for all”, “for fun”, “for diversity”, “for elites”, and “for major events” in primary and secondary schools. Apart from incorporating more learning elements of I&T into the curriculum, such as implementing enriched coding education at the upper primary level and introducing artificial intelligence in the junior secondary curriculum, we will also strive to provide students with a wide variety of STEAM learning activities to identify and nurture elites with potential. Starting from the next school year, schools are required to annually organize or arrange for students to participate in quality STEAM activities of reasonable scale. Moreover, starting from the current school year, schools are required to designate coordinators to holistically plan STEAM education inside and beyond the classroom. Schools are also required to make arrangements for teachers to undergo core professional development training on I&T in an orderly manner within two school years, with a view to enhancing their professional capacity and teaching effectiveness.

In fact, a good team of teachers is crucial to the provision of quality education, and we are grateful to Members for proposing various measures to enhance the professionalism and integrity of teachers. To ensure the quality of teachers, guidelines on teachers’ professional conduct are expected to be promulgated within this year to set out clearly the professional conduct and behaviour required of teachers to be role models for students, with the aim of upholding the education profession and strengthening public confidence in our teaching workforce.

In addition, starting from the next school year, the Basic Law Test requirement for teachers will be extended to cover all Direct Subsidy Scheme schools and kindergartens joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme. The test covers the Basic Law and the Hong Kong National Security Law. EDB will also require newly-joined teachers in publicly-funded schools and teachers aspiring for promotion in public sector schools to attend study tours to the Mainland. Serving teachers will be offered more Mainland study opportunities to gain first-hand experience of the development of our country and better understand the opportunities for and contributions of Hong Kong in national development.

On the provision of vocational and professional education and training (“VPET”) and post-secondary education, the Policy Address has taken on board the views of Members and outlined a blueprint for the development of higher education in Hong Kong, integrating the future development of young people and Hong Kong. Many Members have given their views on enhancing the capabilities of young people, assisting them in moving upward, continuously improving VPET,

nurturing a diversified talent pool to support the development of Hong Kong, and maintaining Hong Kong's competitiveness in the long run. In future, we will, through the strategy of fostering industry-institution collaboration and diversified development, adopt a multi-pronged approach to promote VPET as a pathway parallel to conventional academic education. We encourage industry-institution collaboration and cooperation between schools and enterprises so as to provide diversified learning and employment opportunities and nurture more top-notch talents with applied skills to provide strong impetus for Hong Kong's industrial development.

Major initiatives include launching the Business-School Partnership Programme 2.0; enhancing life planning education; expanding the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors under which the respective numbers of subsidized places for self-financing higher diploma programmes and undergraduate programmes will be increased in phases starting from the next academic year while top-up degree programmes will also be covered for the first time; increasing the flexibility of institutions in admitting students with vocational and professional qualifications, etc. All these initiatives aim to continuously improve the pathway of VPET.

In addition, in response to Members' suggestion of enhancing the training and education of talents in emerging industries, we will actively explore the introduction of more programmes under the Pilot Project on the Development of Applied Degree Programmes. Starting from the next academic year, the Diploma of Applied Education Programme will be launched on a regular basis, incorporating substantial VPET elements and enhancing students' employability. At the same time, we will also expedite the development of the Vocational Qualifications Pathway ("VQP") by increasing the number of industries adopting VQP under the Qualifications Framework from 6 to at least 18. We will also work with the industry to further enhance the Recognition of Prior Learning mechanism so as to make it easier for industry practitioners to seek learning and career advancement opportunities and to dispel the myth that industrial workers can never have a successful career.

In respect of post-secondary education, the number of University Grants Committee-funded research postgraduate ("RPg") places will be gradually increased from some 5 600 at present to 7 200 in the 2024-2025 academic year. This, together with the gradual uplift of the over-enrolment ceiling of RPg places from 70% to 100% from last year onward, will increase the number of RPg places

by more than 50%. In so doing, the capacity to nurture local science and innovative talents can be greatly enhanced to tie in with the development of the “eight centres” in Hong Kong under the National 14th Five-Year Plan.

Many Members were concerned about the cultivation of moral character and values among students and our work on the front of national education as well as national history and national security education. They also offered valuable advice on how to promote education on the rule of law and how to raise national awareness. EDB will enhance the adoption of a multi-pronged and coordinated approach in schools to take forward the relevant work, including encouraging schools to regularly review the primary and junior secondary school curricula and enrich them with learning elements such as the history and geography of our country, starting from the current school year. In addition, the “enhanced School Development and Accountability framework” will be implemented to bolster the accountability of schools so as to improve the planning and implementation of national education in light of the key learning objectives of school education.

