

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 12 June 2024

The Council met at Eleven o'clock

MEMBERS PRESENT

THE PRESIDENT

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW LEUNG KWAN-YUEN, GBM, GBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE TOMMY CHEUNG YU-YAN, GBM, GBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE JEFFREY LAM KIN-FUNG, GBM, GBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE STARRY LEE WAI-KING, GBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HAK-KAN, SBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KIN-POR, GBS, JP

PROF THE HONOURABLE PRISCILLA LEUNG MEI-FUN, SBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE MRS REGINA IP LAU SUK-YEE, GBM, GBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE PAUL TSE WAI-CHUN, JP

THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL TIEN PUK-SUN, BBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE STEVEN HO CHUN-YIN, BBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE FRANKIE YICK CHI-MING, GBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE MA FUNG-KWOK, GBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HAN-PAN, BBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE KWOK WAI-KEUNG, JP

THE HONOURABLE ELIZABETH QUAT, SBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE MARTIN LIAO CHEUNG-KONG, GBS, JP

IR DR THE HONOURABLE LO WAI-KWOK, GBS, MH, JP

THE HONOURABLE JIMMY NG WING-KA, BBS, JP

DR THE HONOURABLE JUNIUS HO KWAN-YIU, BBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE HOLDEN CHOW HO-DING, JP

THE HONOURABLE SHIU KA-FAI, JP

THE HONOURABLE YUNG HOI-YAN, JP

THE HONOURABLE CHAN CHUN-YING, JP

THE HONOURABLE LUK CHUNG-HUNG, JP

THE HONOURABLE LAU KWOK-FAN, MH, JP

THE HONOURABLE KENNETH LAU IP-KEUNG, SBS, MH, JP

THE HONOURABLE VINCENT CHENG WING-SHUN, MH, JP

THE HONOURABLE TONY TSE WAI-CHUEN, BBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE DOREEN KONG YUK-FOON

THE HONOURABLE CHU KWOK-KEUNG

THE HONOURABLE STANLEY LI SAI-WING, MH, JP

DR THE HONOURABLE HOEY SIMON LEE, MH, JP

THE HONOURABLE ROBERT LEE WAI-WANG

THE HONOURABLE DOMINIC LEE TSZ-KING

IR THE HONOURABLE LEE CHUN-KEUNG, JP

DR THE HONOURABLE TIK CHI-YUEN, SBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE STANLEY NG CHAU-PEI, SBS, JP

DR THE HONOURABLE JOHNNY NG KIT-CHONG, MH, JP

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

DR THE HONOURABLE DENNIS LAM SHUN-CHIU, JP

THE HONOURABLE LAM SAN-KEUNG, JP

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW LAM SIU-LO, SBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE DUNCAN CHIU

THE HONOURABLE YIU PAK-LEUNG, MH, JP

DR THE HONOURABLE WENDY HONG WEN

THE HONOURABLE DENNIS LEUNG TSZ-WING, MH

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG MAN-KWONG, MH

THE HONOURABLE EDWARD LEUNG HEI

THE HONOURABLE KENNETH LEUNG YUK-WAI, JP

THE HONOURABLE CHAN YUET-MING, MH

THE HONOURABLE ROCK CHEN CHUNG-NIN, SBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE CHAN PUI-LEUNG

THE HONOURABLE CHAN YUNG, BBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE SUNNY TAN

THE HONOURABLE JUDY CHAN KAPUI, MH, JP

THE HONOURABLE MAGGIE CHAN MAN-KI, MH, JP

IR THE HONOURABLE CHAN SIU-HUNG, JP

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HOI-YAN

THE HONOURABLE JOEPHY CHAN WING-YAN

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HOK-FUNG, MH, JP

IR THE HONOURABLE GARY ZHANG XINYU

THE HONOURABLE LILLIAN KWOK LING-LAI

THE HONOURABLE BENSON LUK HON-MAN

DR THE HONOURABLE KENNEDY WONG YING-HO, BBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE EDMUND WONG CHUN-SEK

THE HONOURABLE KINGSLEY WONG KWOK, BBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE YANG WING-KIT

REVD CANON THE HONOURABLE PETER DOUGLAS KOON HO-MING,
BBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE TANG FEI, MH

THE HONOURABLE TANG KA-PIU, BBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE LAI TUNG-KWOK, GBS, IDSM, JP

PROF THE HONOURABLE LAU CHI-PANG, BBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE KENNETH FOK KAI-KONG, JP

THE HONOURABLE LOUIS LOONG HON-BIU

DR THE HONOURABLE NGAN MAN-YU

THE HONOURABLE CARMEN KAN WAI-MUN

DR THE HONOURABLE TAN YUEHENG, JP

DR THE HONOURABLE SO CHEUNG-WING, SBS, JP

THE HONOURABLE YIM KONG

THE HONOURABLE ADRIAN PEDRO HO KING-HONG

THE HONOURABLE SHANG HAILONG

PROF THE HONOURABLE CHAN WING-KWONG

PROF THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM WONG KAM-FAI, MH

PUBLIC OFFICERS ATTENDING

MR RAISTLIN LAU CHUN, JP
UNDER SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM, AND
SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM

THE HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER HUI CHING-YU, GBS, JP
SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY

THE HONOURABLE TSE CHIN-WAN, BBS, JP
SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

PROF THE HONOURABLE LO CHUNG-MAU, BBS, JP
SECRETARY FOR HEALTH

DR THE HONOURABLE CHOI YUK-LIN, JP
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

MR LIU CHUN-SAN, JP
UNDER SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

CLERKS IN ATTENDANCE

MR KENNETH CHEN WEI-ON, SBS, SECRETARY GENERAL

MS DORA WAI, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL

MS AMY YU, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

MS MIRANDA HON, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

LAYING OF PAPER ON THE TABLE OF THE COUNCIL

The following paper was laid on the table under Rule 21(2) of the Rules of Procedure:

Paper

Employees Retraining Board
Annual Report 2022-23 (including Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Questions. First question.

Recycling domestic food waste

1. **MR DENNIS LEUNG** (in Cantonese): *According to the report “Monitoring of Solid Waste in Hong Kong” by the Environmental Protection Department, food waste accounted for 34% of domestic waste in 2022. There are views that the Government should step up domestic food waste recycling in a step-by-step manner having regard to the waste collection situation of various types of housing. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *as there are views that the limited capacity and the frequent overflowing of the food waste smart recycling bins (“FWSRBs”) under the Smart Food Waste Recycling Programme (Public Rental Housing) are not conducive to developing a habit of food waste recycling among residents, whether the authorities will expedite the achievement of the target of “one FWSRB for each block” in public housing estates under the Housing Department and the Hong Kong Housing Society; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that and the difficulties involved;*
- (2) *as it is learnt that under the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Smart Recycling Bins in Private Housing Estates, the participation period for private housing courts is 28 months, and the FWSRBs allocated to*

them have to be returned at the end of the participation period, which has aroused concern about the sustainability of the Pilot Scheme, whether the authorities have plans to enhance the Pilot Scheme, so as to avoid the occurrence of a window period for the work of food waste recycling in private housing courts; if not, of the reasons for that; and

- (3) *whether it has plans to install additional food waste recycling facilities extensively in rural areas and districts with a high concentration of “three-nil-buildings”, so as to help residents in such areas and districts to develop a habit of food waste recycling; if not, of the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): President, currently, about 11 000 tonnes of municipal solid waste are generated in Hong Kong per day, of which around 30% is food waste. Of the total amount of food waste, about 70% are domestic food waste. The Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”) continues to expand the food waste collection network, with the number of collection points set up at public and private premises that generate larger quantities of food waste having increased substantially from around 170 in mid-2022 to over 1 100 at present. Currently, the amount of food waste recycled in Hong Kong is increasing progressively, with an average daily recovery of around 270 tonnes in May this year, representing an increase of about 60% compared to last year. On domestic food waste collection, EPD has installed food waste smart recycling bins (“FWSRBs”) in over 90% of the public rental housing (“PRH”) estates across the territory. It is expected that FWSRBs will be installed in all PRH estates in Hong Kong by July this year, which is one month ahead of the original schedule. In the coming year, EPD will further enhance various domestic food waste collection measures by doubling the number of FWSRBs in PRH estates and private housing estates, setting up 100 food waste recycling spots, and establishing food waste recycling points at about 100 refuse collection points (“RCPs”) for use by the general public and restaurants. The reply to the question raised by Mr Dennis LEUNG is as follows:

- (1) EPD, in collaboration with the Housing Department (“HD”) and the Hong Kong Housing Society (“HS”), launched the Trial Scheme on Food Waste Collection in PRH Estates in late October 2022. FWSRBs equipped with overflow prevention and odour abatement devices are used to collect food waste to maintain environmental

hygiene, and GREEN\$ rewards are provided to encourage residents' participation. EPD has so far installed a total of 698 FWSRBs in over 90% (i.e. 197) of PRH estates across the territory. EPD is expected to complete the installation of over 700 FWSRBs in 213 PRH estates (a total of approximately 1 500 blocks) in Hong Kong by July.

FWSRBs adopted by EPD are equipped with functions such as weight sensors and fill level sensors. When the inner bin reaches 70% of its capacity, the system will automatically send a phone message reminding the cleansing staff to replace the inner bin. To support the implementation of the food waste collection programme in PRH estates, EPD has provided additional resources to HD for strengthening its manpower to enhance cleansing services in all participating PRH estates, including the replacement of inner bins fully loaded with food waste. To further expedite the replacement of inner bins, EPD has established a new alert system. When there are abnormal operations with FWSRBs, the system will automatically send messages to the management staff of the estate management office and its cleansing contractor, notifying the relevant teams for immediate follow-up. EPD will also closely monitor the situation through the big data platform.

Currently, EPD is in discussion with HD and HS concerning the preparatory work for installing additional FWSRBs in PRH estates with higher usage. It is expected that, before the fourth quarter of this year, additional FWSRBs will be provided at 55 participating PRH estates which have implemented the scheme with high usage. Moreover, EPD will gradually increase the number of FWSRBs in PRH estates, with the goal of achieving "one FWSRB per PRH block" within two years.

- (2) For private housing, EPD supports the installation of FWSRBs in private residential buildings for collecting food waste through the Recycling Fund and the Environment and Conservation Fund ("ECF"). At the end of last year, EPD also collaborated with the Environmental Campaign Committee to roll out the Pilot Scheme on FWSRBs in Private Housing Estates under which FWSRBs are provided for free, with installation and maintenance services covered,

to private housing estates with over 1 000 households for a two-year period. EPD is considering optimizing the existing scheme to cover private housing estates with fewer than 1 000 households. In the financial year of 2024-2025, we expect that over 400 FWSRBs will be put into service in private housing estates. To avoid any service vacuum, EPD will also continue to support food waste recycling in relevant private residential buildings after the completion of the funded projects.

- (3) EPD has already installed FWSRBs at four GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities (including GREEN@SHAM SHUI PO, GREEN@EASTERN, GREEN@SAI KUNG and GREEN@SHA TIN) in proximity to residential areas for the use of residents who live in buildings without sufficient space to install food waste recycling bins (such as “three-nil” buildings). The first public food waste collection point set up at the wet market of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”) also commenced operation at Lockhart Road Wet Market in April this year. In the coming year, EPD will set up about 100 food waste recycling spots in various districts to provide night-time food waste collection services in the form of kerbside collection booths at fixed time and locations. Moreover, food waste recycling points will also be set up at about 100 RCPs of FEHD for the use of nearby residents and restaurants. We will continue to explore the possibility of setting up more public food waste recycling points at suitable premises to provide more convenient recycling outlets for the public.

To promote food waste recycling in rural areas, in addition to the provision of traditional covered food waste recycling bins by EPD, ECF also subsidizes the installation of FWSRBs and food waste pre-treatment facilities known as “Food TranSmarter” in rural villages. In addition, EPD briefed the New Territories Heung Yee Kuk and Tuen Mun Rural Committee on the details of relevant food waste collection services in November last year and May this year respectively, and called for active participation from the rural committees and village representatives. If village representatives are interested in setting up food waste recycling bins at nearby RCPs in rural areas, EPD will assist in exploring its feasibility with FEHD. Thank you, President.

MR DENNIS LEUNG (in Cantonese): *President, the Government replied that it will achieve “one FWSRB per PRH block” within two years. I think this arrangement is too slow to meet the public’s demand for recycling. However, the bigger problem is how to properly handle food waste. Currently, O•PARK1 can only handle 200 tonnes of food waste per day, and the future O•PARK2 will only be able to handle 300 tonnes of food waste per day, making a total of only 500 tonnes. If all the recovered food waste is to be treated, the volume will be up to 3 000 tonnes a day. Can the Secretary tell us when we will be able to treat 3 000 tonnes of recovered food waste per day, so that food waste will not end up being landfilled after collection?*

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): President, as Mr LEUNG has just mentioned, O•PARK1 has a treatment capacity of 200 tonnes, and O•PARK2 has already commenced operation with a treatment capacity of 300 tonnes. In addition, we are implementing the Food Waste/Sewage Sludge Anaerobic Co-digestion Trial Scheme at the Tai Po and Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works, which can provide a treatment capacity of 100 tonnes. This brings our current treatment capacity to 600 tonnes.

Moreover, the pre-treatment capacity of O•PARK2 can reach 600 tonnes. Although it actually only handles 300 tonnes, its pre-treatment capacity is 600 tonnes. If the amount of recovered food waste increases, we can use the remaining 300 tonnes of pre-treatment capacity to pre-treat food waste before sending it to the sewage treatment works for treatment. Therefore, we can actually process 900 tonnes of food waste per day.

In addition, we are promoting the use of “Food TranSmarter” and other food waste pre-treatment technologies to liquefy food waste into slurry and then transport it directly to sewage treatment works for treatment. Our actual treatment capacity should therefore be in excess of 1 000 tonnes. The amount of food waste recovered is 260 tonnes at present. While we certainly hope that the amount of food waste recovered will increase significantly in the near future, the current treatment capacity is estimated to be sufficient to cope with the amount of food waste in the next few years. Moreover, all the sludge treatment facilities in the new sewage treatment works will be converted to food waste/sewage sludge anaerobic co-digestion, so our future treatment capacity will increase significantly. Even if we recover a large amount of food waste, we will not have to worry about downstream treatment capacity. Thank you, President.

MR YANG WING-KIT (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. Yesterday, I attended the launch ceremony of FWSRBs in a HS housing estate. There was a long queue of residents waiting in to buy food waste bins and open their GREEN\$ accounts on the spot. I saw that everyone was very enthusiastic about recycling and actively participated in it.*

However, some elderly people told us that their estate was built on the hill, with 3 800 households in 11 blocks, but there were only three FWSRBs in the whole estate. They had to walk a long way to those FWSRBs. If they wanted to redeem gifts, they had to walk 20 minutes in order to reach the gift redemption unit. They asked if the situation could be improved. Of course, the Secretary just said that the goal of providing “one FWSRB per PRH block” will be achieved within two years, but can more resources be allocated to shorten the implementation time of “one FWSRB per PRH block” to one year? Also, is it possible to achieve “one gift redemption unit per housing estate”? Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): I thank the Member for the supplementary question. We also hope to expedite the recovery of food waste. However, apart from the resources required, this recycling arrangement also involves HD. After we install FWSRBs in housing estates, HD will need to make management arrangements. So, our current estimation is that it may take two years to achieve “one FWSRB per PRH block”. However, we will certainly discuss with HD to see if the progress can be accelerated.

The Member also asked about gift redemption units. We are aware that gift redemption units are very popular with members of the public. However, the operating and other costs will be very high if the number of gift redemption units is to be increased substantially. So we have another idea, which is to use GREEN\$. Later on, we will arrange the redemption of shopping vouchers with points under this points system to encourage the public to recycle. Firstly, for the public, shopping vouchers are more flexible and can be used to redeem more gifts. I believe the new arrangement will be more popular. At the same time, we will be able to save the resources required for the hardware and maintenance of the gift redemption units and use the resources saved to provide shopping vouchers. We believe that this will be more beneficial and attractive to the public, so we will encourage recycling in this direction in the future, and the public will certainly find it more convenient.

I would also like to point out that although it may take us almost two years to achieve “one FWSRB per PRH block”, in the process, we will keep an eye on which housing estates or blocks have a particularly high volume of food waste recovery, and prioritize the installation of FWSRBs in those places. We will also make arrangements with HD to increase the frequency of bin change-outs. I believe this will also facilitate the public to use FWSRBs. Thank you, President.

IR CHAN SIU-HUNG (in Cantonese): *President, the Government is currently setting up FWSRBs to recycle domestic and restaurant food waste. The collected food waste still needs to be transported to the Organic Resources Recovery Centre (O•PARK) or to the sewage treatment works for food waste/sewage sludge anaerobic co-digestion. The process involves a lot of logistics work and costs. However, there are already devices on the market that can process food waste on site by directly crushing or drying it into powder. Some of them can even crush coconut shells, bones, etc.*

Will the authorities consider introducing these more advanced food waste machines? If not, what are the reasons? Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): President, I thank Mr CHAN for his supplementary question. Indeed, we have recently seen machines of various sizes on the market that can treat food waste on site. Some are for domestic use, while some larger ones are for use by shopping malls or businesses. Moreover, some local companies have started research into a new way of using gas to treat food waste on site. We have started to approach different suppliers about this. Firstly, we hope to understand their technology; secondly, we hope to arrange some trials to see if the effectiveness of on-site food waste treatment is consistent with the claim, and if the by-products produced can be effectively utilized.

More importantly, we want to compare the cost-effectiveness of the two approaches, i.e. on-site treatment of food waste and our current centralized food waste treatment. If we find that on-site treatment has its advantages or is particularly suitable for certain places, we will study how to implement it in Hong Kong. In this regard, we have already started to initiate contacts and research. Thank you, President.