In this school year, all government schools under EDB will take the lead in adopting a whole-school and joint-school collaborative approach to launch the “Love Our Home; Treasure Our Country” series of school activities, with a view to enhancing students’ understanding of the Chinese culture and the development and achievements of our country, as well as fostering national values and sense of national identity among students.

In addition, Members were concerned about the impact of the structural decline in Hong Kong’s student population on education and social development. In fact, under the target of achieving a “soft landing”, the Government has been keeping the actual situation under review and maintaining close communication with school sponsoring bodies to assist the sector in planning ahead with the interests of students and education quality as our priority considerations. We will strive to rationalize the supply and demand of school places in a pragmatic manner and optimize the use of resources to enhance education quality.

In response to Members’ suggestions, EDB will also continue to implement small class teaching in public sector primary schools in an orderly manner, achieving small class teaching in over 90% of these schools after two school years so as to seize the opportunity to improve the teaching and learning environment.

Apart from the above measures, we will also continue to provide multi-faceted support for the continuous development of kindergartens, maintain a flexible and diversified ecology in the sector, and support the diversified learning needs of different students (including Chinese language learning for non-Chinese speaking students and provision of learning support for long-stay inpatient-students). We will also strengthen parent education and home-school cooperation to support students' learning on all fronts.

President, I would like to thank Members again for their concerns for and suggestions on education. In the future, EDB will, on the basis of the overall development blueprint for and direction of Hong Kong and in line with the national and global development trends, continue to enhance education and equip for the future. I hope to work with Members to implement all education initiatives as set out in the Policy Address so as to provide better education for our children and respond to the keen expectations of the community. Let's join hands to tell Hong Kong's education story well.

With these remarks, I urge Members to support the Motion of Thanks moved by Ms Starry LEE. Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR HOME AND YOUTH AFFAIRS (in Cantonese): President, I would like to thank Members for their speeches and views. I will highlight the policies and major work of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau ("HYAB").

Youth development

I am grateful for the concerns and precious views raised by a number of Members on youth development.

The Government has all along been attaching great importance to youth development and is committed to assisting young people in overcoming difficulties in education, career pursuits, entrepreneurship and home ownership so that the younger generation may cherish hope for the future and see that there are opportunities for upward social mobility.

Youth Development Blueprint

HYAB is coordinating the formulation of the Youth Development Blueprint (“the Blueprint”), which is the SAR Government’s very first major document dedicated to the promotion of youth development.

In the past few months, the Youth Development Commission (“YDC”) and HYAB have organized more than 100 consultation sessions. I personally participated in a series of activities in which young people and stakeholders were engaged and consulted with the aim of formulating a blueprint that belongs to the youth. We aim to complete and announce the first edition of the Blueprint by the end of this year. Subsequently, we will continuously review and enrich the content of the Blueprint and keep updating it on a need basis to ensure that the Blueprint is a ‘living document’ that keeps abreast of the times.

Deepen Participation of Government Departments and Civil Service Grades in Youth Work

I would like to thank Mr Kenneth LEUNG for his support for our proposal in the Policy Address to deepen the participation of government departments and civil service grades in youth work. Under this initiative, we will encourage various government departments and professional grades in the Government to form youth groups for the purpose of increasing the opportunities for young people to contact and communicate with relevant departments, grades and the industry. And, through various channels and activities, they will also guide young people in their career pursuits and facilitate their life planning.

Broaden Young People’s Horizons and enrich their experience

Subject to the development of the epidemic, we will also enhance the breadth and depth of our Mainland and international internship and exchange programmes. Besides, we will continue to provide the young people of Hong Kong with entrepreneurial support and incubation services in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (“GBA”) through the funding schemes under the Youth Development Fund so as to broaden young people’s horizons and give full play to their aspirations.

I would also like to thank Mr YIM Kong for saying that Chinese enterprises are willing to provide more job opportunities for our young people who are willing to go to the Mainland for development and to thank Mr Kenneth LEUNG for

talking about how to support those young people who seek employment and business opportunities in the Mainland. HYAB and YDC have launched two schemes under the Youth Development Fund, namely the Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the GBA and the Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes at Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the GBA. The former Scheme aims to provide start-up capital and render entrepreneurial support and incubation services for those Hong Kong young people who intend to start their own businesses, while the latter aims to subsidize non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”) to organize short-term experiential programmes at the innovation and entrepreneurial bases in Mainland GBA cities, with a view to enriching Hong Kong young people’s understanding of the entrepreneurial bases therein, as well as the relevant policies and supporting measures on innovation and entrepreneurship in the Mainland. This will, in turn, assist the young people to consider settling in the relevant entrepreneurial bases and starting businesses therein in the future.

The Alliance of Hong Kong Youth Innovative and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Greater Bay Area will also be established. Organizations from Guangdong and Hong Kong with strength and proven track records, such as innovative and entrepreneurial bases, universities, NGOs, scientific research institutes, professional bodies, venture funds, etc., will be invited to join the Alliance and jointly set up a one-stop information, publicity and exchange platform to support Hong Kong young people seeking business or employment opportunities in GBA.

In addition, Ms Nixie LAM and Dr Johnny NG mentioned that young people in Hong Kong should play a part in telling Hong Kong’s stories well. HYAB and YDC will continue to enhance and expand various youth internship and exchange programmes. We are actively preparing for the gradual and orderly resumption of various overseas internship and exchange activities. One such activity is the “United Nations Volunteers (“UNV”)—Hong Kong Universities Volunteer Programme”, which will invite applications shortly. Overseas exchange activities under the YDC Youth Ambassadors Programme will also be resumed shortly.

Looking ahead, we will further enhance the breadth and depth of our Mainland and international internship and exchange programmes, not only to help our young people understand the global development trend and grasp the development of our country but also to facilitate their integration into national development. What is more important, young people should be well-equipped to tell Hong Kong’s stories well.

Youth Participation Initiative

I would like to thank Ms Nixie LAM for expressing her support for our endeavours in launching the Youth Participation Initiative to engage more young people in public affairs. Specific measures include further expanding the Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth. We aim to triple the number of participating advisory committees from around 60 at present to no less than 180 to enhance their function as talent “incubators”.

The Home Affairs Department (“HAD”) are preparing to establish a District Youth Community Building Committee in each of the 18 districts to advise on selected district works or other projects. As Mr Tony TSE has said, the initiative has been drawn up by incorporating the views expressed by Members. Separately, we will re-structure the existing District Youth Programme Committee and District Civic Education Committee into a District Youth Development and Civic Education Committee. We will open up certain seats of two selected committees for young people to nominate themselves as members, encouraging young people to play a part in building the community by offering views on matters such as district works projects, youth development and civic education. We are examining the composition of the above committees, and it is expected that the scheme could be launched in early 2023.

Youth Hostel Scheme

To further meet the aspirations of some working youth in having their own living spaces, we will expand the scope of the existing Youth Hostel Scheme (“YHS”). The Government will explore ways to increase the supply of youth hostels, including subsidizing NGOs to rent suitable hotels and guesthouses for use as youth hostels, with the target of providing about 3 000 additional hostel places within five years. Youth tenants will be charged rentals of about 60% of the market level; in return, they have to commit themselves to providing district or volunteer services to the community.

We have briefed the hotel/guesthouse industry and NGOs on the proposed subsidy scheme. Their feedback on the scheme has been positive in general. At the meeting of the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) Panel on Home Affairs, Culture and Sports held on 14 November, at which we briefed the Panel on the relevant proposals, members also expressed support for the scheme. In line with the spirit of “enhancing speed and efficiency”, we plan to submit funding applications to

LegCo in December and simultaneously invite NGOs interested in operating youth hostels in hotels or guesthouses to submit applications and proposals.

In addition, HYAB will, in collaboration with relevant Policy Bureaux, identify suitable land sale sites and require developers to set aside a certain number of flats to support YHS on a pilot basis.

Cultivate positive thinking among young people

Mr YIM Kong mentioned the annual Hong Kong Youth Festival initiated by us. We will launch an annual Hong Kong Youth Festival starting next year. Different sectors of the community will be invited to jointly organize a wide spectrum of activities for engaging the youth with the aim of promoting positive thinking and development of potentials, as well as enhancing the exchange of knowledge and experience sharing.

Women Affairs

The SAR Government attaches great importance to the contribution of women to society and the work of supporting women. It is announced in this year's Policy Address that the annual funding for the Women's Commission ("WoC") will be substantially increased in the next three years from \$4 million to \$10 million to promote women development., and that a Women Empowerment Fund will also be set up to provide funds for women organizations and NGOs to organize community projects that support women in balancing job and family commitments, taking care of their physical and mental health and unleashing women's potential. HYAB will further discuss the implementation details with WoC, hoping that more organizations will get more funds to launch different types of activities to promote women's well-being.

District Administration

Review of District Administration

In order to improve the work of district administration and solve the problems of people's livelihood in the district more effectively, HYAB is working with the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau on a review of district administration.