MR TONY TSE (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. President, the Secretary's main reply gives people the impression that there is still much room for improvement in food waste recycling and treatment. According to the Secretary, the current daily recovery volume is about 270 tonnes, but the authorities can actually treat 600 tonnes. The authorities still need to make more efforts in this regard.*

Besides, President, it seems to me that the Government is putting a lot of emphasis on the recovery in PRH estates, but the problem in private housing is actually much more complicated. Why does the Government not pay more attention to private housing estates? Of course it is because there are other problems.

The supplementary question I would like to ask is: For private housing estates, especially in older districts (e.g. Sham Shui Po and Mong Kok) where there are a lot of single-block buildings, will the Government consider designating public space for the installation of FWSRBs? For example, will the Government consider designating space in sitting-out areas for the installation of FWSRBs? Will this be done?

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): I thank Mr TSE for the supplementary question. Actually, we have not neglected private housing estates. Why did we start with PRH estates? The main reason is that HD strongly supports our food waste recycling work, so we believe it would be more convenient to start in PRH estates under HD. Recently, we have launched the Waste Reduction and Recycling Charter. We have invited private housing estates to sign up to this charter to motivate them to do more recycling.

With regard to food waste recycling, we have two other schemes for private housing estates to apply for. Under the schemes, we will provide housing estates with FWSRBs, and the housing estates will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of such FWSRBs. As you can see, we are keen to encourage more private housing estates to participate in food waste recycling, and we are definitely not neglecting them.

As for buildings such as “three-nil” buildings, as I briefly explained in the main reply, it is because they do not have space for FWSRBs, we will install FWSRBs at GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities in proximity to residential areas

and set up about 100 food waste recycling spots in various districts to facilitate food waste recycling by residents. In response to Mr TSE's idea of using the space near these buildings, we are now planning to set up food waste recycling spots at about 100 RCPs for use by residents in the neighbourhood. We are also discussing with FEHD the establishment of food waste recycling spots in various markets, subject to the availability of space in the markets. Food waste recycling spots in markets will also provide convenience to the public.

However, our work does not stop there. We will examine whether there are more public spaces that are suitable for the purpose. As the Member has just said, we will look into that. But, of course, we must consider not only whether there is space for installation, but also whether the collection of food waste in that location will affect its operation and whether it is suitable. We hope to explore different ways to help single-block buildings and "three-nil" buildings other than public and private housing estates to collect food waste. Thank you, President.

IR DR LO WAI-KWOK (in Cantonese): *President, domestic waste is broadly divided into five categories, namely food waste, plastics, metals, paper and glass. If proper recycling and waste reduction can be achieved, theoretically, we will not even need to buy a green plastic bag if waste charging is introduced in the future.*

At present, for domestic food waste, we certainly hope that FWSRBs can be widely installed to facilitate the public to dispose of food waste downstairs of their homes. In fact, such a network is also needed for other recyclable waste.

I would like to ask the Secretary this: Taking food waste as an example, if there are sufficient FWSRBs, but because the degree to which they can process food waste varies, in the end, we still need large-scale facilities that can convert food waste into, say, energy. In this regard, what are the complementary measures? In fact, the other four categories of recyclable domestic waste also need this kind of network.

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): President, with regard to the collection of recyclables, the current recovery rate in Hong Kong is about 32%, which is calculated based on the total volume of waste in Hong Kong. In fact, apart from food waste, Hong Kong has its own downstream recycling facilities for the other four types of waste that the Honourable Member has just mentioned. We have looked at the recycling

capacity of the downstream recycling facilities and learned that even if the amount of recyclables in Hong Kong increases significantly, they will still have the capacity to handle it because they basically operate on an industrial scale.

It can be said that our main challenge is food waste. As we have explained earlier, we currently have a downstream treatment capacity of 600 tonnes, but with the 300 tonnes of unused pre-treatment capacity at O•PARK2, which can be fully utilized when necessary, plus the capacity of the sewage treatment works, the total capacity for treating food waste is now 900 tonnes. Additionally, as we are promoting the “Food TranSmarter” and other food waste pre-treatment technologies, our actual treatment capacity is believed to exceed 1 000 tonnes.

However, of course, it also depends on the amount of food waste collected. So, our first and foremost task is to explore how to expand the food waste collection network and encourage residents and restaurants to recycle food waste. I believe that if we make efforts on both fronts, the amount of food waste recycled will increase significantly in the future. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Second question.

Relationship between tertiary institutions and intermediary agencies for overseas studies

2. **DR HOEY SIMON LEE** (in Cantonese): *President, it has been reported that some people are suspected to have falsified academic qualifications and have succeeded in enrolling in a tertiary institution in Hong Kong through intermediary agencies for overseas studies (“agencies”). Meanwhile, some agencies have claimed on the Internet that they, through connections, can ensure that their clients obtain quotas for direct admission of students to tertiary institutions in Hong Kong. There are views that such a situation creates negative impacts on Hong Kong’s reputation as a clean society and its reputation in education. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *whether various tertiary institutions have granted any agencies any degree of authority for admission of students, made commitments to any agencies that the students whom they recommend can enjoy the right of priority admission or guaranteed admission, and entered into exclusive agency agreements with agencies; if so, of the details;*

- (2) *whether employees and members of the Councils of tertiary institutions are required under the existing management regime to declare any relationship with agencies, and whether tertiary institutions have exercised regulation over such persons for receiving sponsorships, donations or interests from agencies or the consortia behind them; if so, of the details; and*
- (3) *as it has been reported that some agencies have claimed that they obtain quotas for direct admission of students to tertiary institutions through making consistent financial donations to the institutions, of the measures put in place by the authorities to cope with the situation where any persons or organizations are offered quotas for admission of students through such means?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Cantonese): President, Hong Kong's higher education is internationally competitive, and Hong Kong is the only city across the globe with 5 universities in the world's top 100, achieving international excellence in terms of teaching and research. According to world university rankings published last week, the University of Hong Kong ranked among the world's top 20 for the first time, securing the 17th position globally. The rankings of other universities have also risen, claiming spots between the 36th and the 62nd. The high-quality programmes offered by local institutions are all along very popular among both Mainland and overseas students. According to the information provided by the University Grants Committee ("UGC"), as far as the 2023-2024 academic year is concerned, the eight UGC-funded universities have admitted over 38 000 non-local students.

Earlier on, a certain university disclosed that a very small number of cases were found where applicants allegedly submitted fraudulent documents when applying for admission. The university concerned reported the incident to the Police. As legal proceedings are ongoing, we are not in a position to comment on individual cases. Nonetheless, the university's disclosure of the situation indicates that the university is dealing with the incident seriously and is determined to adopt a zero-tolerance stance on the matter. Whether being out of misguided hopes or misled into believing in false publicity, anyone engaging in any dishonest practices will have to bear consequences. Those in serious cases will not only be expelled from the university but also even have to face criminal prosecution.

Hong Kong's higher education has unique advantages, including high teaching quality, strong basic research capabilities, extensive international connections, and close cooperation with the Mainland, representing a strong foundation. We particularly treasure the golden reputation of Hong Kong's higher education. Facing intense competition for admissions, universities have always established stringent admission procedures and mechanisms to ensure fairness and impartiality in selecting the best candidates. As the cradle of future talent, our higher education institutions must be well prepared for Hong Kong to develop itself into an international hub for post-secondary education, regardless of academic standards or the establishment of systems. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the following.

First, upholding fair and stringent admission processes is universities' responsibility. Universities must ensure that the admission mechanism is non-discriminatory, merit-based, fair and impartial, with clear internal guidelines on admission standards and procedures. The academic qualifications, public examination results and relevant documents of students admitted are subject to stringent vetting by the respective academic units and graduate schools, which act as gatekeepers. Verification is made through various channels, such as direct communication with the awarding institutions, examination boards or official platforms concerned, and students may be required to provide originals or certified copies for checking when registering with the universities as and when necessary. At the same time, in the light of the ever-changing circumstances, the universities will continually improve the arrangements to maintain their academic reputation.

Second, the universities have zero tolerance towards dishonest or improper admission applications. They will take decisive disciplinary actions upon discovery of such violations, including rescission of admission offers or expulsion, and will refer such cases to the relevant law enforcement agencies and visa-issuing authorities for follow-up action as appropriate. We solemnly remind all applicants not to break the law or undermine the fair and impartial system, as the consequences will be severe.

In response to the question raised by Dr LEE, our key replies are as follows:

- (1) The eight UGC-funded universities have made it clear that they have neither granted any intermediary agencies for overseas studies any degree of authority for admission, nor pledged to guarantee the admission of the applicants recommended by these agencies, not to mention a mechanism of internal recommendation for guaranteed

admission of applicants. The universities have been paying closer attention to the unscrupulous intermediary agencies on the market or on the Internet on their untrue claims of guaranteed admission and their abetting and other illegal activities. The universities actively make clarifications on their websites, social media and in application forms, as well as reminding applicants that all application materials must be accurate. Unlawful conduct will not be tolerated.

- (2) The universities have put in place a rigorous regime for declarations of interests, under which members of the Councils and staff are required to declare any potential pecuniary advantage.
- (3) The admission mechanism of the eight UGC-funded universities upholds the principles of merit-based selection, fairness and impartiality. The institutions have clearly stated that no intermediary agencies for overseas studies are engaged and the institutions do not allow students to obtain quotas for direct admission through making financial donations to the institutions. All UGC-funded universities are subject to the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, and they have drawn up rigorous guidelines on declaration and provided internal training for staff responsible for admission matters, including collaborating with the Independent Commission Against Corruption (“ICAC”) in this regard, inviting ICAC to take part in reviewing or providing advice on the admission procedures, and formulating internal guidelines on corruption prevention, etc., with a view to raising anti-corruption awareness among relevant staff and ensuring the integrity of the system and fairness of the admission mechanism.

President, I would like to thank Dr Hoey Simon LEE again for raising this question so that we can take this opportunity to clarify the false information, and remind everyone to be wary of the publicity of those unscrupulous agencies. If applicants have any doubts, they should directly seek verification with the universities to avoid losses. At the same time, I also take this opportunity to reiterate that the Government, universities, and society have a zero tolerance stance towards using fraudulent academic qualifications to apply for admission, and we share the determination to safeguard the integrity of Hong Kong’s society and the good reputation of higher education. Thank you, President.

DR HOEY SIMON LEE (in Cantonese): *I thank the Secretary for her clarification. When intermediary agencies for overseas studies claim that they have channels for the so-called “guaranteed admission”, it should be false information, and it may even involve illegal activities of abetting. However, if we visit social media sites, we can still find a lot of advertisements from intermediary agencies. Some even have clear prices, and the intermediary fees for the so-called “guaranteed admission to higher education institutions in Hong Kong” can be as high as \$800,000. More importantly, this situation has been going on for quite a long time, so I would like to make further enquiries with the Bureau.*

The Secretary emphasized the situation of UGC-funded universities in her reply. For institutions that are under the supervision of the authorities (including public and private universities), if it is found that certain students have successfully enrolled with fraudulent academic qualifications but have already graduated, how will the Bureau handle it? Will the degrees awarded to them be revoked? Thank you.

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Cantonese): President, as I pointed out just now, the society as a whole has a zero-tolerance stance towards improper and dishonest behaviour. If the allegations of using false information or fraudulent academic qualifications are substantiated after investigation, the institutions will take all resolute actions, including expulsion and rescission of admission offers, as mentioned earlier. Apart from this, where fraudulent academic qualifications are involved, the individuals concerned may ultimately face the consequence of having their qualifications revoked.

The admission principles are the same for both self-financing and public-funded institutions. Our society upholds the values of honesty and integrity, and all institutions must comply with the requirements under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance. At the same time, in the case of self-financing institutions, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications will review the procedures and various situations of the institutions from time to time. If the institutions are negligent in the relevant situation, the authorities will raise the issue with them. Thank you, President.

MS MAGGIE CHAN (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. Does the Education Bureau (“EDB”) have any plans to coordinate and collaborate with ICAC, the Police and other law enforcement agencies to strengthen cooperation*

with Hong Kong's tertiary institutions to prevent improper admission procedures or related incidents from occurring, so as to prevent persons intending to pursue further studies in Hong Kong from falling prey to the scams of intermediary agencies, thereby enhancing the integrity of tertiary institutions and ensuring the fairness in the admission of students?

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Cantonese): President, as I said in the main reply just now, EDB would, from time to time, collaborate with various relevant departments (including ICAC and the Police) to raise the awareness of students and relevant parties on integrity and prevention of bribery, while at the same time enhancing the law-abiding awareness of students. Therefore, whether it is ICAC or the Police, we would work with the relevant departments on relevant topics. Thank you, President.

PROF PRISCILLA LEUNG (in Cantonese): *President, may I ask the Secretary whether she will tackle the problem at source? Universities may be one of the targets of intermediary agencies, because many people will use fraudulent academic qualifications. But the rampant activities of unscrupulous intermediary agencies are like a big fraud. Can these intermediary agencies be listed as targets for strict law enforcement actions? In the light of the current cases found in universities, can the Secretary and the Secretary for Security examine whether similar situations may exist in other institutions or industries?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Cantonese): President, regarding the aforesaid false and untruthful publicity, on the one hand, the universities would take immediate actions through various channels upon discovery, including reflecting the situation on the relevant social media. Secondly, the universities themselves would immediately make clarifications. As I just said, they would, among others, make clarifications through the media, or even remind applicants repeatedly in the application forms that all information declared must be accurate, and that there will be serious consequences if fraudulent academic qualifications are involved.

As I said a moment ago, I am grateful to Dr LEE for raising this question, which gives us the opportunity to clarify the matter to the entire society again on this platform. Here, I once again appeal to all applicants not to believe in such

false advertisements and to stay vigilant, otherwise the consequences can be very serious. As I said earlier, the persons concerned will be disqualified from admission or expelled after admission. There may be other serious consequences even after graduation if they are found to have violated academic discipline. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Prof Priscilla LEUNG, which part of your supplementary question has not been answered?

PROF PRISCILLA LEUNG (in Cantonese): *My question is actually about one thing, that is, whether the Bureau will work with the Security Bureau to take strict law enforcement actions against these intermediary agencies?*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary, do you have anything to add?

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Cantonese): Of course, we will deal with the relevant situations through the reporting mechanism. After all, EDB is not a law enforcement agency. If cybercrimes are involved, I believe we also have to consider the situation in different regions. We will call on universities to report promptly if they have found any relevant cases or if there is a need to do so. Thank you, President.

MR CHU KWOK-KEUNG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. “Black intermediary agencies” in the Mainland offer the so-called “guaranteed admission” service, provide recommendations from scholars at set prices, and even falsify overseas academic qualifications. In fact, these illegal practices are not isolated incidents but an open secret, and they are definitely cross-border crimes.*

May I ask the Bureau whether it will seek the assistance of the Mainland’s law enforcement departments or agencies to crack down on these “black intermediary agencies” across the border, in order to maintain Hong Kong’s brand as an international education hub? Thank you.

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. As I pointed out just now, if we suspect that there are false advertisements that are inaccurate, we will follow up the matter through various possible channels, including reporting to the relevant law enforcement agencies and lodging complaints with the online platforms. We have also appealed to the institutions which are involved in such incidents to make clarifications, seek legal advice or take feasible follow-up actions as soon as possible. Thank you, President.

MR KENNETH LEUNG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. Here, I would like to ask the authorities whether, in the light of the previous incidents, they will consider requiring tertiary institutions to strengthen their verification of academic qualifications? That is to say, apart from the first graduation certificate or proof of graduation, will the authorities also examine the applicants' visa records, travel records, etc. regarding their past studies abroad, so as to strengthen the verification process? Thank you, President.*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Cantonese): President, we know that Hong Kong's higher education is very popular, so every year hundreds of thousands of students apply for admission to our higher education institutions. Our eight UGC-funded universities have their own specific mechanisms for processing and accepting applications for admission. They will rigorously examine the relevant academic qualifications of the applicants, and at the same time have put in place a verification system. Under such circumstances, the universities will deal with any cases of using false instruments seriously in accordance with their existing mechanisms. In fact, the discovery of fraudulent academic qualifications is also the result of the universities' continuous verification work.

Of course, before enrolment, universities may also require students to submit the original copies of the certificates for verification, or verify students' academic qualifications through recognized authorities. In general, universities will request the relevant degree-awarding institutions to send the applicants' proof of academic qualifications directly to them. Therefore, universities have now adopted various means to confirm the authenticity of applicants' qualifications. Thank you, President.

MR MA FUNG-KWOK (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. We have always had great respect for the autonomy and academic freedom of various institutions. Besides, educational institutions of all kinds have the right to retain their autonomy and enjoy academic freedom under the Basic Law. However, autonomy does not mean that the management of universities or institutions is not subject to any monitoring or regulation. Given that higher education has a significant impact on the culture and economy of society, the Government and the public are very concerned about the operation of these institutions. On this basis, may I ask whether EDB has proactively—and I would like to emphasize the word “proactively”—gained an understanding of the incident involving such intermediary agencies from the tertiary institution in Hong Kong? Has EDB proactively requested other law enforcement agencies to follow up on the whole incident?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Cantonese): President, as I said earlier, we take a zero-tolerance attitude towards fraudulent academic qualifications. This is the unanimous position of all institutions, as honesty and integrity are the core values of Hong Kong society. In addition, safeguarding the academic reputation of an institution is also a core value shared by all institutions. Therefore, upon discovery of fraudulent academic qualifications, the institutions have taken appropriate actions immediately, including referring the cases to law enforcement agencies as mentioned earlier. At the same time, as EDB, apart from formulating policies and allocating resources, we will ensure that the institutions uphold the principles of merit-based selection, fairness and impartiality in the operation of their admission mechanisms. In this regard, we would work closely with the universities from time to time. Thank you, President.