The review aims to ensure that the future district organizations, in whatever forms, will comply with the requirements of Article 97 of the Basic Law and the principle of “patriots administering Hong Kong”, are broadly representative, well-acquainted with district affairs and can be consulted by the SAR Government on district affairs as well as conducive to enhancing governance efficacy at the district level. Reports on the next step forward will be made to LegCo and the public in a timely manner.

Community Building

Regulation of the Property Management Services Industry

In regard to proposals on enhancing building management highlighted by Ms Doreen KONG in her speech, in fact, we agree that good building management is conducive to improving the living environment, promoting community building and fostering social harmony. As it is the Government’s policy to assume the role of a promoter, we will implement multi-pronged initiatives, including the provision of a legal framework and appropriate support to assist owners in setting up appropriate organizations, such as owners’ corporations (“OCs”), to discharge their responsibilities in building management.

Regarding proposed amendments to the Building Management Ordinance (Cap. 344), we have been working closely with the Department of Justice to follow up on the relevant amendments. We plan to report our work progress to relevant LegCo Panels in due course.

As it takes time to complete the legislative process and we hope that OCs will have practical experience in applying the proposed amendments, HAD has promulgated the relevant amendments in the form of Codes of Practice and Administrative Guidelines on Best Practices on Building Management. The Checklist on Procedural Propriety on Building Management has been compiled to set out, in the form of a list, the requirements and best practices related to the convening of a general meeting of OC, with a view to encouraging compliance by relevant stakeholders, such as OCs and owners.

In addition, support services are provided to owners, OCs, residents’ organizations, etc., in the areas of dispute resolution and advisory services. Among them, the Free Outreach Legal Advice Service on Building Management launched by HAD in collaboration with the Law Society of Hong Kong has been regularized since September 2022.

District Services and Community Care Teams

It is announced in the Policy Address that District Services and Community Care Teams (“Care Teams”) will be set up to put into practice the proposal set out in the Chief Executive’s election manifesto.

The Government will devise the governance structures and operational arrangements for Care Teams, provide some of the resources required and set KPIs. The Government will also delineate each of the 18 districts in Hong Kong into different sub-districts and set up a Care Team in each sub-district. District organizations will, through a selection process, form the Care Teams and be responsible for the work of the sub-districts concerned.

I am glad to learn that Mr Rock CHEN supports our proposal and that associations of Chinese fellow townsmen are willing to be engaged in the work of the Care Teams.

The Government will initially set up Care Teams in the Tsuen Wan and Southern districts in the first quarter of 2023. With reference to the experience in the two districts, Care Teams in other districts will gradually be set up.

Support for Ethnic Minorities

HYAB has all along been committed to assisting ethnic minorities who have settled in Hong Kong to integrate into our community as soon as possible. To help them overcome the problems arising from cultural differences and language barriers, we have, over the years, launched and strengthened a number of targeted services to help them understand the community and enhance their self-confidence and communication skills. We will continue to work closely with NGOs and ethnic minority groups to seek continuous enhancement of relevant services and promote social inclusion.

Leisure Facilities and Projects

I am obliged to Mr LEUNG Man-kwong for mentioning weekend bazaars in his speech. The Chief Executive mentions in paragraph 92 of the Policy Address that the Government will develop more leisure facilities and projects, adding variety to the activities of citizens. In response, HAD has taken immediate actions by organizing bazaars at five regions in the territory, covering Hong Kong Island,

Kowloon East, Kowloon West, New Territories East and New Territories West, on specified weekends in October and November this year. I would like to thank Members for supporting and participating in various district bazaars. The bazaars received very good responses. It is generally considered that the bazaars have successfully injected impetus into community building, strengthened community cohesion, and created business opportunities for grass-roots entrepreneurs, including youths.

Concluding remarks

I would like to thank Members again for their views. I also appeal for Members' support for the Motion of thanks.

President, I so submit.

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH (in Cantonese): President, I am grateful to Members for expressing support for and voicing their views on the Policy Address in relation to the policy areas of “healthcare and public health”, “development of Chinese medicine (“CM”)” and “combat the epidemic together”, both at the earlier Panel meeting and in this debate. I would like to give a consolidated response here.

Hong Kong has all along possessed a high level of medical standards and a highly efficient healthcare system. Many of our health indicators rank top in the world, and we are among one of the regions having the longest life expectancy. However, with an ageing population and increasing prevalence of chronic diseases, among other challenges, such as the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, it has become increasingly evident that our public healthcare system is overburdened, and the waiting time for specialist services has continued to lengthen. Our healthcare system needs to keep abreast with the times and continue to transform with innovation. In order to better safeguard public health and enhance the standard of our health services, the Health Bureau will, in the light of the Policy Address, work on the following areas in a focused manner in the coming five years.