MR CHAN PUI-LEUNG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. If the recent spate of incidents involving the falsification of academic qualifications is not handled properly, it will seriously affect the credibility of education in Hong Kong, which will in turn affect many students, especially those who will soon graduate and who will return to the Mainland to look for jobs. In this connection, may I ask what measures the authorities have in place to maintain the credibility of Hong Kong’s academic system?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Cantonese): President, as I said just now, the so-called incidents of fraudulent academic qualifications are actually very rare. First, in terms of the system, we have very strict requirements at all levels in respect of admission, academic qualifications and quality of programmes to ensure that all Hong Kong university graduates meet all university requirements. At the same time, we also take strict action against those lawless elements. The main purpose is to maintain the academic reputation of the institutions, which is of paramount importance to the institutions. This can also ensure fairness and justice for all graduates, so that their academic qualifications are not compromised by such misconduct. Thank you, President.

MR DENNIS LEUNG (in Cantonese): *President, the Mainland has been relentless in its efforts to fight corruption, whether it is “beating the tigers”, “hunting the crocodiles” or “catching the flies”. Will the HKSAR Government adopt the same attitude in instituting legal proceedings of prosecution against the persons involved in the cases (including Mainlanders or overseas persons) to combat offenders who have falsified academic qualifications, so as to enhance confidence and credibility in the development of Hong Kong as an international hub for post-secondary education?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. As I mentioned earlier, integrity and honesty are very important values cherished by Hong Kong society, and the academic reputation of universities is hard-won and therefore highly valued by everyone. We all have zero tolerance for fraudulent academic qualifications and improper and dishonest behaviour. Universities will take stringent actions against such illegal acts, whether in terms of mechanism or in various aspects (including admission mechanism and anti-corruption measures). However, EDB and universities are not law enforcement agencies. Therefore, if we discover such situations, we will report them to the law enforcement agencies promptly, so as to stop the lawbreakers and bring them to justice as soon as possible. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Third question.

Promoting the development of the film industry

3. **MR VINCENT CHENG** (in Cantonese): *President, it has been reported that following the splash made recently by the film “Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In” at the Cannes Film Festival, the morale of the film industry has been greatly boosted. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *as there are views pointing out that “Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In” has enjoyed the opportunity to triumph beyond Hong Kong only because it is invested by private enterprises with a production budget as high as \$300 million, whereas most Hong Kong films, especially those subsidized by the Film Development Fund (“FDF”), are low-budget productions with varied box-office numbers, whether the authorities will consider enhancing the funding schemes under FDF, such as raising the amount of financing that each film can receive under the Film Production Financing Scheme (“FPFS”), enhancing the training subsidies for prospective film directors and scriptwriters, or introducing other enhancement measures; if so, of the details, and whether they will consult the film industry;*
- (2) *of the amounts of public funds used for the various schemes under FDF (including FPFS, the First Feature Film Initiative, and the Scriptwriting Incubation Programme) and set out, by title of subsidized film, the amounts of subsidies under FDF, the amounts of investment from private enterprises, and the box-office takings; whether it has assessed the effectiveness of various schemes; and*
- (3) *apart from participating in the international film festivals as well as launching the Film Financing Scheme for Mainland Market and the Hong Kong-Europe-Asian Film Collaboration Funding Scheme recently, of the other deployments put in place by the authorities to enable Hong Kong films to tap into the markets in other places and generate economic benefits, including whether they will support the release of Hong Kong films in other places?*

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): President, our reply to Mr Vincent CHENG’s question is as follows:

(1) and (2)

The Government has been supporting the development of the Hong Kong film industry through the Film Development Fund (“FDF”) along four strategic directions, namely, nurturing talent, enhancing local production, expanding markets and building audience. The Government reviews the operation of FDF and the scope of funding from time to time in response to the development needs of the film industry.

In order to encourage the film industry to enhance Hong Kong film production, the Government introduced the Film Production Financing Scheme (“FPFS”) in 2007 to provide government finance to small and medium-budgeted film productions. The recommended financing ratio is determined based on the score obtained by the film project, which ranges from 20% to 40% of the production budget, with a cap of \$9 million. When the Government further launched the Film Production Financing Scheme—Relaxation Plan (“Relaxation Plan”) in 2020, taking into account the challenges faced by the industry due to the epidemic at that time, the mechanism was enhanced and the actual financing amount was increased. Each approved film project would receive a maximum financing ratio, which is 40% of the production budget or \$9 million, whichever is less. This measure was well received by the film industry. Having regard to the positive feedback from the sector, the deadline for application under the Relaxation Plan has been further extended for one year to 14 January 2025. The Government will consolidate the experiences from implementation of the relaxation measures so as to enhance the scheme. Taking into account the significance of sustainable projects in promoting the development of Hong Kong films, we will continue to reach out to the film sector to gauge their views on the financing/funding ceiling for considering further enhancements to the current mechanism.

FDF has also been committed to nurturing talents. The First Feature Film Initiative (“FFFI”) was launched in 2013 with the aim of providing funding to support new directors and their film production teams to make their first feature films on a commercial basis, with an aim of nurturing talents for the local film industry. FFFI identifies

new talents through competitions. The winning new directors and their film production teams will receive funding from FDF to make their first feature films. FDF also launched the Directors' Succession Scheme in July 2020. It invites veteran directors to partner with young directors to co-produce local films in the spirit of mentorship, with a view to encouraging directors to groom young talents and enhancing the quantity of quality local film productions. In addition, the Scriptwriting Incubation Programme under FDF aims at identifying and nurturing local screenwriting talents to help incubate quality screenplays, thereby enhancing the quality of Hong Kong film productions. FDF also supports other film-related talent nurture programmes for practitioners in different aspects of film production and post-production, such as the Screenwriting Apprenticeship Programme, which aims to provide talents for different positions in film production, thereby improving the quality of films.

In response to the rise of online social platforms and streaming platforms, the Content Development Scheme for Streaming Platforms was launched under FDF in 2023. Teams are recruited through a competition under this Scheme to develop content for streaming platform series, thereby nurturing cross-sectoral production teams for streaming platforms and facilitating the film industry to enter new distribution markets by creating quality streaming content.

To date, over 100 emerging directors and producers were engaged in some 100 films funded under FDF, which have won more than 160 local and international awards. Many of the Government financed films in recent years, for example, *A Guilty Conscience*, *Mama's Affair*, *Chilli Laugh Story*, *Time Still Turns the Pages*, *Hong Kong Family*, *A Light Never Goes Out* and *Lost Love*, have achieved good box office. More than 3 500 job opportunities were also created by the projects funded under FPFS. The Government will evaluate the effectiveness of the schemes from various aspects, including the numbers of talents nurtured, job opportunities created, box office receipts, as well as local and international awards attained. The Government reviews the schemes according to the development needs of the film industry from time to time.

The projects funded under the schemes of FDF are shown at the Annex. The amount of investment by private companies is a kind of commercial information, thus it is not appropriate for the Government to disclose such information.

- (3) In order to further subsidize Hong Kong films to explore overseas markets, the Government has actively launched a number of new schemes under FDF in the past two years. Following the launch of the Hong Kong-Asian Film Collaboration Funding Scheme in 2023, the Film Financing Scheme for Mainland Market was launched in May this year to support Hong Kong film companies and the Mainland cultural enterprises to invest in and promote the productions of Hong Kong directors. This will also help boost the chance of Hong Kong films for release in the Mainland market. The Government will also expand the original Hong Kong-Asian Film Collaboration Funding Scheme to the Hong Kong-Europe-Asian Film Collaboration Funding Scheme, which will subsidize film projects co-produced by filmmakers from European and Asian countries to produce films featuring Hong Kong, European and Asian cultures. This would help promising Hong Kong filmmakers broaden their regional cultural horizons, draw inspiration from film productions of other countries and have better understanding of the market demands of other countries. These schemes have just been launched, and some are just entering the assessment stage. We will take the work forward as soon as possible so that the projects can be released and the effectiveness of the schemes can be evaluated.

The Government has been actively organizing and subsidizing screenings of Hong Kong films in Mainland and overseas international film festivals and cities in recent years so that audiences from around the world can watch Hong Kong films and know about the unique charms about Hong Kong from these films. Through the support of FDF, the Government and film-related groups have organized Hong Kong film screenings at many overseas film festivals and cities. Among them, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices in the overseas have sponsored screenings of Hong Kong films and exchange activities with their directors/actors at different international film festivals since 2023. Create Hong Kong also organized Hong Kong film screening in more than 30 cities from 2022

to 2024 to promote the works of the new Hong Kong directors/actors. The above activities aim to increase the exposure and popularity of Hong Kong films and build audience. Some of the films of the new directors have been given local distribution opportunities after being screened, and the results are encouraging. In addition, FDF also subsidizes promotional activities for individual films at major international film festivals to increase publicity effects and distribution opportunities. Create Hong Kong will collaborate with the Hong Kong Film Development Council to study and consider providing further support for the overseas distribution of Hong Kong films.

Annex

Projects funded under schemes of the Film Development Fund^{Note(1)}

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong ^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
Film Production Financing Scheme (Including Relaxation Plan)					
1	2008	Bliss Pictures Limited	McDull Kungfu Ding Dong	3,598,800	2,462,303
2		Runaway Films Production Limited	Claustrophobia	1,618,255	842,474
3		Joy Charm Enterprise Limited	Coweb	2,993,179	327
4		BIG Pictures Limited	Give Love	2,419,674	165,219
5		Glory Top Properties Limited	Strawberry Cliff	3,017,435	666,269
6		ET Media Group Limited	Lover's Discourse	1,855,297	2,075,832

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
7		Dadi Entertainment Limited	Echoes of the Rainbow	3,598,274	23,133,269
8	2009	Diva Productions Limited	Break Up Club	1,759,500	10,333,691
9		Icon Pictures Limited	La Comédie humaine	2,520,000	7,292,519
10		Manner Movie Limited	37	2,842,500	33,520
11	2010	Beach Spike Holdings (HK) Limited	Beach Spike	2,799,836	1,677,655
12		Mega-Vision Pictures Limited	MicroSex Office	1,723,750	3,411,062
13	2011	Film Mall Limited	The Killer Who Never Kills	3,012,250	523,618
14		Gold Harbour International Films Limited	Lost in Wrestling	3,748,788	3,729
15		Universe Entertainment Limited	Love Lifting	2,708,816	1,298,130
16	2012	Film Mall Limited	The Love Expert	2,995,500	5,625
17		Golden Scene Company Limited	The Way We Dance	2,119,519	13,646,417
18		Milkyway Image (Hong Kong) Limited	A Complicated Story	3,014,859	276,738
19		Shadow Puppet Productions Limited	Bends	4,000,000	402,972
20		Film Plus Productions Limited	Doomsday Party	3,384,000	290,326

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
21		Movinpix Company limited	The Seventh Lie	1,840,000	584,975
22		Hundreds Idea Limited	The True Love	1,597,100	1,480
23	2013	C & M Film Workshop Limited	Kick Ass Girls	2,251,147	1,450,055
24		Golden Scene Company Limited	The Midnight After	5,250,000	21,298,819
25		Ideas Workshop Limited	Twilight Online	1,500,000	4,460,210
26		Ko Chi Sum Productions Limited	Wonder Mama	1,590,180	443,366
27	2014	GlobalSaga Media Entertainment Limited	The Merger	1,951,632	483,470
28	2015	Golden Scene Company Limited	The Moment	2,760,000	215,798
29		Same Way Production Limited	Love Revolution	2,997,300	43,752
30	2016	Golden Scene Company Limited	Tomorrow is Another Day	3,397,668	6,046,782
31	2017	CEO Production Limited	Men On The Dragon	4,492,800	15,690,440
32	2018	Icon Group Limited	Ciao, UFO	5,400,000	Yet to be exhibited
33		Tailor Made Production Ltd	I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change	5,200,000	8,947,057
34	2019	One of the One Limited	The Secret Diary of a Mom to be	3,750,000	501,180

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong ^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
35		Sky Power Entertainment Culture Limited	Golden Boy	5,162,101	Yet to be exhibited
36		Mei Ah Film Production Company Limited	The Sparring Partner	2,502,500	43,691,815
37	2020	Mandarin Motion Pictures Limited	Sunshine of My Life	2,391,540	4,864,927
38		Point Five Creations	Another World	5,600,000	Yet to be exhibited
39	2021	Montage Film Production Company	The Dishwasher Squad	4,798,600	Yet to be exhibited
40		Mei Ah Film Production Company Limited	Last Song For You	5,353,220	Yet to be exhibited
41		Cheer Trend Creation Limited	We Are Family	5,600,000	3,554,718
42		Cheer Trend Creation Limited	Social Distancing	2,030,000	173,361
43		Star Talent Production Limited	Peg O' My Heart	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
44		Leading PR and Promotion Limited	Vital Signs	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
45		Just Distribution Company Limited	Fight for Tomorrow	3,873,600	Yet to be exhibited
46		Blue Sea Productions Limited	An Abandoned Team	4,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
47		Icon Group Limited	Over My Dead Body	7,552,400	23,078,611

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
48		Movie Addict Productions Limited	Tales from The Occult: Body and Soul	3,783,200	675,697
49		Treasure Island Production Limited	Chilli Laugh Story	4,534,000	32,708,642
50		Mei Ah Film Production Company Limited	Possession Street	4,678,800	Yet to be exhibited
51		One Cool Home Limited	Good Game	4,800,000	Yet to be exhibited
52		Vast Forever Limited	Mama's Affair	4,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
53	2022	Blue Sea Productions Limited	Someone Like Me	3,200,000	Yet to be exhibited
54		Shine Wise Corporation Limited	Inexternal	6,400,000	Yet to be exhibited
55		Mega Ascent Limited	A Guilty Conscience	8,866,250	121,794,204
56		Sil-Metropole Organisation Limited	Look Up	2,489,730	1,434,833
57		Word By Word Limited	PaPa	7,246,400	Yet to be exhibited
58		MM2 Studios Hong Kong Limited	Back Home	3,599,200	5,149,384
59	2023	Red Dot Films Production Limited	A Trace of Murderer	6,569,910	Yet to be exhibited

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong ^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
60		Success Dimension Limited	Once In A Blue Moon	1,650,000	Yet to be exhibited
61		Shine Wise Corporation Limited	YUM Investigation	2,750,000	3,837,440
62	2024	Treasure Island Production Limited	Golden Bird	8,591,200	Yet to be exhibited
63		Golden Gate Productions Limited	Little Red Sweet	3,320,000	Yet to be exhibited
Film Production Grant Scheme					
64	2016	Star Pictures Entertainment (Hong Kong) Limited	Lucid Dreams	1,958,000	532,771
65		Entertaining Power Co Ltd	Zombiology: Enjoy Yourself Tonight	1,979,000	5,010,411
66		Dot 2 Dot Production Limited	Napping Kid	1,379,749	1,118,529
67	2017	A.M. Associates Limited	Keep Rolling	1,959,200	963,260
68		Photon Films (HK) Limited	Beyond The Dream	1,200,000	15,292,371
69		River Vision Company Limited	The Lady Improper	2,000,000	4,160,052
70		HK Entertainment Corporation Limited	The First Girl I Loved	1,064,000	2,451,777
71		Mo Production Company Limited	BAND FOUR	2,000,000	2,260,877

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong ^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
72	2018	Asia Premium Investment Limited	Just 1 Day	2,000,000	98,032
73		Golden Scene Company Limited	The Way We Keeping Dancing	2,000,000	8,740,681
Directors' succession Scheme					
74	2021	Wong Kar-wai/Ronald Zee	In the Still of the Day	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
75		Peter Chan/Wong Chun	The Long Night	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
76	2022	Mabel Cheung/Wong Hoi and Norris Wong	Tango For Four	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
77		Fruit Chan/Chan Kin-long	Sap Yi	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
78		Stanley Kwan/Chu Hoi-ying	To be confirmed	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
79		Wilson Yip/Cheng Wai-ki	To be confirmed	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
80		Sylvia Chang/Kung Siu-ping	Measure in Love	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
81	2023	Derek Yee/Cheung King-wai	To be confirmed	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
82	-	Gordon Chan/Lam Suk-ching	To be confirmed ^{Note(3)}	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
83	-	Dante Lam/Tong Wai-hon	To be confirmed ^{Note(3)}	9,000,000	Yet to be exhibited

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong ^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
First Feature Film Initiative					
84	2013	Flash Glory Limited	Winner of the 1st First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Weeds On Fire	2,000,000	4,714,917
85		Mad World Limited	Winner of the 1st First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Mad World	2,000,000	17,130,415
86		Opus 1 Limited	Winner of the 1st First Feature Film Initiative (Professional Group): Somewhere Beyond the Mist	5,000,000	771,424
87	2015	In Your Dream Film Production Limited	Winner of the 2nd First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): In Your Dreams	3,250,000	479,404
88		Plazza Production Limited	Winner of the 2nd First Feature Film Initiative (Professional Group): Apart	5,500,000	41,353
89		No Ceiling Film Production Limited	Winner of the 3rd First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Still Human	3,250,000	19,846,887

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
90		G-Class Films Limited	Winner of the 3rd First Feature Film Initiative (Professional Group): G Affairs	5,500,000	1,050,899
91	2016	My Prince Edward Film Production Limited	Winner of the 4th First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): My Prince Edward	3,250,000	5,282,680
92		Hand-roll Cigarette Film Production Company Limited	Winner of the 4th First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Hand Rolled Cigarette	3,250,000	8,025,869
93		Amour Film Limited	Winner of the 4th First Feature Film Initiative (Professional Group): Elisa's Day	5,500,000	714,202
94	2018	Tales of Honey Limited	Winner of the 5th First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Hong Kong Family	3,250,000	12,789,619
95		Roundtable Pictures Limited	Winner of the 5th First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Time Still Turns the Pages	3,250,000	28,084,605

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
96		A Light Never Goes Out Limited	Winner of the 5th First Feature Film Initiative (Professional Group): A Light Never Goes Out	5,500,000	3,157,212
97	2020	The Flow Of Words Limited	Winner of the 6th First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Fly Me To The Moon	5,000,000	4,711,767
98		The Wonder Film Production Limited	Winner of the 6th First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Bloosoms under Somewhere (formerly “The Wonder”)	5,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
99		Stay Hungry Keep Foolish Limited	Winner of the 6th First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Gamer Girls	5,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
100		Head Office Film Limited	Winner of the 6th First Feature Film Initiative (Professional Group): Love Lies	8,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
101		Flowing Water Production Limited	Winner of the 6th First Feature Film Initiative (Professional Group): Lost Love	8,000,000	7,174,824

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
102	2022	Flowing River Production Limited	Winner of the 7th First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Eternal Sunshine Life- saving Squad	5,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
103		baat3 baat3 luk6 Films Limited	Winner of the 7th First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Dead End	5,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
104		Bird of Paradise Limited	Winner of the 7th First Feature Film Initiative (Higher Education Institution Group): Bird of Paradise	5,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
105		THIS Pictures Limited	Winner of the 7th First Feature Film Initiative (Professional Group): Spare Queens	8,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
106		AIM Creative Limited	Winner of the 7th First Feature Film Initiative (Professional Group): Love & Sex on Streaming	8,000,000	Yet to be exhibited
107		Stuntman Film Production Co. Limited	Winner of the 7th First Feature Film Initiative (Professional Group): Stuntman	8,000,000	Yet to be exhibited

	Approval year	Name of applicant(s)	Project title	Funding amount (HK\$)	Box office receipts in Hong Kong ^{Note(2)} (HK\$)
Scriptwriting Incubation Programme					
108	2020	Film Services Office	Scriptwriting Incubation Programme	8,200,000	Not applicable

Note (1): Excluding projects withdrawn after approval is granted.