(I) Promote primary healthcare

Many Members have expressed support for the promotion of primary healthcare. Our present healthcare system relies more on treatment than prevention. Expenditure on public hospital services accounts for over 80%, while

less than 20% is spent on primary healthcare. Not only are resources skewed heavily towards public hospitals, but the pressure exerted on them is also huge. The Government will revamp the healthcare system. Our aim is to shift the emphasis of the healthcare system from its current treatment-oriented, hospital-based structure to a prevention-focused, community-based system by investing additional resources to promote primary healthcare. In this connection, we will publish the Primary Healthcare Blueprint later this year, with District Health Centres as the hub for coordinating primary healthcare services for members of the public so that the public will have access to one-stop service, “family doctor for all” care and “one patient, one health record” protection. Our major initiatives include:

- establishing the Primary Healthcare Authority;
- launching the three-year Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme;
- enhancing the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme;
- better utilizing multi-disciplinary healthcare services (nurses, CM practitioners, pharmacists, dietitians, etc.), including amendments to the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance to facilitate patients’ direct access to services provided by physiotherapists and occupational therapists without a doctor’s referral under specified circumstances;
- last but not least, we will pursue stage three development of the electronic health record sharing platform “eHealth”, which should support healthcare delivery across the public and private sectors so as to attain the objective of “one patient, one health record”.

I am grateful for the concerns expressed by Members on dental care services. In view of the public’s keen demand for dental care services, we will set up a working group on the development of dental care services to review the existing dental care services and advise the Government on matters relating to the enhancement of the scope and mode of these services.

(II) Improve public hospital services

Public hospital services have always been the backbone of our healthcare system. We have proposed several initiatives to enhance medical services and improve patient experience, which include setting the specific target of reducing

the waiting time of stable new case bookings for the specialty of Medicine by 20%. We will strengthen hospital infrastructure by pressing ahead with the First Ten-year Hospital Development Plan (“HDP”), adding about 4 600 beds and about 80 operating theatres in the next five years. The Second Ten-year HDP will include the development of a hospital network in the Northern Metropolis.

The Hospital Authority (“HA”) will provide more convenience for patients by making wider use of telehealth services and introducing a new service model for drug collection and delivery. We will continue to promote telemedicine, which has already been widely applied amid the COVID-19 epidemic. Under the guidance of the Medical Council of Hong Kong, we will continue to enhance the efficiency of telemedicine while taking into account medical quality and safety. To enhance healthcare services, HA will also establish the Integrated Neuroscience Centres and Cardiovascular Diseases Centres, establish the Uncommon Disorders Registry, and set up the Poison Control Centre. We will also develop “eHealth” into an underpinning system supporting healthcare delivery across the public and private sectors, enhancing its functions to support the development of primary healthcare.

(III) Enhance the supply of healthcare manpower

Medical manpower is indeed the cornerstone of our healthcare services. Many Members have expressed concern about the shortage of healthcare manpower. In order to provide proper medical treatments to those who are ill, sufficient healthcare manpower must be secured to provide various healthcare services to meet the needs of members of the public. The Government has all along been sparing no effort in adopting a host of strategies to enhance the supply of local healthcare manpower. In order to secure a stable supply of public healthcare services, the Government plans to explore various means, including by way of legislation, to mandate qualified healthcare professionals to serve in public healthcare institutions for a specified period. Such proposals are still at an early conceptual stage. Upon formulation of the proposal’s framework, we will consult relevant stakeholders and the industry with a view to formulating concrete details of the proposal. In light of the experience of amending the Medical Registration Ordinance (Cap. 161) last year, we plan to, by way of legislation, create new pathways for admission of qualified non-locally trained dentists and nurses under the overarching principle of not sacrificing the professional standard and the well-being of patients.

(IV) Promote the development of Chinese medicine

CM has all along been an integral part of Hong Kong's healthcare system, with its strengths fully demonstrated during the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic. We will establish the post of "Commissioner for Chinese Medicine Development" and strengthen the functions of the Chinese Medicine Unit of the Health Bureau to take forward a number of initiatives to further promote the long-term development of CM in Hong Kong on all fronts in collaboration with the CM sector. Some of the initiatives include increasing the annual quota of Government-subsidized CM outpatient services from about 600 000 to 800 000; regularizing and expanding the integrated Chinese-Western services; and formulating a blueprint for overall CM development, etc. The blueprint will cover various areas, such as the positioning and strategies of CM development, professional development and training of CM personnel, CM service development, CM drugs industry development, CM-related research, promotion and knowledge popularization, application of technologies, collaboration with the Mainland, Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area ("GBA") and the international community. Meanwhile, the Government will also actively pursue the establishment of the two flagship institutions, namely the Chinese Medicine Hospital and the Government Chinese Medicines Testing Institute, which will serve as an important pillar in establishing a trade platform for the CM industry in GBA.