Note (2): Box office receipts as at end-May 2024.

Note (3): The film projects to be finalized by the project teams.

MR VINCENT CHENG (in Cantonese): *President, the Government is discussing with the film company of Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In on how to preserve the film materials, film stills or props for the purpose of exhibition, and one of the functions of FDF is to promote audience interest and appreciation of local films through the funding schemes. Apart from Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In, many Hong Kong films have earned a good reputation both within and outside the territory in the past. For example, on the mention of Table for Six, we would think of the neon lights; speaking of Warriors of Future, we would think of the special effects scenes and armour. The relevant scenes, costumes and props are very attractive.*

May I ask the Bureau whether, in addition to making good use of FDF, it will consider strengthening cooperation with commercial organizations to set up a film-themed tourism park with Hong Kong characteristics, which can be developed into a tourist attraction and also be used to promote Hong Kong's film culture? Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I thank Mr CHENG for his supplementary question. The Government is very willing to work with the industry to explore options that can help promote the development of the film industry and at the same time actively drive the development of tourism. If any enterprises or organizations are interested in these ideas, they can discuss with the Government. We will actively coordinate in the hope that such projects can be taken forward.

In fact, we have added elements of film promotion in different areas. For example, in the newly launched City in Time project, we have included the filming locations of some of the past films, as well as the highlights of the films that were shot there, with the aim of promoting tourism through films and at the same time driving the development of the film industry through tourism. Thank you, President.

MS JOEPHY CHAN (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. The timing of this question today is perfect because as of yesterday (11 June), Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In has been released for 41 days and its total box office in Hong Kong and Macao has officially exceeded \$100 million, but in fact, the production cost of the film is \$300 million. The reason why Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In is so successful is that the production team did not just make the film to show to themselves and their coterie. That is why films can also promote culture and tourism.*

President, after our follow-up in the past, the Bureau has responded to our aspirations. As mentioned just now, FDF has become more diversified with a broader perspective. The Film Financing Scheme for Mainland Market was also launched in May this year, and I, of course, hope that elements of patriotism can be added to it. As stated in the main reply, shortly after the launch of this Scheme, some applications have entered the assessment stage. I would like to enquire about the relevant figures in order to understand whether the publicity for the Scheme is adequate and how popular it is. Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I thank Ms CHAN for her supplementary question. The Film Financing Scheme for Mainland Market was launched last month and is currently at the stage of accepting applications. I do not have the relevant figures at hand. However, the main reply is mostly about the level of popularity of the other film funding schemes. We can provide the relevant figures asked by Ms CHAN for Members' reference later. **(Appendix 1)**

MR KENNETH FOK (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. Just now the Secretary's reply mentioned films and tourism. In my view, the interaction between films and tourism is very strong. Whenever the film The Lord of the*

Rings is mentioned, we would think of New Zealand, and some people would even travel to New Zealand specifically.

Many neighbouring regions or countries have policies that provide resources to support foreign production teams to shoot films in their local places, such as providing a certain amount of subsidy; if the production can promote or publicize their local culture, the amount of subsidy will be higher, and there are many different types of subsidies. However, there is no such subsidy in Hong Kong at present.

Will the Secretary consider providing subsidies in the future, whether through FDF or government support, to attract more international or overseas film production teams to shoot films in Hong Kong? This can help promote our tourist attractions. I still remember a film released in 2008 in which Batman jumped off IFC (International Financial Centre), giving the world a spectacular view of Hong Kong. In addition, it can also help Hong Kong's practitioners because the international teams would hire Hong Kong crews to assist in filming. Will the Government consider this? Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I thank Mr FOK for his supplementary question. We will consider how to attract more foreign films to shoot in Hong Kong, including the provision of one-stop coordination services and other concessions. We will take all of this into consideration. We will make an announcement in due course when we have come up with such proposals. Thank you, President.

DR WENDY HONG (in Cantonese): *What is mentioned in the Secretary's reply just now is only funding or financing schemes launched under a fund set up by the Government, which is the use of government means. In fact, being an international financial centre, Hong Kong has not made good use of market capital to promote the development of local cultural, arts and creative industries. In my view, Hong Kong's cultural and creative industries have not made good use of the support of market capital.*

I would like to ask: Will the Government discuss with the relevant financial departments to take a cue from the mechanism for the development of technology industries and use such means as tax concessions to provide an incentive mechanism to channel the financial capital in society to set up seed funds, angel

funds, equity investment funds, etc., similar to those for the cultivation of technology industries, thereby promoting the development and financialization of the cultural and creative industries by financial means? Thank you.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese):

Thank you, President. I thank Dr HONG for her supplementary question. We can consider the relevant direction. Indeed, like Dr HONG said, the strength is limited if we just rely on government resources. We also want to harness the strengths of different sectors of society and work together to achieve good results in this matter. So, we are willing to consider this direction. Thank you, President.

MR SHANG HAILONG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. As I can see, the film industry today is pursuing historical IP (intellectual property) on the one hand, and moving in the direction of science fiction on the other, such as using innovative technological approaches, especially artificial intelligence (“AI”), to promote the development of special effects.*

I would like to ask: Has the Secretary considered investing in the direction of science fiction in the future (especially as Hong Kong is to be developed into an international innovation and technology centre), and at the same time supporting a handful of science fiction writers in Hong Kong? Thank you.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese):

Thank you, President. I thank Mr SHANG for his supplementary question. We are willing to consider this direction. We understand that nowadays, society (especially the younger generation) attaches great importance to technological elements, the application of AI, and so on. We also want to develop in this direction, and we will study how to do the work properly on this front. Thank you, President.

DR CHOW MAN-KONG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. It is very important for a film to be able to make the audience reminisce about the past and freshen up tourists’ impression of Hong Kong, so that they will come to Hong Kong for “star chasing” and “checking-in”.*

Will the authorities consider further supporting Hong Kong's film and television entertainment industry for further development, including establishing a film and television entertainment city with local characteristics in Hong Kong? I also strongly support the public-private partnership approach that the Honourable Member has just proposed. On the other hand, the authorities can introduce more measures to encourage overseas films to shoot in Hong Kong. In particular, for films co-produced by the Mainland and Hong Kong, it may find it relatively difficult to apply for approval at present. Will the authorities do this so that Hong Kong's film and television entertainment industry can flourish, which will in turn drive the development of the tourism industry? Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I thank Dr CHOW for his supplementary question. We are very willing to cooperate with the private sector. If they have proposals or projects that are suitable for Hong Kong, we are willing to coordinate and provide the necessary support.

As regards the support for overseas films to shoot in Hong Kong, as I replied just now, we will consider different measures to provide them with facilitation and preferential treatment. We will announce the relevant details in due course when we have come up with a conclusion after consideration. Thank you, President.

MR YIM KONG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. The current mode of operation of FDF mainly aims to finance the shooting and production of Hong Kong films. In the long run, is it possible to set up under FDF ...*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those in the public gallery please do not take photos. Please sit down.

Mr YIM Kong, please continue with your supplementary question.

MR YIM KONG (in Cantonese): *In the long run, is it possible to include commercial investment portfolios under FDF, so that FDF can receive commercial investment returns for sustainable operation while supporting the sustainable development of the local film industry? Thank you.*

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I thank Mr YIM for his supplementary question. Some of the existing funding schemes are of an investment nature. Therefore, the profits from the box office receipts of the films, if any, have to be shared with the Government.

As to whether it is appropriate to introduce private sector participation under this measure, this is a relatively complicated issue that we need to consider carefully. However, the objective of the whole measure is to facilitate film production through the Government's input of resources, and it is hoped that with the Government's input, it will be easier for film production teams to find external funding to support filming. Thank you, President.

DR JOHNNY NG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. FDF has long supported the production of many local films in the past. I particularly appreciate the Scriptwriting Incubation Programme, but the Government only injected about HK\$8 million in 2020, and the results are yet to be seen.*

As the essence of a play, the script is of paramount importance. May I ask the Secretary whether it is possible to increase the injection in this regard, or even to bring in more Mainland or overseas experts to write good scripts together with Hong Kong creators? Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): I thank the Member for his supplementary question. We are very willing to consider how we can continue to enhance the Programme. Therefore, we will discuss with the industry from time to time on how to improve the Programme. We will also, from time to time, take on board their views and see how we can adjust the contents of the Programme. Thank you, President.

MR PAUL TSE (in Cantonese): *President, regarding the film Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In, which was mentioned in the main question, we know that its box office receipts are high. However, if we look only at the records in Hong Kong and Macao, excluding the results in the Mainland, the production cost of \$300 million has brought in box office receipts of only \$100 million. As at the beginning of this month, the yield rate is around 0.3.*

Usually, films with good scripts, such as the film Time Still Turns the Pages, directed by Nick CHEUK, son of Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration CHEUK Wing-hing, have very high box office receipts. However, I have not yet calculated the film's return. For other films with good scripts, such as The Sparring Partner, the return was \$17.5 for every \$1 invested; and for A Guilty Conscience, it was \$13.7. There is one point I would like to bring out. The question has asked about scriptwriting, because the script plays an important role in the box office, but it seems that the Secretary has not responded to the question about the funding for scriptwriting. Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I thank for Mr TSE for his supplementary question. In fact, we also attach great importance to the quality of the scripts. That is why, as I mentioned earlier, we have launched the Scriptwriting Incubation Programme. Certainly, the current performance of this Programme may warrant further efforts. We will study how to improve this Programme so that more scripts can be successfully produced under it. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Fourth question.

The new Capital Investment Entrant Scheme

4. **MS CARMEN KAN** (in Cantonese): *President, I first declare that the financial institution where I work is a provider of integrated services for the new Capital Investment Entrant Scheme. On 19 December last year, the Government announced the details of the new Capital Investment Entrant Scheme ("CIES"). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *given that under the requirements of the new CIES, each eligible applicant must invest at least \$30 million in permissible investment assets, of which \$3 million must be invested in the CIES Investment Portfolio set up and managed by the Hong Kong Investment Corporation Limited ("HKIC"), how HKIC selects investment targets for the Portfolio, and whether HKIC will match the funds it manages with the Portfolio for investment in the Portfolio;*

- (2) *of the number of enquiries received and the respective numbers of applications received and approved by the authorities since the launch of the new CIES in March this year, together with a breakdown by the applicants' place of domicile; the average time taken to vet and approve such applications; and*
- (3) *as there are views pointing out that the new CIES requires the cooperation of stakeholders such as financial institutions, of the progress made by the authorities in interfacing with various stakeholders and the work that has been done in terms of international promotion, publicity and explanation, and set out the relevant information in a table?*

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Cantonese): President, in consultation with Invest Hong Kong (“InvestHK”), the Immigration Department (“ImmD”) and the Hong Kong Investment Corporation Limited (“HKIC”), the consolidated reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

- (1) The New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (“New CIES”) has been launched for application from 1 March 2024, with the aim to further enrich the talent pool and attract new capital to Hong Kong. Eligible applicants must invest a minimum of HK\$30 million in the permissible investment assets, including investing a minimum of HK\$27 million in the permissible financial assets, non-residential real estate (subject to a cap of HK\$10 million), and placing HK\$3 million into a new Capital Investment Entrant Scheme Investment Portfolio (“the Portfolio”).

The Portfolio will be set up and managed by HKIC for making investment in companies/projects with a Hong Kong nexus, with a view to supporting the development of innovation and technology industries and other strategic industries, particularly start-up projects, that are beneficial to the long-term development of Hong Kong's economy. The HK\$3 million placed into the Portfolio will be subject to lock-up. Capital preservation and dividend distribution are not guaranteed. The arrangements for the Portfolio will be announced in the third quarter of this year.

- (2) Under the New CIES, InvestHK is responsible for assessing whether the applications fulfil the financial requirements, and ImmD is responsible for assessing the applications for visa/entry permit and extension of stay, etc. After InvestHK's verification that an applicant fulfils the Net Asset Requirement, the applicant may submit an entry application to ImmD for visa/entry permit to enter Hong Kong for residence (entry application). After assessment from the immigration perspectives, ImmD may grant "approval-in-principle" for the applicant to enter Hong Kong as a visitor for not more than 180 days for making the committed investment. Upon the applicant's completion of the committed investment and InvestHK's verification that the applicant meets the investment requirements, ImmD may grant formal approval of the entry application for the applicant and his/her dependants to stay in Hong Kong for not more than 24 months. Thereafter, the applicant and his/her dependants may apply for extension of stay for not more than three years, which may be further extended for not more than three years upon the expiry of each period, provided that the applicant continues to meet the requirements under the New CIES. The applicant and his/her dependants, who upon a period of continuous ordinary residence in Hong Kong of not less than seven years, may apply for becoming Hong Kong permanent residents in accordance with the law.

Since the launch of the New CIES on 1 March up to end-May, InvestHK received over 3 000 enquiries (mainly from potential applicants and service providers) and over 250 applications. The Net Asset Assessment for over 100 applications was approved, including those from Europe, the United States and Singapore, etc. ImmD granted "approval-in-principle" for over 40 applications, enabling the applicants to enter Hong Kong as visitors to make the committed investment. Details of the assessment of the applications are set out in Annex 1. If all applications received are approved, it is estimated that they will bring more than HK\$7.5 billion to Hong Kong, enhancing the developmental strengths of Hong Kong's asset and wealth management industry.

InvestHK and ImmD will process applications expeditiously. The time needed for processing individual applications varies, depending on the information on the asset types as provided by applicants therein and the adequacy of supporting documents, etc. For applications for

Net Asset Assessment, subject to sufficient information and supporting documents provided by applicants, InvestHK will generally complete the assessment in around three weeks. Regarding “approval-in-principle” for entry, upon receipt of all needed documents, ImmD will generally complete the assessment in around three weeks.

- (3) We are confident that the New CIES will be well-received by investors interested in investing and pursuing development in Hong Kong, hence channelling funds to Hong Kong’s capital market and strengthening Hong Kong’s status as an international asset and wealth management hub. To connect with stakeholders such as financial institutions and facilitate their better understanding of the details of the New CIES, InvestHK has organized 24 briefings for around 2 000 participants from various sectors of the financial services industry, covering the banking, securities, funds and insurance sectors as well as the professional bodies of the accounting and legal sectors as detailed in Annex 2. Industry stakeholders generally welcome the launch of the New CIES. In particular, service providers for high-net-worth individuals or family offices are positive towards their business prospects brought by the New CIES. InvestHK will continue to address their questions and publish frequently asked questions on the New CIES website in promoting the effective implementation of the New CIES.

InvestHK will continue to coordinate with relevant government departments in promoting the New CIES, including reaching out to various business associations, international stakeholders and family offices. In 2024-2025, InvestHK will launch extensive publicity to target client groups through the Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses as well as the Talents and Investment Promotion Divisions (which base in the Economic and Trade Offices around the globe), and plans to further promote the New CIES to industry practitioners such as private banks, lawyers and accounting firms through the Private Wealth Management Association in the third quarter of 2024, thereby enhancing their awareness of the New CIES. InvestHK is also planning to promote the New CIES as well as Hong Kong’s competitiveness and unique advantages as a family office hub by means of physical events and online seminars in the Mainland and overseas places. Thank you, President.

Annex 1

Assessment of applications under the New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme
(as of end-May 2024)

	Applications for Net Asset Assessment received by InvestHK	Applications for Net Asset Assessment approved by InvestHK	Entry applications received by ImmD	Applications with “Approval-in-principle” granted by ImmD	Applications fulfilling Investment Requirements as approved by InvestHK	Applications with “Formal Approval” granted by ImmD^(Note 1)
Foreign nationals or persons with permanent residence overseas	245 (see Table 1)	100	88 (see Table 1)	42	1	0
Macao Special Administrative Region Residents and Chinese residents of Taiwan	6	3	2	1	0	0
Total	251	103	90	43	1	0

Note 1: Permission to stay will normally be granted to an applicant and his/her dependants for not more than 24 months, subject to the condition that the applicant continuously satisfies the requirements under the New CIES throughout this period.