(V) Enhance mental health

On enhancing mental health, the World Health Organization ("WHO") has pointed out that "there is no health without mental health". The Government will enhance the mental wellness of the community with services targeting the needs of various groups. Among these, we will launch a number of new measures, including setting up a mental health support hotline to provide immediate support and referral services. We will also set up a service centre on a trial basis to provide emotional support and counselling for ethnic minorities.

(VI) Strengthen tobacco control

On tobacco control, with years of hard work by the Government and different stakeholders, in Hong Kong, the smoking prevalence of persons aged above 15 reached a historic low of 9.5% in 2021. We prepare to go further by introducing

a roadmap on tobacco control for public consultation early next year to gather public views on the target of further reducing the smoking prevalence rate to 7.8% by 2025.

(VII) Deepen medical cooperation with the Mainland

On deepening medical cooperation with the Mainland, to foster medical cooperation between Hong Kong and the Mainland, we have, since 1 November this year, with reference to the registration approvals made by the National Medical Products Administration and other drug regulatory authorities, allowed pharmaceutical products registered in the Mainland to be registered and sold in Hong Kong upon fulfilment of relevant approval requirements in Hong Kong, thereby diversifying the supply of pharmaceutical products. We will also maintain liaison with the Mainland on allowing more Hong Kong-registered drugs and medical devices to be used in GBA.

In addition, as more Hong Kong people choose to live and retire in the Mainland, subject to the requirements of their place of residence in the Mainland, we will actively study the feasibility of allowing Hong Kong people living in the Mainland cities of GBA to make use of the Elderly Health Care Vouchers for settling payments of Mainland medical insurance premiums.

(VIII) Emerge from the epidemic

As for the epidemic, which is of great concern to all of us, our anti-epidemic work seeks to safeguard the well-being of citizens and protect the public healthcare system while reducing the disruption to normal social activities in a bid to facilitate activities and people flow essential to socio-economic recovery. We aim to achieve the greatest effect with the lowest cost. The Government adopts a prudent and stable approach in adjusting various anti-epidemic measures in order to avoid a rebound of the epidemic situation and backtracking along the path to normalcy as far as practicable.

Recently, some people have been of the view that our society has already resumed normal and the COVID-19 epidemic is no longer a public health emergency and that the Government should abolish all preventive measures. I must reiterate that the COVID-19 virus still poses a threat to human health and the global pandemic is not yet over. WHO has recently come to the view that the COVID-19 epidemic remains a “public health emergency of international

concern”. Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS, emphasized the need to strengthen surveillance and expand access to tests, treatments and vaccines for those most at-risk and for all countries to update their national preparedness and response plans. Concerns have also been expressed about the cancellation of public health and social distancing measures by some countries ahead of the winter high transmission season. The United States has also extended the public health emergency status of the COVID-19 epidemic to beyond January next year.

It is worth noting that there are signs that the epidemic in Hong Kong is intensifying, with a marked increase in the number of positive cases and hospital admissions: over 8 000 confirmed cases per day and over 2 300 hospital admissions, subjecting our healthcare system to increasingly intense pressure. The Government will continue to tackle the COVID-19 epidemic development under the principles of science-based and targeted anti-epidemic measures, as well as the proper management of risks and citizen-focused facilitation. The Government will also adjust anti-epidemic measures as appropriate based on analyses of scientific data. However, I would like to appeal to all members of the public not to take the epidemic lightly, but to stay alert. Instead of believing in rumours, the public should have trust in science and get vaccinated as soon as possible to protect themselves as well as the elderly and the children. Those who are at high risk should consider taking COVID-19 drugs after being confirmed. We have an ample supply of COVID-19 drugs, and we have expanded the clinical indications. Provided that the epidemic is under control, the Government will continue to move forward with adjustment and enhancement to anti-epidemic measures in the light of the actual situation and development. This is to ensure that things will be taken forward in an orderly and measured manner. Regarding the possibility of increasing the number of quotas for quarantine hotels and taking forward the “pre-departure quarantine” proposal, we will strengthen our communication with the Mainland authorities in the hope of laying a solid foundation for pursuing the work relating to the resumption of connections with overseas places and with the Mainland.

(IX) Concluding remarks

Finally, I would like to thank Members once again for their precious views on and support for the work of the Health Bureau. We will do our utmost to work together with the Legislative Council and the general public to further improve our medical and healthcare services and better our epidemic prevention and control work.