Table 1: Foreign nationals or persons with permanent residence overseas

	Applications for Net Asset Assessment received by InvestHK	Entry applications received by ImmD
Guinea-Bissau	100	39
Vanuatu	92	33
Canada	10	1
Australia	5	3
Singapore	5	1
South Korea	5	2
Turkey	4	2
Dominican Republic	2	1
Gambia	2	0
Hungary	2	1
Netherlands	2	1
Philippines	2	0
United States	2	2

	Applications for Net Asset Assessment received by InvestHK	Entry applications received by ImmD
Cambodia	1	1
Greece	1	0
Ireland	1	0
Italy	1	0
Malaysia	1	0
Malta	1	0
New Zealand	1	0
Republic of Cyprus	1	0
Spain	1	0
St. Kitts and Nevis	1	1
Venezuela	1	0
Not yet provided	1	0
Total	245	88

Annex 2

Briefings on the New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme organized by InvestHK
(as of end-May 2024)

Sector	Number of activities
Network of Family Office Service Providers (including private banks, accounting firms, legal firms, trusts, wealth management professional organizations, and other professional service providers)	8
Organizations in the financial sector	3
Organizations in the securities sector	3
Organizations in the funds sector	3
Organizations in the insurance sector	2
Professional bodies (including the accounting and legal sectors)	5
Total	24

MS CARMEN KAN (in Cantonese): *President, the New CIES was announced in December last year, and the authorities have referred to the statistics of the old scheme which at that time received nearly 4 000 applications a year. According to the main reply, during the three months from 1 March to the end of May, the*

authorities received 3 000 enquiries but only 251 applications. From the main reply we can see that the authorities have adopted a “four-step” vetting and approval procedure. As at the end of May, InvestHK had approved 103 applications for Net Asset Assessment, while ImmD had granted “approval-in-principle” for 43 applications. InvestHK has approved only one application that fulfilled the investment requirement, and no application has received “formal approval” from ImmD.

May I ask how the authorities will enhance the appeal of the New CIES and streamline the procedure to attract more new capital to Hong Kong?

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. Let me answer Ms KAN’s supplementary question from several perspectives.

The figures cited by the Member just now reflect the situation of the old scheme that we implemented previously, and the figures that she cited are correct. In the 11 years since the implementation of the old scheme, the authorities received nearly 44 000 applications, an average of about 4 000 applications per year. In retrospect, however, the authorities did not receive 4 000 applications per year during the initial implementation of the old scheme. It was only after a certain period of time following the implementation of the old scheme that people (including potential investors or service providers) developed an interest in the scheme, and had some knowledge of it and then participated in it. Statistics show that there were not many applications in the first two years after the scheme was launched. From this we can see that it takes some time for any new scheme to receive a more satisfactory or higher number of applications. This is the first point.

Secondly, Ms KAN is right. She asked how we can try by all means to make people aware of the New CIES and its benefits when promoting the new scheme. In terms of the awareness of the scheme, we have launched a series of eight measures to promote Hong Kong as a hub for family offices. One of the measures is to form a coalition comprising the authorities and the industry to provide an integrated platform for service providers in the market (including banks, lawyers, accountants, and so on). This has enabled the Government to put across messages and provide information to them, so that they can be promptly updated on the changes to the scheme and the latest situation.

As far as the New CIES is concerned, apart from InvestHK making dedicated efforts to organize various briefings, we have also given play to the role of this coalition, hoping that different messages in the industry can be disseminated more quickly and that these messages can be brought to the attention of the market efficiently. This is the second point.

Thirdly, although the New CIES has only been launched for a short time, Members can see that we have received quite a large number of enquiries and accumulated some experience in the process. When conducting publicity to promote the scheme, rather than monotonously repeating the old information, we will consolidate the common features of different applications that we noticed during the vetting process and summarize them as our overall observations. We will share these summarized observations, thoughts or views with the market through the usual briefings or our communication with the industry. On the next step, I think that with the participation of more applicants and the relevant information being conveyed to the market on a rolling basis, more people will understand our vetting process and naturally, more people will participate by submitting their applications.

All in all, firstly, it takes time for the New CIES to reach out to its targets. This is the approach we have taken and will continue to take in the future. We hope to make the scheme more widely known and take it forward through cooperation with the industry. Secondly, we will share different information and new messages with the industry on a rolling basis and in a timely, updated, and expedient manner, so that the industry can have more comprehensive information to attract customers. In conclusion, we will adopt a multi-pronged approach to promote the New CIES for it to reach out to its targets and be put into operation successfully. Thank you, President.

MR ROBERT LEE (in Cantonese): *President, after the introduction of the New CIES, we can, in principle, bring in a lot of capital and talents to Hong Kong. In my recent communication with the industry, there are views that some applicants have encountered various degrees of difficulties in the process. What measures will the Bureau take in the future to enhance the flexibility of the New CIES? For example, given that an applicant is required to prove that he or she holds \$30 million worth assets in the two years prior to application, will the authorities consider the situation where, for instance, the assets are held jointly by a husband*

and a wife? In the meantime, how can the authorities avoid making the asset assessment requirements overly stringent, so as to achieve a higher number of successful cases more quickly and more efficiently?

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. As Mr LEE just said, we certainly adopt a stringent attitude when we receive applications because the New CIES is, after all, a government scheme, not to mention that the New CIES is very attractive in terms of its threshold and various other aspects. Therefore, we must be stringent in vetting and approving applications. This is one thing.

Secondly, Mr LEE mentioned some situations, including joint ownership of assets. Our asset assessment consists of two parts. The first is a preliminary asset assessment. This means that before an investor comes to make an actual investment, we will first conduct a Net Asset Assessment, and I think that Mr LEE was asking about this stage in his earlier question. At this stage, the investor has not yet made an actual investment but has only provided the relevant documentation for us to make an early assessment of his net worth.

The Honourable Member asked just now why the authorities do not accept applications involving joint ownership of assets, or why some applicants face greater difficulties. As we all know, there can be a lot of ambiguities in the ownership or control of joint assets. On the one hand, we have to maintain a stringent vetting system and, on the other hand, we have to ensure a higher degree of accuracy in implementation. If we find a lot of ambiguities during implementation and if problems arise in the course of the investment in the future, it would be difficult to exercise regulation and control. This is the first reason.

Secondly, the assessment is a net asset assessment, which is carried out at the stage prior to the actual injection of capital by the investor. As Members all know, we have adopted a “two-step” arrangement, which means that after an investor passes the net asset test and completes the relevant procedures, he has 180 days to make investment or open bank accounts in Hong Kong. Since the investor ultimately has to invest a capital of \$30 million, he may as well provide the proof right at the very beginning for the Net Asset Assessment to be conducted more easily and conveniently, because the time gap between the two processes is, after all, not big. Here, I hope Members will understand that we need to ensure the stringency of the assessment while at the same time balancing the potential risks in the process to ensure the successful implementation of the New CIES.

Apart from the situation of joint assets mentioned just now, if there is any other work that can facilitate the provision of more convenient services in the market or make it easier for service providers to introduce the contents of the New CIES to their customers, InvestHK will be duty-bound to carry out such work. Thank you, President.

MS STARRY LEE (in Cantonese): *President, first of all, I have to give my recognition to the Government for its endeavour to introduce various schemes, including the New CIES, during this period of time. The response to the New CIES has been positive.*

After communicating with the industry, I understand that the application process of the New CIES is convenient, and from my observation, many people in the Mainland are interested in the New CIES, and I would say that it is reasonable for the authorities to focus on promoting the scheme in the Mainland. Having said that, the ASEAN market is actually huge, and based on our communication with Indonesia earlier, I think the authorities can expand the dimensions of the New CIES.

I would like the Secretary to consider one point. Apart from the New CIES, the authorities have also introduced measures to attract family offices. In order to maximize the benefits for Hong Kong, I think if we can attract the largest number of family offices to Hong Kong, their asset investment will be even greater. However, as far as I understand, there is no synergy between the measures for attracting family offices and the New CIES. To put it simply, if a person applies to set up a family office and at the same time applies for the New CIES, as far as I understand, his investment will not be counted together. I hope that the Secretary will think about how to maximize the benefits for Hong Kong through these schemes and, in particular, consider allowing the investment made for setting up a family office and that for the New CIES to be counted together, so that all the schemes can produce a stronger appeal.

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. Ms LEE has made a good point. She asked how the schemes introduced by the Government at different stages or at different points in time can produce the greatest synergistic effect.

Let me explain the complementarity between the tax concessions for family offices and the New CIES. Firstly, the tax concessions for family offices and the New CIES are two of the eight measures for promoting Hong Kong as a hub for family offices, and their positioning is clear. This is the first point. Secondly, there are still substantive differences between them. For example, the asset threshold for tax concessions for family offices is higher, around US\$30 million, while the asset threshold for the New CIES is HK\$30 million. In addition, prior asset assessment is not required for the setting up of family offices because insofar as tax concessions are concerned, if a family office can meet our relevant requirements, its investment status will be reflected in its tax return and therefore no prior assessment is required. However, the New CIES per se involves the eligibility for immigration and therefore requires a prior assessment. This shows that there is a certain degree of difference between the two schemes. This is the second point.

Having said that, I very much agree with Ms LEE's view about how we can maximize the synergistic effect. To this end, we are carrying out work in several areas. Firstly, as I said right at the outset, these two schemes are among the eight measures that we have adopted, and therefore we will carry out comprehensive promotion. This is the first point.

Secondly, when an applicant applies for the New CIES (or the so-called "migration scheme"), if he is also interested in setting up family office businesses and has given his consent, we will, after obtaining his consent, refer his application to colleagues in InvestHK who are responsible for the work of family offices. Under the New CIES, there are assessment teams responsible for conducting the Net Asset Assessment and approving applications. However, as the promotion of family offices is promotional in nature rather than assessment based, InvestHK has set up a dedicated team separately to undertake this work. When we receive an application, and subject to the applicant's consent, we will refer the application to the family office team for follow-up. In line with the usual practice of promoting family offices, the family office team will promote the various policies and measures on family offices to the applicants. Therefore, in terms of synergy, we have always been market-oriented and have worked together with the many service providers, including banks, lawyers, accountants and other professionals. This is one thing.

Secondly, in respect of promotion, we will try to maximize the synergistic effect as much as possible when interfacing with individual applicants, so that we can provide services to them through multiple channels. When they submit their

applications, we, as the assessor and approver, will interface with them, and so will the InvestHK team as the promoter responsible for attracting them to set up business in Hong Kong. In this connection, Members can be assured that we are working on various fronts and will be happy to continue to listen to the views of different Members. Thank you, President.

MR SHANG HAILONG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. First of all, I would like to follow up the figures provided by the Bureau. The current figures are not too satisfactory, because there is only one application that has successfully reached the third step, and the number of applications that have successfully reached the fourth step is zero. Having analysed the figures, I think the Government needs to consider several aspects.*

Firstly, was the New CIES introduced a bit too late? Had the scheme been introduced during the pandemic, I think it would have yielded far better results. For example, Singapore attracted more than 2 800 new investment immigrants through its capital investment entrant scheme in 2022.

Secondly, in terms of direction, the Bureau has in the past ...

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr SHANG Hailong, this is not a debate session. Please raise your supplementary question.

MR SHANG HAILONG (in Cantonese): *My supplementary question is this: Under the current requirements, the investment in innovation and technology is capped at HK\$3 million. Can the authorities provide a new option to allow investors to invest all the HK\$30 million in innovation and technology? This morning, HKIC launched its first project, and I think there should be great opportunities in this respect in the future. I urge the Bureau to consider this.*

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Cantonese): President, the supplementary question raised by Mr SHANG just now covers several aspects. First, it is about the New CIES itself. The New CIES has been open for application since March, and only a short time has passed since then. I think the market will gradually digest the application requirements. In

retrospect, even the old scheme that we introduced a decade or so ago did not achieve success instantly, and it took some time for the market to accept and understand the contents of the scheme before applications were sent in. In this regard, I think we need to observe the situation for a period of time before deciding on the next step. This is the first point.

Secondly, although it takes time for the applications to be processed, we have received up to thousands of enquiries. I believe that Members, like myself, have confidence in the future of the New CIES. As we continue to do the promotional work and so on, more and more people will consider applying for this scheme. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Fifth question.

Facilitating pet owners to go out for consumption with pets

5. **MR ROCK CHEN** (in Cantonese): *The Chief Executive has reportedly pointed out the need to brainstorm how to attract local spending by members of the public. However, there are views pointing out that statutory and policy restrictions have rendered it difficult for pet owners to go out for consumption with pets. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *whether it has plans to study with public transport service operators the relaxation of regulation on boarding public transport with animals during holidays and non-peak hours, e.g. allowing passengers to board public transport at special fares with small pets put in bags or cases or large pets that are muzzled, in diapers and kept on a leash, or designating some routes or train compartments exclusively for use by people with pets, as well as imposing fines or other penalties on those in violation of the regulation; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (2) *given that under the Food Business Regulation, no person shall bring any dog onto food premises, whether the authorities will amend the legislation to allow restaurant operators to decide on their own whether indoor pet areas should be set up, and formulate the relevant*

hygiene and management standards, such as requiring that pets should be kept on a leash and stay away from food preparation areas; and

- (3) *given that the Government is promoting a mega event economy, whether the authorities have plans to incorporate pet-related elements and pet-friendly measures into the festive events, celebrations, shows, carnivals, etc. under planning to enable pet owners to participate with pets, so as to promote local spending; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): President, as pet keeping has become increasingly common in Hong Kong, there has been more attention in society to carrying pets when using public transport services and participating in public activities. Regarding whether members of the public can go out for consumption or participate in events with pets, the Government or relevant organizations generally need to take into account various factors, including the nature of individual facilities, whether ancillary facilities are in place, the degree of social acceptance, etc.

For instance, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”) has actively responded to requests for opening up individual parks to members of the public for use with their pets in recent years, and has been liaising with District Councils from time to time, to identify suitable locations as pet gardens. Regarding cultural venues, members of the public are generally not allowed to bring dogs into the venues of civic centres, museums and libraries under LCSD, except for the visually impaired bringing guide dogs along into the venue facilities. LCSD will balance the views of different stakeholders and users of venues and facilities, and review relevant arrangements from time to time.

Having consulted the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, my reply to the question of Mr Rock CHEN is as follows:

- (1) Currently, operators of some of the public transport services, including ferries, public light buses, non-franchised buses and taxis, may decide at their discretion whether to allow passengers to board with pets. Take ferries as an example, individual operators have set relevant terms and conditions for passengers to board with pets.

These terms and conditions are generally set in consideration of the actual operating conditions of the operators and to minimize disruption to other passengers, e.g. passengers must leash their pets or put them in a cage/bag, passengers with pets must stay in designated cabin zone, etc. At present, there are 19 outlying island and in-harbour ferry routes that allow passengers to board with pets, accounting for over 80% of all regular ferry routes. As for public light buses and non-franchised buses, the operators may decide whether to allow passengers to board with pets having regard to the actual situation and individual hire service contract.

As regards the Mass Transit Railway (“MTR”) and franchised buses, the carriage of animals by passengers into railway premises and on board is currently regulated by the relevant laws. With high daily patronage and limited compartment spaces, passengers are currently prohibited from boarding MTR trains and franchised buses with pets, except for guide dogs accompanying the visually impaired. When considering whether to further relax the restriction to allow passengers to use these public transport services with pets, the Government shall consider and balance different factors, including the space and carrying capacity of the compartments, the reaction of the pets in the travelling environment, as well as the potential impact on other passengers.

The Government will continue to keep in view relevant suggestions for considering whether a change to the existing arrangement is necessary.

- (2) Regarding bringing dogs into food premises, the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) currently prohibits dogs (except guide dogs) from entering food premises. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”) has from time to time received complaints about certain food premises allowing customers who bring pet dogs inside.

In recent years, some members of society have expressed the hope that they will be allowed to bring along their pet dogs to dine in food premises. The Government understands that there may be changes in the societal culture over time but would also have to strike a balance on the need to safeguard public health and hygiene, etc. In addition,

as food premises in Hong Kong are generally cramped, aside from the above-mentioned angles, the reaction of pet dogs in a crowded and cramped environment (possibly with different types of dogs/animals), as well as the potential impact and threat on other diners would also need to be taken into account. Hence, the Environment and Ecology Bureau, together with FEHD, will first conduct research on practices and experiences in other places, and will take note of the views of the public regarding bringing dogs into food premises, so as to consider the need to review current practice and legislation.

- (3) Hong Kong is the events capital of Asia. Major mega events in Hong Kong mean a lot to the city in various aspects, including generating passenger flow and more business opportunities, creating a positive atmosphere in the community, bringing joy to the public and bolstering Hong Kong's international image. In addition, different types of mega events can drive the multi-faceted development of various industries in Hong Kong. Both the direct and indirect spending of the local public and tourists during their participation in the mega events will also bring economic gains to Hong Kong.

Different mega events have their own nature and characteristics, and cater for different target audiences. When organizing mega events, the organizers will consider different factors, including the condition and restrictions of the venue, the nature of the activity, target participants, public safety and hygiene, etc., to decide whether to allow the entry of pets. If there are mega events suitable for incorporating pet elements, it is believed that the organizers will actively consider allowing the entry of pets. Thank you, President.

MR ROCK CHEN (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary said in his reply just now that pets are generally not allowed in the dining areas of restaurants in Hong Kong. However, we all know that some restaurants in Hong Kong have both indoor and outdoor dining areas, and the outdoor dining areas are completely separated from the kitchen and other food preparation areas.*

May I ask whether the Government will consider amending the legislation to allow pet owners to dine with their pets in outdoor dining areas, provided that public hygiene and health standards are fully met? Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): President, under the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X), no person shall bring any dog onto any food premises, and no person engaged in any food business shall knowingly permit the presence of any dog on any food premises unless the dog concerned is a guide dog or is brought there by an enforcement officer.

In recent years, some restaurants that advertise themselves as “pet-friendly” have placed tables and chairs in areas outside their licensed premises (e.g. public areas in shopping malls or along waterfront promenades) to allow customers who bring pet dogs to eat takeaway food in these areas. With regard to this phenomenon, if FEHD receives complaints, it will check the actual situation to ascertain whether the dogs are outside or inside the licensed area of the restaurant, as the two situations will be handled differently. FEHD will take action according to the actual situation.

As for whether or not to amend the legislation on licences, as I mentioned earlier, it seems that different places have different practices, and the public also has different opinions on this issue, so we need to consider this carefully. Therefore, we will first conduct research to find out how the issue is handled in other places around the world. In Hong Kong, we will take note of the public’s views and examine whether the legislation needs to be amended. However, as far as I can see, there is already flexibility for restaurants to deal with the issue.

MR PAUL TSE (in Cantonese): *President, regarding the prohibition of feeding of wild animals (including pigeons), we have imposed a ban in the light of the prevailing circumstances, but when it comes to allowing dogs in restaurants, it seems that we are far behind the standards of the rest of the world (including the Mainland).*

The Food Business Regulation prohibits dogs from entering restaurants on the grounds that the co-existence of animals and humans may increase the risk of transmission of infectious diseases, but will guide dogs not get canine diseases? Cats and birds are allowed in restaurants under the current regulation, but do these animals not have the potential to carry infectious diseases? I am just stating the facts. The Secretary also said that restaurants in Hong Kong are generally cramped. After checking the relevant list in FEHD’s 2023 report, I found that there are 50 restaurants in Central that allow the entry of pets, while there are only 12 such restaurants in the relatively spacious outlying islands. I am just

reasoning things out. When the time comes for the review of the regulation, I hope that the Secretary will not just read out the contents of the regulation, because we all know what the existing regulation says. May I ask when the research will be conducted? When will the reform take place? Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): President, in fact, different places in the world have different requirements and different ways of dealing with this issue, and not all places allow dogs in restaurant areas. In places like Japan, for example, there are no explicit rules. Some places may require restaurants to be licensed, while others may only allow dogs in the outdoor areas of restaurants. As we have just mentioned, Mainland cities such as Beijing and Guangzhou also do not allow dogs in restaurants, so Hong Kong's practice is not lagging behind the rest of the world.

As I said earlier, Hong Kong is a densely populated place and many restaurants are very cramped. In fact, dogs are slightly different from other animals in that some dogs can be dangerous or injure people. Some people may also panic when they meet dogs. Therefore, we need to take careful stock of the practices of foreign places and compare the situation in other cities with that in Hong Kong. We also need to consider the views of Hong Kong people as a whole. As many people in society have different views on this issue, I think we need to consider and handle it carefully. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Paul TSE, which part of your supplementary question has not been answered?

MR PAUL TSE (in Cantonese): *When? The two "when" questions were left unanswered.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Secretary, do you have anything to add?

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): I think we need to conduct a careful study, and there is no timetable at the moment.

MR STANLEY LI (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. The authorities have just mentioned in the main reply the situation regarding bringing pets into restaurants and using public transport with pets. As far as the use of transport is concerned, the Secretary has just mentioned that only ferries will allow passengers to board with pets, while other public transport operators will decide at their own discretion. We can imagine how dog owners will bring their pets to the pier to board the ferry. They may have to use other modes of transport, such as taxis. The authorities have just said that they may conduct a review, but this will involve other departments. In this connection, can the authorities conduct the review in conjunction with other bureaux and departments (including the Transport and Logistics Bureau, LCSD, FEHD and the Environment and Ecology Bureau)? If necessary, can the legislation be amended? Thank you, President.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Which public officer will give a reply? Under Secretary for Transport and Logistics, please reply.

UNDER SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS (in Cantonese): President, we conduct reviews from time to time. Regarding the supplementary question raised by Mr Stanley LI just now, i.e. which modes of transport allow passengers to carry pets (such as dogs), given the relatively crowded condition of the existing modes of transport, those that are heavily used (such as MTR and franchised buses) do not allow pets on board. As I mentioned in the main reply, several other types of public transport operators have discretion in granting permission. For example, taxi drivers can exercise discretion. Taxis are point-to-point public transport vehicles. If passengers get into a taxi with animals or birds, the taxi driver has the discretion to decide whether or not to carry those animals or birds. According to the taxi fares set out in Schedule 5 to the Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. 374D), passengers are required to pay an additional fare of \$5 for each animal or bird they are permitted to carry. Of course, passengers are liable to pay compensation for any damage caused to the vehicle by the animal or bird. Taxi drivers are generally concerned about whether passengers will properly handle the animals or birds brought on board to maintain the cleanliness of the vehicle, and whether the animals or birds will cause damage to the vehicle.

MR STANLEY LI (in Cantonese): *He was beating around the bush. My supplementary question is whether the authorities will review the legislation and whether the legislation can be amended.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Stanley LI, you have raised your supplementary question, please let the Under Secretary reply.

Under Secretary, please continue with your reply.

UNDER SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS (in Cantonese): President, perhaps I can put it simply. We are in fact constantly reviewing the situation of public transport. If necessary, we will consider amending the legislation. We have no timetable at the moment.

(Mr Stanley LI stood up and intended to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Stanley LI, the Under Secretary has answered your supplementary question.

Ir Gary ZHANG, please ask.

IR GARY ZHANG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. Since 2019, the Mainland has implemented new measures for Hong Kong people travelling north with their pets, exempting pets from quarantine. However, Hong Kong strictly applies a one-size-fits-all approach, requiring pets brought into Hong Kong from the Mainland to be quarantined for a period of four months. If we look at the practices of neighbouring regions, their quarantine periods are not as long as ours.*

Pet cats and pet dogs are becoming increasingly important to modern urban families. With Hong Kong's integration into the development of the entire Bay Area, the exchange of people has increased. Will the authorities consider reviewing this one-size-fits-all four-month quarantine arrangement and at least shortening the quarantine period for registered pets? The current quarantine period is actually longer than four months because the waiting time for quarantine facilities can sometimes be half a year or even more than a year, which has caused great inconvenience to pet-owning families. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Ir Gary ZHANG, your supplementary question has nothing to do with the main question except for the word “pet”.

However, Secretary, do you have anything to add?

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): President, Hong Kong has not reported any rabies cases for more than three decades. Therefore, when our dogs are taken from Hong Kong, a rabies-free place, to other places, they can enjoy more relaxed quarantine requirements. For example, dogs from Hong Kong do not need to be quarantined if they are taken to the United Kingdom or Japan. Therefore, we need to be cautious when dealing with the movement of pets between the Mainland and Hong Kong, lest there be a resurgence of rabies in Hong Kong, which would lead to severe restrictions on the movement of pets between Hong Kong and other places of the world.

However, in terms of the movement of dogs, we will examine whether there are ways to strengthen certain aspects of testing or control with the Mainland, in the hope of shortening the current quarantine period of at least 120 days. The Honourable Member just mentioned the four-month quarantine period, which is very long indeed. In this regard, we have started discussions with the Mainland to see if there are better ways of strengthening monitoring and control so as to shorten the quarantine period. If there is any progress, we will announce it to the public. Thank you, President.

MS STARRY LEE (in Cantonese): *President, I hope the Bureau can adopt the concept of “tourism is everywhere” proposed by Director XIA to encourage pet owners to take their pets out more often for consumption. We should start with the easier tasks before tackling the harder ones. I understand that there is a group of people in the community who have opinions about pets. Can the authorities discuss with the bus company the possibility of transporting pet owners to the open pet gardens at weekends and Sundays? I think this would encourage pet owners to go out with their pets. If a circular bus route could be introduced with stops at one or two shopping malls or restaurants, I believe this would give a real boost to local tourism and the local economy. Can the authorities try to take this proposal forward?*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Which public officer will give a reply? Under Secretary for Transport and Logistics, please reply.

UNDER SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS (in Cantonese): President, we have heard Ms Starry LEE's suggestion. Her supplementary question is whether there is transport for people to get to the pet gardens and restaurants. We have indicated that we will keep an eye on the latest situation and review it from time to time. If we receive specific proposals, we will consider them. Thank you, President.

MS ELIZABETH QUAT (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. I do have a specific proposal. In Shenzhen, there are more than 50 shopping malls that welcome pets, and a pet-friendly bus route was just launched in April, connecting commercial areas with wetland parks and pet campsites, among other places.*

In fact, there are hundreds of thousands of pet-owning families in Hong Kong, and pets are already part of the family. Wherever they go or when they go on weekend trips, these families want to take their pets with them. We want to achieve the goal of "tourism is everywhere" and encourage more families to go out and spend money, but if we do not allow them to bring their pets, it is tantamount to telling them not to go out and spend money. So, this is an issue for the whole of Hong Kong, and we have been discussing it for a long time.

We very much hope that the Government will really review its policy. Please do not carry out any more studies. The Secretary has just mentioned the situation in many different places, which proves that the authorities have done some research. Why can we not have dedicated bus routes to pet gardens on holidays? Why is it that even if the outdoor areas of restaurants are far away from the kitchen and food preparation area ... why can they not be opened up to pets? Why do our shopping malls... If shopping malls are willing to allow pets, and Hong Kong has more pet-friendly shopping malls, this will contribute to a more vibrant economy for Hong Kong as a whole. In addition, Macao ...

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Ms Elizabeth QUAT, you have just asked a number of questions. You asked four "why" questions.

MS ELIZABETH QUAT (in Cantonese): *President, I would like to make a comprehensive suggestion.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Ms Elizabeth QUAT, you can make suggestions on other occasions.

MS ELIZABETH QUAT (in Cantonese): *In Macao, the “Northbound Travel for Macao Vehicles” allows residents to bring their pets to and from Macao. When will we be able to do that, Secretary?*

SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY (in Cantonese): President, different premises have different situations. As to whether pets are allowed in private premises (e.g. shopping malls), there is generally no requirement in the land lease, and it mainly depends on whether the operators of the premises concerned allow pets to enter.

Members also mentioned restaurants and, as I mentioned earlier, restaurants often place tables and chairs outside in public areas for pets to eat. This is currently permitted. However, pets are not allowed to enter the licensed areas of restaurants. We will conduct more in-depth research on this to see if there is a need to make amendments; if so, we will study how to make the amendments.

As regards transport arrangements, let me see if the Transport and Logistics Bureau has anything to add.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Under Secretary for Transport and Logistics, please reply.

UNDER SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS (in Cantonese): President, some shopping malls welcome pets. In fact, we also mentioned in the main reply that non-franchised buses may have the discretion to allow pets on board, especially if the non-franchised bus has a contract with the shopping mall, the shopping mall may stipulate that pets are allowed on board the mall’s exclusive buses. This is not a problem and is permitted under the existing policy and legislation. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Last question seeking an oral reply.

Developing tourism projects with local characteristics

6. **MR TANG FEI** (in Cantonese): *President, there are views that recently a film about the Kowloon Walled City, which receives critical acclaim and box office success, has once again demonstrated Hong Kong's strong cultural foundation, and given that Hong Kong enjoys the country's unequivocal support to develop into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, the SAR Government should draw on the experience and proactively develop tourism projects with local characteristics in order to pursue the concept of "tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong". In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *as the Government indicated last month that it planned to support exhibitions and promotional activities related to the Kowloon Walled City through the Film Development Fund, how the Government allocates the relevant resources to ensure that they are used effectively and are able to continuously promote the internationalization of Hong Kong films and the development of local cultural tourism;*
- (2) *of the strategies or measures in place to enhance the international image of Hong Kong's characteristic cultural tourism and capitalize on the diversity of Hong Kong's culture in order to attract more international tourists to come to Hong Kong to experience its unique history and culture; and*
- (3) *under the strategy of promoting "tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", whether the Government has plans to introduce "educational tours" to further diversify Hong Kong's tourism industry and promote the characteristics of the Hong Kong SAR under "one country, two systems", so as to tell the good stories of Hong Kong?*

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): President, under the National 14th Five-Year Plan, Hong Kong is positioned as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau ("CSTB") has been driving cultural tourism based on the

principle of “shaping tourism with cultural activities and promoting culture through tourism”. The Government will join hands with the trade to implement the concept of “tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”, enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong’s tourism industry and fully explore and make good use of Hong Kong’s rich tourism resources.

In respect of the question raised by Mr TANG Fei, the reply is as follows:

- (1) The movie *Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In* has been very popular, rendering many visitors eager to know more about the story of Kowloon Walled City and the story behind the production of the movie. As such, the Government is in discussion with the film company to explore the possibility of displaying the film’s materials such as stills, video footage and props, so as to attract visitors and drive the tourism industry.

In fact, the Government has been supporting exhibitions and activities that promote film culture and film-related intellectual property rights through the Film Development Fund (“FDF”). We have also been actively promoting the internationalization of Hong Kong films in recent years by participating in Mainland and overseas film festivals and organizing and subsidizing Hong Kong film programmes. These not only help to increase the exposure of Hong Kong films, but also enrich Hong Kong’s tourism elements. For example, this year we have led delegations from the film industry to bring their films to the world’s leading film festivals to promote Hong Kong films and tell the good stories of Hong Kong. The Government will continue to strengthen support to the Hong Kong film industry through FDF, increase the exposure of the Hong Kong film industry in the Mainland and global film markets, and leverage the cultural influence of films to strengthen tourism promotion and attract more visitors to Hong Kong. Besides, the Government just launched the new phase of the “City in Time” tourism project, which also incorporates film elements, allowing locals and visitors to enjoy classic Hong Kong film clips at the filming locations as well as the past appearance of Hong Kong.

- (2) Hong Kong is a cultural melting pot of the East and the West. Our traditional and foreign festivals attract tourists from all over the world. Hong Kong also has many rich and vivid resources of intangible

cultural heritage, such as the Tai O Dragon Boat Water Parade, the Cheung Chau Jiao Festival and the Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance, which all feature very unique characteristics. Riding on different festivals, we will organize various activities to attract visitors. Examples include the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races this weekend (15 to 16 June), the Mid-Autumn Lantern Carnival in September, and the International Chinese New Year Night Parade in the Lunar New Year, all of which will allow visitors to experience the lively atmosphere of traditional festivals. Besides, we have different activities to celebrate foreign festivals, which include the “Hallo” Hong Kong Halloween for Halloween, featuring themed decorations at various tourist hotspots, and the Hong Kong WinterFest and the Hong Kong New Year Countdown Celebrations at the end of each year, to celebrate the festive seasons with everyone. Through the Pilot Scheme for Characteristic Local Tourism Events, we also provide funding support for arts, culture and festive events with local characteristics or unique appeal of Hong Kong, such as the Yu Lan Cultural Festival and the Hong Kong Dragon and Lion Dance Extravaganza, with a view to enriching travel experiences in Hong Kong.

Cultural events can help promote the development of tourism. As the East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, the Government has been committed to showcasing Hong Kong’s cultural and artistic vibe and vitality to the world by curating distinctive and unique cultural activities that attract visitors. This year, for the first time, CSTB launched Art March as a brand to promote multiple mega arts and cultural events organized, funded, or supported by the Government, with a view to providing citizens and visitors with an enriched cultural and artistic journey. Meanwhile, we strive to curate cultural programmes that highlight the distinctive culture of Hong Kong. For example, we have launched the annual Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival since 2023 to attract the participation of locals and visitors through pop concerts, thematic exhibitions, film screenings, outdoor activities, outreach events, etc. Traditional Chinese culture is a great attraction around the world. Starting this year, we will organize the annual Chinese Culture Festival between June and September, offering more opportunities for both locals and visitors to appreciate Chinese culture. This year, Hong Kong will

serve as the host city for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival for the first time, allowing locals and visitors to experience the unique cultural charm of Hong Kong and different regions. Besides, the inaugural edition of Asia+ Festival was successfully held last year, with a focus on Asia and celebrating the cultural diversity of Asia and the Belt and Road regions.

In addition, the Government has also stepped up its efforts to promote characteristic tourism so that visitors can experience the unique local culture. We have launched the “Hong Kong Neighbourhoods” campaign in Old Town Central, Sham Shui Po and West Kowloon, and introduced quite some thematic walking routes to visitors. We also launched the Temple Street promotion last year to attract visitors to travel around local communities in Yau Ma Tei and Jordan to experience the most authentic side of Hong Kong. The Government has also been encouraging the trade to design more itineraries with different themes, covering cultural heritage, and provided subsidies to the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong in 2023 to organize the “Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition”. Of course, we will continue to stage signature creative arts and cultural tourism projects with local elements, such as the Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival and “Design District Hong Kong” (#ddHK).

Meanwhile, the Government will continue to organize Hong Kong Week in the Mainland or overseas to showcase the unique East-meets-West arts and cultural ambience of Hong Kong. Our Economic and Trade Offices (“ETOs”) in the Mainland and overseas will also strengthen their promotion work on arts and culture, deepening cultural exchanges and promoting people-to-people bonds.

- (3) The tourism industry of Hong Kong is mature. There are travel agents in the market that provide different inbound tourism products and services for study tours.

In the above-mentioned “Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition”, some winning itineraries included study tours, such as the Hong Kong Manufacturing Study Tour and the Archaeology Tour in Cheung Chau. We will continue to promote

the winning itineraries and encourage the trade to develop more unique tourism products covering study themes.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (“HKTB”) has also consolidated study-related information to provide inbound study tours with references on different learning experiences and activities. HKTB is also planning to invite travel trade partners to visit Hong Kong in the second half of the year to learn more about the relevant tourism resources to help the trade develop more study tour products with Hong Kong characteristics.