With these remarks, I earnestly appeal for Members' support for the Policy Address and the Motion of Thanks.

Thank you.

CHIEF SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION (in Cantonese): I would like to thank some 80 Members for actively speaking and putting forward a lot of valuable and substantive views in the four debate sessions over the past three days. Just now, the Secretaries of Departments and Directors of Bureaux have also spoken to respond to Members' speeches in respect of their policy areas. On behalf of the SAR Government, I would like to make a collective response to the three-day debate.

Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China

There are many references to Hong Kong in the report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China ("the report to the 20th National Congress"): fully, faithfully, and resolutely implement the policy of "one country, two systems", under which the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy; support Hong Kong in growing their economies, improving the people's lives, and resolving deep-seated issues and problems in economic and social development; support Hong Kong in better integrating itself into China's overall development. The discussion on the "one country, two systems" principle in the report to the 20th National Congress is a key action guide for Hong Kong to advance from stability to prosperity. The years to come are crucial for our nation to build a modern socialist country in all respects and off to a good start. At this crucial stage, Hong Kong should not only act as a witness and a beneficiary but should also play a deeper, broader and better role as a participant and a contributor.

The HKSAR Government will firmly ensure the sustained implementation of the policy of "one country, two systems" and uphold the policy as the institutional arrangement for ensuring sustained prosperity and stability in Hong Kong. The Policy Address emphasizes the importance of building a solid foundation for security while upholding the principle and leveraging the advantages of "one country, two systems". We will endeavour to put the three "implementations" into practice and enhance our capability and level of governance: implementation of the exercise of overall jurisdiction over Hong Kong

by the Central Government; implementation of the principle of “patriots administering Hong Kong”, and the implementation of the legal systems and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security.

The HKSAR government will seek to integrate into national development in a more proactive manner. The Policy Address has set out measures that aim to dovetail with HKSAR-related national strategies, including establishing the Steering Group on Integration into National Development to be chaired by the Chief Executive, with three Secretaries of Departments as deputies; implementing an array of initiatives targeted at “competing for talents” and “competing for enterprises” to be led by me and the Financial Secretary respectively in order to enhance our competitiveness; creating strong impetus for growth by launching short-, medium- and long-term measures that are relevant to developing the “eight centres”³ in Hong Kong under the National 14th Five-Year Plan; implementing all measures that aim to strive towards carbon neutrality; taking forward the development of the Northern Metropolis in full steam, creating synergy with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, etc.

Address People’s Concerns and Difficulties in Daily Life

President XI mentioned in his important speech delivered on 1 July that “the people’s aspiration for a better life is what we are striving for.” The HKSAR Government will earnestly address people’s concerns and difficulties in daily life. The Policy Address demonstrates our resolve in pressing ahead with land creation and housing construction on all fronts, building a healthy, vibrant, caring, inclusive and liveable Hong Kong, as well as facilitating whole-person youth development so as to nurture a younger generation that will strive for continuous growth.

A number of Members have expressed concerns about the living environment of the people of Hong Kong. Solving the housing problem tops the agenda of the current-term Government. Having considered the work reports submitted by the Steering Committee on Land and Housing Supply and the Task Force on Public Housing Project, the Chief Executive announces a host of key strategies and targets in the Policy Address in terms of land and housing:

³ The “eight centres” are the international financial centre, international shipping centre, international trade centre, centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region, international aviation hub, international innovation and technology centre, regional intellectual property trading centre, as well as East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange.

constructing about 30 000 units under the new Light Public Housing scheme in the coming five years; delivering sufficient land for private housing development; implementing the PRH Advance Allocation Scheme; compress land production procedures; and building up a land reserve, etc.

“Hong Kong will prosper only when its young people thrive”

President XI said, “Hong Kong will prosper only when its young people thrive; Hong Kong will develop only when its young people achieve well-rounded development; and Hong Kong will have a bright future only when its young people have good career prospects”. Fully understanding that young people are Hong Kong’s future, the HKSAR Government has put forward a number of policies and measures in the Policy Address to support youth development. The Government will vigorously promote STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) education, enhance post-secondary education, strengthen national education, etc. The Home and Youth Affairs Bureau will publish the first edition of the Youth Development Blueprint by the end of this year to outline the principles, objectives and actions of the Government in pursuing youth development. We will continuously review and enrich the content of the Blueprint to ensure that the Blueprint is a “living document” that keeps pace with the changing social environment and meet the needs of our young people.