We will continue to make the best use of Hong Kong’s characteristics as a cultural melting pot of the East and the West and proactively develop tourism projects with local cultural characteristics, so as to provide visitors with diversified travel experiences, and to reinforce and strengthen Hong Kong’s position as “the best tourism destination”. Thank you, President.

MR TANG FEI (in Cantonese): *President, I commend the SAR Government for organizing a number of mega events and making a lot of efforts to promote Hong Kong’s cultural characteristics. However, as we all know, in addition to boosting the flow of people and attracting social media “check-ins”, it is imperative to create a strong flow of money at the same time in order to make things work. Recently, many tourists have flocked to the Yau Ma Tei Police Station to “check in”, which is a good thing, and the Yau Ma Tei Theatre, the Red Brick Building and the Broadway Cinematheque in the vicinity have also become “check-in spots”. But the question is: How should the SAR Government carry out publicity campaigns and provide supporting measures to turn the flow of people into a flow of money, in the sense that tourists will not only “check in” and go sightseeing, but also patronize the nearby restaurants, shops, speciality shops and hotels to make them thrive in tandem? Thank you, President.*

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President, and I thank Mr TANG for his supplementary question. The main role of the SAR Government is to “set the stage”. After we have set the stage, we hope that the industry will have the opportunity to play a part in harnessing the flow of people to drive the flow of money and turning popularity

into prosperity. This is why we are more than willing to strengthen cooperation with the industry. If they have any suggestions, we are ready to consider them to advance this goal together. Thank you, President.

MS CHAN YUET-MING (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. The Policy Address encourages the industry to develop thematic tours. The Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point (“BCP”) is currently the preferred BCP for the entry of Mainland inbound tour groups, and it boasts rich tourism resources in the vicinity, such as a number of ancient villages, cultural monuments like diaolou towers, as well as outlying island resources, leisure farms, New Territories food culture, and so on. In view of this, I very much hope that the Secretary will expeditiously facilitate the development of more travel itineraries suitable for tour groups near the Heung Yuen Wai BCP in the New Territories, and take advantage of the BCP’s massive cross-border passenger flow to promote the mega event economy in the New Territories. This includes widening roads and providing parking spaces for tourist coaches and infrastructure for retail, catering and other purposes, so that the industry can make complementary development efforts as soon as possible to showcase more different facets of Hong Kong’s culture to visitors and citizens. Thank you.*

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President, and I thank Ms CHAN for her supplementary question. We are very willing to work with members of the local community and various sectors to promote distinctive local itineraries. In order to pursue the concept of “tourism is everywhere”, we need the joint efforts of other Policy Bureaux in addition to our Bureau and its departments. I hope to strengthen cooperation with the Home Affairs Department to jointly design tourist itineraries that offer visitors a rich experience while not causing unnecessary nuisance to local residents. Thank you, President.

PROF LAU CHI-PANG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. As Members may have noticed, the SAR Government, CSTB and the industry have been working hard for Hong Kong’s tourism over the past period of time. This question is about how to develop local characteristic tourism. May I ask the Bureau whether it will consider doing, or has ever done, any research in the Mainland and overseas to understand what tourists want to see in Hong Kong and what kind of tourism*

content they want to include? The Government can conduct such research through the Hong Kong ETOs in the Mainland and overseas, but has the Government ever done so? Thank you.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President, and I thank Prof LAU for his supplementary question. We conduct research from time to time and collect various information through the Government's ETOs in the Mainland and overseas. We have also invited delegations from the Mainland and overseas, consisting local industry representatives, to visit Hong Kong to discuss ways to promote cultural exchanges between the two sides. These are our regular tasks and we will keep up the efforts. Thank you, President.

MR JIMMY NG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. Nowadays, inbound visitors are not only looking to eat, drink and shop, but are also actively seeking in-depth travel experiences, such as exploring history and experiencing culture. Although there are many distinctive attractions in Hong Kong, such as sites related to industrial tourism and red tourism, almost all of them are operated and managed by the industry or community organizations, and we have not seen any vigorous promotion and publicity efforts by the Government, which may affect the popularity of these attractions.*

Let us look at the practice in the Mainland. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism classifies tourist areas into national grades A to 5A according to the Classification and Evaluation of the Quality Grades of Tourist Areas and the Administrative Measures for the Quality Grade of Tourist Areas. In this connection, will the authorities consider taking a cue from the practice of the Mainland and establishing a grading and certification mechanism for distinctive tourist attractions, as well as subsidizing the industry and organizations to carry out maintenance, publicity and coordination activities? Thank you, President.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President, and I thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question. Different places have their own systems, and we will promote the development of the local tourism industry in our own way. As I mentioned in the main reply just now, we have recently held an itinerary design competition in the

hope of designing itineraries with different themes to meet the needs of different visitors. We will also endeavour to promote these itineraries and introduce more similar measures in the future.

The Honourable Member asked whether consideration would be given to formulating grading standards and other measures for tourist attractions. In the long run, we can carry out studies and research to see how this can be put into practice or whether it is feasible. Thank you, President.

MR HOLDEN CHOW (in Cantonese): *President, as far as tourism development is concerned, I think there are a number of waterfront locations in Hong Kong that are worthy of further planning. Tuen Mun District has a very beautiful waterfront. Along Sam Shing, there is plenty of development space with stunning scenery where more restaurants and shops can be accommodated and further beautification can be carried out. Will the Bureau consider making some liaison efforts to improve the overall planning and provide new support facilities in the future to drive the overall economy, including the tourism economy, in Tuen Mun District?*

MR STEVEN HO (in Cantonese): *President, both blue tourism and green tourism are forms of tourism with local characteristics. However, I think the coordination between CSTB and the Development Bureau (“DEVB”) of the SAR Government is not quite effective. Along the waterfront promenade in Sai Kung, there are many boatmen or boat company employees setting up parasols, shouting and inviting visitors to take their boats out to sea. There is no centralized and covered area, and visitors cannot rate a particular boatman or boat company because there is no objective organization. Can the SAR Government help the public and the industry to establish some relevant platforms to improve the quality of tourism in Hong Kong? Thank you, President.*

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President, and I thank Mr HO for his supplementary question. We are willing to consider how we can work with the industry in this regard to provide better services to visitors, so that they can fully enjoy Hong Kong’s blue and green resources. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Steven HO, which part of your supplementary question has not been answered?

MR STEVEN HO (in Cantonese): *I mainly want to ask about the land issue in relation to DEVB. If the authorities do not provide land, we can hardly have a covered place.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I do not think this Secretary is responsible for handling land issues.

However, Secretary, do you have anything to add?

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): President, the implementation of many projects requires the concerted efforts of various Policy Bureaux and departments of the Government, and we will communicate with the relevant authorities. For example, when it comes to issues such as land or the impact on local residents, we may need to discuss with DEVB, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau, etc. Thank you, President.

MS NIXIE LAM (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President, and thank you, Secretary. I would like to raise a question on red tourism products. There are many different local red tourism attractions in Hong Kong. One example is Wu Kau Tang, which is very famous. Even if people only go on a half-day tour in Yuen Long, they can visit Poon Uk in Au Tau, Yuen Long, Yeung Ka Tsuen in Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long, and the iron gates in Kat Hing Wai, where they can learn about the history of the retrieval of the iron gates in those years. These trips can be incorporated into the patriotic history education being promoted in Hong Kong and become excellent study tour projects. May I ask the Bureau whether it will coordinate the efforts with other Policy Bureaux in this regard? If so, what are the Bureau's plans; if not, when does the Bureau intend to start? Thank you.*

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. We have introduced some measures to promote red tourism or history tourism. For example, we have joined hands with the

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to link up hiking trails and historical relics related to the history of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (“the War of Resistance”), including some projects under the “Enhancement of Hiking Trails—Phase II”. In the future, we will work with various Policy Bureaux to further intensify efforts in this regard.

In fact, we have launched certain schemes, such as the Cultural and Heritage Sites Local Tour Incentive Scheme (which was transformed into the Characteristic Local Tourism Incentive Scheme this year), in the hope of promoting tourism with different themes, including red tourism, through various schemes. We will continue with such efforts. Thank you, President.

MR CHAN YUNG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. I would also like to follow up on the Government’s efforts in promoting what I would describe as “blue, green, gold, red and heritage” tourism. Regarding red tourism, may I ask the authorities, given that many existing monuments in the community that are related to the history of the War of Resistance or ancient history are rich in patriotic sentiments, whether there is any plan to consolidate the monuments in the community for coordination by the Bureau in order to enhance their attractiveness, breadth and depth? This is the only question I want to ask. Thank you, President.*

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President, and I thank Mr CHAN for his supplementary question. In fact, the workload of our Bureau is already very heavy. If we are to coordinate more projects, we may have to consider priorities. However, we are more than willing to join forces with other Policy Bureaux to promote tourism with different themes. As Members can see, our Bureau has been allocated a large number of oral questions today. Thank you, President.

MS JUDY CHAN (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. Last week, at a committee meeting, we discussed the renaming of the Museum of Coastal Defence (“MCD”) as the “Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence”. So, over the long weekend just past, I made a special trip to Lei Yue Mun Park to enjoy the beautiful scenery of MCD.*

I find that many of Hong Kong's declared monuments are not easily accessible for a visit. Taking Lei Yue Mun Park as an example, there are three declared monuments in the park, but tourists who want to visit them have to book a day camp in order to get in. When I talked to the staff of the café in the park, they said that there are not many tourists on weekdays, so it is not possible to run the café on weekdays and the café can only be open on Saturdays and Sundays. May I ask the Secretary whether there is a need to look at ways of increasing publicity for declared monuments and providing convenient ways for tourists to access monuments for a visit? Thank you.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President, and I thank Ms CHAN for her supplementary question. As far as declared monuments are concerned, the Antiquities and Monuments Office under DEVB is responsible for the relevant work. We will communicate with them to explore ways to make it more convenient for different people to go inside for a visit or other activities, while effectively preserving antiquities and monuments. Thank you, President.

REVD CANON PETER DOUGLAS KOON (in Cantonese): *Thank you, President. President, I would like to ask the Bureau whether it will consider the possibility of promoting religious tourism, as many people like to visit different religious facilities.*

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Thank you, President, and I thank Revd Canon KOON for his supplementary question. As mentioned in previous oral replies, we are willing to consider the development of religious tourism and are ready to discuss with members of the religious community how we can provide convenience to visitors and citizens without unduly disrupting normal religious activities.

Of course, there is a kaleidoscope of tourism themes, especially when people nowadays have different preferred tourism activities. When we launch different themes, we may have to make arrangements based on urgency and priority. Thank you, President.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**Public toilets provided along the New Territories Cycle Track Network**

7. **MR STEVEN HO** (in Chinese): *It is learnt that the Tuen Mun to Ma On Shan backbone section of the New Territories Cycle Track Network is about 60 kilometres long, and it takes more than six hours to complete the entire route by cycling. Regarding public toilets provided along the cycle track network, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the number, locations and facilities of public toilets provided along the aforesaid cycle track network; how the Government assesses the demand of cyclists and residents in the vicinity of the cycle track network (especially villagers) for such public toilets;*
- (2) *given that as shown on the map and according to site visits conducted by the staff of my office, the distances between public toilets (not temporary public toilets) along the cycle track network vary, whether it has compiled statistics on the respective average and farthest distances between each public toilets, as well as the corresponding travel time needed by walking and cycling;*
- (3) *whether temporary public toilets have been provided along the cycle track network; if so, of the specific number and locations of such toilets;*
- (4) *as the staff of my office are given to understand, temporary public toilets in a number of villages along the cycle track network have been provided in-situ for more than five years, whether it has assessed if such a situation reflects the long-term need of such temporary public toilets (e.g. whether it has compiled statistics on the number and locations of temporary public toilets which have been provided in-situ for more than five years in Ting Kok Road, whether it has received views or applications from the residents concerned for converting such temporary public toilets into permanent ones, as well as the corresponding ways and progress of handling such views and applications); and*

- (5) *as there are views that while temporary public toilets can provide an interim solution to the problem faced by members of the public due to the shortage of toilet facilities, the design of some temporary public toilets gives rise to odour and hygiene problems and poses potential safety hazards, whether the authorities will consider expeditiously converting temporary public toilets along the cycle track network into permanent ones; if so, of the locations and number of additional permanent public toilets to be provided; if not, the reasons for that?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Development** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

The “1+” mechanism for approval of new drugs

8. **PROF CHAN WING-KWONG** (in Chinese): *The new “1+” mechanism for approval of new drugs (“1+” mechanism”) announced in the 2023 Policy Address formally came into effect on 1 November 2023. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the respective numbers of applications for registration of new drugs under the “1+” mechanism that have been received, approved and rejected since the mechanism came into effect, and the main reasons for the applications being rejected;*
- (2) *whether it has compiled statistics on the total number of patients who have benefited from the new drugs approved for registration and use in Hong Kong under the “1+” mechanism; and*
- (3) *how the authorities will further promote the “1+” mechanism in the future?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Health** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Consolidating Hong Kong’s position as an international maritime centre

9. **MR LAI TUNG-KWOK** (in Chinese): *In April this year, the Transport and Logistics Bureau issued a post in social platform, pointing out that the*

comprehensive strength of Hong Kong's port is multidimensional and should not be measured solely by its container throughput ranking, and that Hong Kong remains a leading international maritime centre. Regarding the consolidation of Hong Kong's position as an international maritime centre, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) apart from the 2023 Xinhua-Baltic: International Shipping Centers Development Index Report mentioned in the aforesaid post, whether the authorities have obtained other information relating to maritime or port rankings (including but not limited to the container throughput rankings of ports in various places provided by Lloyd's List, an authoritative media outlet in the international maritime industry, and Alphaliner, a maritime consultancy); if so, of Hong Kong's ranking in the past five years;*
- (2) whether it has compiled statistics on the total number of port and maritime-related companies in Hong Kong in each of the past five years, together with a breakdown by scope of business;*
- (3) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of maritime arbitration cases conducted in Hong Kong and the total amount in dispute involved in such cases in each of the past five years; whether it knows the ranking of the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre among arbitration institutions worldwide in each of the past five years;*
- (4) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of local and overseas insurance companies engaged in marine hull insurance business in Hong Kong in each of the past five years, as well as the total amount of related premiums and their percentage in the total amount of related premiums worldwide;*
- (5) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of ship finance transactions conducted in Hong Kong in each of the past five years and the total financing amount involved, as well as the percentage of such total amount in the total amount of ship financing worldwide;*
- (6) whether it has compiled statistics on the gross tonnage of Hong Kong-registered vessels in each of the past five years; whether it*

knows Hong Kong's global ranking in terms of the number of vessels registered in each of the past five years;

- (7) whether it has compiled statistics on (i) the average number of international container liner services provided in Hong Kong per week, and (ii) the number of destinations worldwide connected by Hong Kong's international container liner services in each of the past five years;*
- (8) as it has been reported that due to the realignment of global supply chains and shipping alliances this year, some shipping routes have ceased to call at the port of Hong Kong, whether the authorities have assessed the far-reaching implications of the adjustment of global shipping routes, and the targeted measures they intend to take to cope with the crisis facing Hong Kong's maritime industry; and*
- (9) as it is learnt that the land leases of Container Terminals 1 to 9 in Kwai Tsing Container Terminals will expire in 2047, whether the authorities have negotiated with the terminal operators the arrangements after 2047 in order to plan the way forward for Hong Kong's development as an international maritime centre; if so, of the progress and details; if not, the time planned to conduct negotiation?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Transport and Logistics** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Conducting body temperature checks for incoming travellers

10. **MR CHAN HOK-FUNG** (in Chinese): *It is learnt that since the SARS outbreak in 2003, the Department of Health ("HD") has been conducting temperature checks for people arriving in Hong Kong; in the case of travellers entering Hong Kong through land boundary control points ("BCPs") in private vehicles, HD has arranged for its staff to conduct body temperature checks for the drivers and passengers on board in an instant by using contactless thermometers. However, some members of the public have relayed to me their doubts about the effectiveness of such practice. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *given that the aforesaid measure has been introduced for over 20 years, whether the Government has assessed if (i) the measure has achieved the original intention of the relevant policy, and (ii) the practice of arranging for dedicated staff to check the body temperature of drivers and passengers of private vehicles is economically efficient;*
- (2) *of the respective numbers of travellers crossing the boundary on foot and in vehicles whose body temperature was detected to be abnormal during temperature screening in each of the past five years, and the Government's procedures for handling such cases, e.g. whether it had denied entry of the travellers concerned; if so, of the number of travellers who had been denied entry and sent to the hospital immediately; and*
- (3) *of the manpower and resources deployed by the Government for conducting on-the-spot temperature checks at land BCPs in each of the past five years, together with the costs of the mobile temperature-checking devices involved?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Health** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Applications for processions and assemblies

11. **DR TIK CHI-YUEN** (in Chinese): *The Government has emphasized that the Hong Kong National Security Law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance will not affect the public's freedom of procession and assembly, and that the regulation of processions and assemblies is based on considerations under the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the respective numbers of applications for letters of no objection to assemblies, processions and petitions received, approved and rejected by the Police in the past five years, as well as the reasons for refusing to issue such letters of no objection;*