As mentioned in my speech delivered at the first session of the debate on the Motion of Thanks, the Task Force to Lift Underprivileged Students out of Intergenerational Poverty, which is led by me, has launched the Strive and Rise Programme through tripartite collaboration among the Government, the business sector and the community. The Programme has been well received by the community. We will provide strong impetus for pressing ahead with the Programme in the coming year. We will also chart the way forward by, inter alia, increasing mentee quotas and expanding the target group, etc.

Tell the Hong Kong story well

An international metropolis embracing both Chinese and Western cultures, Hong Kong enjoys the strong support of the motherland while being closely connected to the world, which is the unique advantage of Hong Kong. Nevertheless, against the complex international political environment, rumours and smears by external forces will certainly continue unabated in the future. We will

continue to refute and respond quickly and solemnly to any acts and reports that maliciously smear, suppress or distort the affairs of HKSAR in order to set the record straight.

As the saying goes, “To forge iron, one must be strong.” We will continue to seek enhancements both internally and externally. Internally, we will continue to consolidate and leverage our advantages, such as a simple and low tax regime, a fair and clean government, a solid foundation for the rule of law and the exercise of the common law system. Externally, we will take the initiative to tell the Hong Kong story well and explain everything to the world with facts so that the world can see the true brilliance of Hong Kong. The Chief Executive is in Thailand right now to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (“APEC”) Economic Leaders’ Meeting to elaborate on the latest situation of and future opportunities in Hong Kong. The Government will lead business leaders to visit traditional and emerging markets to polish the image and branding of Hong Kong. We will also launch a new visitors’ programme, inviting prominent political, business and media leaders from the Mainland and overseas places to visit Hong Kong so that these visitors can see for themselves the latest and real developments in Hong Kong. We are confident that with the successful holding of various conferences and events in Hong Kong, such as the Global Financial Leaders’ Investment Summit, the Hong Kong Masters 2022 and the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens, other international events will return to Hong Kong soon. Provided that the epidemic is under control, we will continue to review our social distancing measures in the light of the actual situation to ensure that such measures will be relaxed in a gradual, orderly and measured manner. Let us liven up the Hong Kong society.

Concluding remarks

During the three-day debate, Members from different sectors put forward a lot of unique views on different policy areas. While such views and key points may be diverse, they put together a prelude to starting a new chapter for Hong Kong’s advancement from stability to prosperity in the coming five years. The “four musts” and the “four proposals” put forward by President XI will remain to be the general direction and blueprint for the HKSAR Government in mapping out our policies. We look forward to working with all Members to build a more unified and promising Hong Kong.

I would like to reiterate my heartfelt thanks to the Members for their precious views. I have asked all Secretaries of Departments and Directors of Bureaux to follow up on Members' views in a proactive manner. I implore Members to support the Policy Address and work with the HKSAR Government to better serve our people and better develop Hong Kong.

I so submit. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): The debate sessions on the 2022 Policy Address end.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Ms Starry LEE, you still have 6 minutes 47 seconds to reply. Then, the debate will come to a close.

Ms Starry LEE, please reply.

MS STARRY LEE (in Cantonese): President, a total of 80 Members spoke in the debate on the motion on the Policy Address, and the total speaking time was 18 hours and 26 minutes. I would like to thank Members for their enthusiastic speeches and for expressing their views on the policy areas of their concern, many of which contained constructive suggestions.

This Policy Address has set out a series of innovative, pragmatic and feasible policy initiatives that are conducive to the overall development of the community, with a view to faithfully implementing the “one country, two systems” principle, improving governance, dovetailing with national development strategies, addressing land and housing supply problems, resolving deep-rooted conflicts, strengthening Hong Kong's competitiveness, nurturing talents and promoting youth development, etc. I hope that the Chief Executive, the Secretaries of Departments and the Directors of Bureaux will continue to listen to Members' views seriously and communicate with all Members so that the Government's administration will win the support of both the Council and the public.

President, the debate on the Motion of Thanks mainly serves to provide a platform for Members to express their views on the Policy Address. I hope that all officials of the HKSAR Government will bear in mind President XI's words in the report to the 20th National Congress: “[T]his country is its people; the people

are the country”. We must endeavour to “work hard together to meet the people’s aspirations for a better life” by adopting more measures that “will deliver real benefits to the people and win their approval” and serving everyone in Hong Kong wholeheartedly.

President, the motion itself does not point in any direction, and I hope Members will support it. Thank you, President. Thank you, everyone.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Ms Starry LEE be passed. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority of each of the two groups of Members present, that is, those returned by the Election Committee and those returned by functional constituencies and geographical constituencies.

I declare the motion passed.

NEXT MEETING

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now adjourn the Council until 11:00 am on Wednesday, 23 November 2022.

Adjourned accordingly at 2:53 pm.