- (2) *among the applications mentioned in (1), of the main demands made by the applicant organizations for holding assemblies, processions and petitions, together with a breakdown by the government policy areas involved in such demands;*
- (3) *of the respective conditions imposed by the Police under Cap. 245 in the past five years regarding each of the applications mentioned in (1); whether it has assessed if such conditions will restrict the public's right to participate in assemblies, processions and petitions;*
- (4) *whether any organization has refused to comply with the conditions mentioned in (3) and was denied a letter of no objection; if so, of the details (including but not limited to the contents of the applications and the organization's appeal against the outcome of the applications); and*
- (5) *whether any organization has made a compromise proposal due to its disagreement with the conditions mentioned in (3); if so, of the following information about such proposals: the contents of the proposals, the number of proposals accepted and rejected, as well as the reasons for acceptance and rejection?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Security** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Education in the national flag and regional flag

12. **MR TONY TSE** (in Chinese): *The National Flag and National Emblem Ordinance and the Regional Flag and Regional Emblem Ordinance respectively provide for the specifications, use and protection of the national flag and regional flag, flag raising ceremonies and related etiquette, as well as education in the national flag and regional flag. There are views that currently, the relevant education efforts and the requirement for the regular conduct of flag raising ceremonies are primarily focused on primary and secondary schools, and that the Government should further promote such education to the entire society. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *of the Government's efforts to deliver education in the national flag and regional flag to the public, in addition to primary and secondary schools;*
- (2) *whether it will consider setting up sales points in some suitable government premises and buildings for the sale of national flags, national emblems, regional flags, regional emblems, and related souvenirs;*
- (3) *whether it will further enhance the Flag Raising Ceremony, which is currently held regularly at Golden Bauhinia Square in Wan Chai, including (i) reviewing the frequency, date and time for holding such ceremony, (ii) stepping up publicity among the public and tourists, and (iii) adding more performance programmes and tourism facilities in addition to the Flag Raising Ceremony; whether it will consider holding flag raising ceremonies at more suitable and distinctive locations; and*
- (4) *of the requirements, rules and implementation status regarding the display of the national flag and regional flag, as well as the conduct of flag raising ceremonies in the offices of government departments and government buildings; whether it will strengthen such requirements and rules, including providing appropriate guidelines and training to the staff responsible for flag raising ceremonies and requiring all government personnel to participate in at least one flag raising ceremony per year, where practicable?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Positioning and role of Kai Tak Sports Park in sports development

13. **MR ADRIAN PEDRO HO** (in Chinese): *Occupying an area of about 28 hectares and being the largest sports infrastructure project in Hong Kong's history, the Kai Tak Sports Park ("KTSP") will open in the first half of next year. Some competition events of the 15th National Games ("NG") will be held in KTSP. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *given that while Hong Kong will organize eight competition events of NG (including Basketball (men U22), Cycling Track, Fencing, Golf, Handball (men), Rugby Sevens, Triathlon and Beach Volleyball) and one mass participation event (i.e. Bowling), the events are scheduled to be held at different venues, of the reasons for the relevant arrangement (including whether it is based on the consideration on the capacity of KTSP in organizing mega events); the plans in future to showcase KTSP's world-class facilities and operation quality, thereby enabling it to contribute to the efforts in making Hong Kong a centre for major sports events;*
- (2) *as it is reported that the competition events of NG to be organized in Hong Kong will be shared among KTSP and venues such as the Hong Kong Coliseum, the Hong Kong Velodrome and the Fanling Golf Course, and only the Rugby Sevens competition will be held at KTSP's Main Stadium, giving an impression of a limited role played by the Main Stadium in NG, whether the authorities have set a target on organizing other events at the Main Stadium, such as attracting more competitions comparable in scale with the Hong Kong Sevens to be held at KTSP's Main Stadium, so as to proactively develop KTSP into an "iconic foothold" for hosting local and international major sports events; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and*
- (3) *as there are views that with the commissioning of KTSP in future, it may also serve as a performance venue for concerts of local artistes and international superstars, variety shows, etc., but such use may give an impression that KTSP has deviated from its original purpose of development, how the authorities strike a balance among different development directions, thus allowing KTSP to develop into a landmark for major sports events in Hong Kong, and at the same time promoting the development of the sports, performing arts and cultural industries in Hong Kong?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Advertising spaces in government properties

14. **MS JUDY CHAN** (in Chinese): *At present, the Government Property Agency lets out government properties, including advertising spaces, for specified uses through open tenders or quotations. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) of the following information in respect of each of the advertising spaces currently available for letting by the Government for commercial advertising purposes: (i) name of the government property where the space is located, (ii) address, and (iii) display area;*
- (2) of the rental income received by the Government from advertising spaces in government properties in the past five financial years, and its percentage in the rental income from different categories of government properties; and*
- (3) given that at present, some government departments have set up notice boards for displaying public information at facilities under their purview (such as footbridges under the purview of the Highways Department), whether the Government will consider taking the initiative to adjust the established practice in the past, and arrange for letting out notice boards at suitable locations for commercial advertisements, so as to increase government revenue and alleviate the fiscal difficulties?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Measures to attract new capital to Hong Kong

15. **MR JEFFREY LAM** (in Chinese): *To further enrich the talent pool, attract more new capital to Hong Kong, and strengthen the development of the asset and wealth management, financial and related professional service sectors in Hong Kong, the Government introduced the new Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (“the new CIES”) in March this year. Under the scheme, persons who intend to*

invest in Hong Kong and their dependants (including spouses and unmarried and dependent children aged under 18 years) can apply for entry to stay in Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of enquiries and applications received so far under the new CIES; in respect of the applications received, a breakdown of the figures and percentages by age and nationality of the applicants and whether they are applying for entry to Hong Kong with their dependants;*
- (2) of the current number of applications which have passed the Net Asset Assessment, and the latest progress in the vetting and approval of such applications; and*
- (3) as it is learnt that some banks have recently launched integrated dedicated services targeting applicants of the new CIES to help them capture local investment opportunities through the provision of various tailor-made asset allocation solutions, whether the Government will collaborate with the relevant organizations to provide one-stop services, including enquiry, consultation, application and subsequent follow-up, to the applicants of the new CIES, with a view to enhancing the competitiveness and effectiveness of the new CIES in attracting new capital to Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Support for patients with rare diseases

16. **MR TANG KA-PIU** (in Chinese): *Some concern groups have relayed that as the drugs provided by local medical organizations for patients with rare diseases are limited in type and the costs of prescribing such drugs are excessively high for public hospitals, some patients with rare diseases have opted to buy drugs from hospitals in the Mainland, where the prices are only 5% of those at local public hospitals. Regarding the support for patients with rare diseases, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *whether it has compiled statistics on (i) the types of rare diseases already identified at present, (ii) the number of rare diseases that are curable or eligible for pharmaceutical palliative care, and (iii) the number of types of drugs provided by the Hospital Authority (“HA”) for use on rare diseases and, among them, of those eligible for subsidy application;*
- (2) *whether it has compiled statistics on the types of rare disease drugs which (i) patients have to purchase at their own expenses and (ii) are subsidized by the Government, and set out in the table below a breakdown by monthly expenditure of patients with rare diseases on such drugs (i.e. (a) between \$5,000 and \$10,000, (b) above \$10,000 and up to \$20,000, (c) above \$20,000 and up to \$30,000, (d) above \$30,000 and up to \$40,000, (e) above \$40,000 and up to \$50,000, and (f) above \$50,000);*

<i>Monthly expenditure of patients with rare diseases on relevant drugs</i>	<i>(i)</i>	<i>(ii)</i>
<i>(a)</i>		
<i>...</i>		
<i>(f)</i>		

- (3) *as it is reported that patients with Spinal Muscular Atrophy have to apply for subsidies for therapies with Nusinersen injections and Risdiplam, a specific oral drug for targeted therapy, before the age of 25, after which their subsidy applications will not be approved, whether it knows if HA will consider relaxing or removing the age limit for subsidies on those two drugs; if HA will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (4) *given that, according to the Department of Health, the new mechanism for registering New Drugs (“1+” mechanism”), which came into effect on 1 November last year, facilitates applications for registration of new drugs for treatment of life-threatening and severely debilitating diseases in Hong Kong, of the total number of applications received and approved under the mechanism since November last year, together with a breakdown by drug name; whether the Government will take drug price as a factor for consideration in vetting and approving applications for drug registration under the “1+” mechanism;*

- (5) *whether the Government has formulated plans to encourage or support patients with rare diseases to go north for medical treatment and drug purchase, such as by provision of transport support, cross-boundary drug delivery services and video consultations; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (6) *as it is learnt that the Pilot Scheme for Supporting Patients of the Hospital Authority in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area enables Hong Kong people with scheduled follow-up appointments at designated Specialist Outpatient Clinics or General Outpatient Clinics of HA to receive subsidized consultations at the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital, whether the service targets of the Scheme include patients with rare diseases; if not, whether the Government will consider including such patients as service targets of the Scheme; and*
- (7) *as there are views that with a relatively small pharmaceutical market size, Hong Kong is no match for the Mainland in bargaining power for bulk procurement of drugs, and that pharmaceutical products are more affordably priced in the Mainland than in Hong Kong, whether the Government will encourage HA to purchase drugs directly from the Mainland or join the Mainland's drug procurement mechanism, so as to alleviate the pressure on patients in terms of drug expenses?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Health** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Bringing regulated food into Hong Kong

17. **MR SHIU KA-FAI** (in Chinese): *In accordance with the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK), it is an offence to bring any game, meat, poultry or eggs (“regulated food”) into Hong Kong without health certificate issued by an issuing entity of the place of origin and / or without prior written permission granted by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. However, it has been reported that many members of the public have brought regulated food into Hong Kong from the Mainland or overseas in violation of the regulations, and there are even activities of cross-boundary purchase of such food by agents. The Administration has pointed out that such food may come from*

unknown sources and may not be under regulatory control, making it difficult to guarantee the safety of consumption, and also such regulated food is often exposed to environments with unsatisfactory temperatures or hygiene during transportation, largely increasing food safety risks. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of cases of members of the public bringing regulated food into Hong Kong in violation of the regulations and, among them, the number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted in each month of the past two years;*
- (2) of the maximum, general and minimum penalties imposed on the convicted persons in the prosecution cases mentioned in (1);*
- (3) as there is a suggestion that officers at various boundary control points can make extensive use of equipment such as X-ray machines to enhance the inspection of items brought by arrivals and on inbound vehicles, whether the authorities will consider the suggestion; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (4) of the number of cases in the past two years in which members of the public were found, with the assistance of quarantine detector dogs, to have brought regulated food into Hong Kong in violation of the regulations; whether the authorities have plans to increase the number of quarantine detector dogs and their duty time; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (5) in respect of activities of cross-boundary purchase of regulated food by agents (including placing orders using social network groups and then making self-pickup from local retail stores/consolidation points or direct delivery of the goods), whether the authorities have taken targeted actions to prevent the relevant activities from posing food safety risks to members of the public; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*
- (6) as some meat stalls in the Mainland have claimed that their pork can be brought through customs as long as it is vacuum-packed, whether the authorities have followed up in this regard; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;*

- (7) *as there are views pointing out that uncooked seafood and aquatic food are also high-risk food, whether the Government will consider listing them as regulated food; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and*
- (8) *of the authorities' specific plans or measures in place to reduce the number of cases of members of the public bringing regulated food into Hong Kong in violation of the regulations?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Environment and Ecology** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect Scheme in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

18. **MR CHAN CHUN-YING** (in Chinese): *The Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect (“WMC”) Scheme in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area was officially launched in September 2021 while “WMC 2.0” officially commenced on 26 February this year. It has been reported that in March this year, the number of new Mainland investors participating in the Southbound Scheme increased by nearly 12 times month-on-month and the amount of cross-boundary fund remittances involved also increased by 7.9 times month-on-month, but there was no significant increase in these figures under the Northbound Scheme. The Hong Kong Monetary Authority has pointed out that this was mainly due to the different interest rate environment between the Mainland and Hong Kong as well as the different financial management needs of the residents in the two places (e.g. Hong Kong residents already have many channels to diversify their investments). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *as it has been reported that as at the end of March this year, over 98% of the market value of Hong Kong and Macao investment products held by Mainland investors under the Southbound Scheme were deposits, while some members of the financial sector expect that the US Federal Reserve may start cutting rates in the second half of this year, whether the Government has reviewed the attractiveness of other investment products under the Southbound Scheme (e.g. funds*

and bonds), with a view to maintaining the development momentum of the Southbound Scheme; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

- (2) whether it has conducted studies on the categories of products and the selling process under the Northbound Scheme and put in place enhancement measures to attract more Hong Kong investors to participate in the Northbound Scheme; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and*
- (3) whether the relevant policy bureaux and regulatory bodies have communicated with the relevant Mainland authorities on the implementation of the Cross-boundary WMC Scheme on a regular basis; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Subsidized sale housing flats

19. **MR LEUNG MAN-KWONG** (in Chinese): *In June last year, the Housing Bureau announced the sale of flats under the Private Subsidised Sale Flat—Pilot Scheme (“the Pilot Scheme”) at 65% of market value, and that the applicant eligibility criteria would follow those (including income and asset limits) adopted under the prevailing Home Ownership Scheme (“HOS”) and housing policy. On the other hand, Hemma Amber, a Subsidised Sale Flats (“SSF”) Project launched by the Hong Kong Housing Society (“HKHS”) in November last year, has also adopted the relevant income and asset limits for HOS as its applicant eligibility criteria, with a discount rate the same as that of “HOS 2023”. However, it has been reported that as pointed out by some analyses, the prices of the flats of Hemma Amber are higher than those of HOS 2023 flats in the same district, and the gap between the income limits for and flat prices of Hemma Amber is comparatively wide. As a result, only some of the flats are within applicants’ choice on the premise that they have met the stressed debt-to-income ratio for mortgage loans with a loan-to-value ratio of 90%, thus affecting their chance of successfully acquiring a flat. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *whether it knows if the authorities have set calculation criteria for the (i) discount rates and (ii) applicants' income and asset limits in respect of various kinds of subsidized sale housing projects (including the Tenants Purchase Scheme, the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme, HOS, the Pilot Scheme, the "Starter Homes" Pilot Scheme for Hong Kong Residents and the SSF Projects of HKHS), so as to ensure affordability of applicants in purchasing the flats;*
- (2) *whether it knows if the authorities have reviewed whether the sale prices of the flats under the projects mentioned in (1) are commensurate with the affordability of applicants in a timely manner; if so, of the specific details; if not, the reasons for that; and*
- (3) *given that the discount rates of some of the projects mentioned in (1) are comparable (e.g. HOS and the Pilot Scheme), whether the Government has plans to conduct a review on these projects and study the merger of them; if so, of the specific details; if not, the reasons for that?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Housing** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Developing the futures and derivatives business

20. **MR ROBERT LEE** (in Chinese): *The National 14th Five-Year Plan has established Hong Kong's functions and positioning in the national development, including strengthening Hong Kong as a global offshore Renminbi business hub, an international asset management centre and an international risk management centre. Some members of the finance industry are of the view that in order to promote Hong Kong as an international risk management centre, the Government should proactively develop the futures and derivatives business. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) *whether it will urge the Hong Kong Futures Exchange to (i) look into the introduction of trading hours that dovetail with the global markets to enhance market continuity and liquidity; (ii) increase the futures*

products available for Derivatives Holiday Trading; and
(iii) expeditiously implement the trading arrangements for futures and derivatives under inclement weather;

- (2) whether it knows the latest development in respect of the launch of China Treasury Bond Futures in Hong Kong by the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (“HKEx”);*
- (3) whether it will discuss with relevant regulatory bodies to introduce more futures and options products for mainstream virtual assets, such as bitcoin and Ethereum;*
- (4) whether it will discuss with the Mainland authorities to expedite the inclusion of international futures products of Mainland futures exchanges (including the Shanghai International Energy Exchange, the Dalian Commodity Exchange and the Zhengzhou Commodity Exchange) into the mechanisms for mutual access between the financial markets of the Mainland and Hong Kong; and*
- (5) whether it will urge the London Metal Exchange under HKEx and commodity market participants to proactively look into and expeditiously take forward the establishment of bulk commodity delivery warehouses in Hong Kong, so as to strengthen Hong Kong’s infrastructure for commodity futures and foster the development of the relevant ecosystem?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

Prevention and treatment of liver cancer

21. **MR MICHAEL TIEN** (in Chinese): *According to the data of the Hospital Authority (“HA”) in 2021, liver cancer is the fifth most common cancer in Hong Kong and the mortality rate is the third highest. Regarding the prevention and treatment of liver cancer, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (1) as it is learnt that liver cancer patients are currently required to undergo oesophagogastroduodenoscopy before receiving drug treatment with Atezolizumab and Bevacizumab and the current annual*

demand for such screening service for liver cancer patients is approximately 600 to 800 attendances, accounting for only about 0.67% to 0.89% of the total number of such screening service provided by public hospitals in 2022-2023 based on the estimation of patient groups, but the existing waiting time for screening in public hospitals is very long, whether the authorities will consider setting up a waiting list for liver cancer patients or adopting a public-private partnership approach to help them get screened within three months, so that they can take medication as early as possible; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

- (2) *as it has been reported that as pointed out by doctors, hepatitis B can develop into cirrhosis or liver cancer if left untreated, and according to the survey results of the Department of Health last year, about 410 000 people in Hong Kong are infected with the hepatitis B virus, with over 40% of them being unaware that they are carriers, and based on the information provided by patient groups, the cost of blood tests for hepatitis B is about \$30 each, whether the authorities will consider allocating additional resources to conduct at least one hepatitis B screening test for citizens born before 1986 in order to identify the carriers so that they can receive treatment as early as possible to prevent their conditions from deteriorating further and save public expenditure on liver cancer treatment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and*
- (3) *given that in the reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-2025, the Secretary for Health indicated that HA would explore new diagnostic and treatment options for liver cancer, including the introduction of technology for detecting the biomarkers of abnormal coagulation in a timely manner to provide patients with optimal treatment, whether the Government knows the timetable for the introduction of the relevant new detection technology by HA, and whether HA will arrange time this year to meet with stakeholders, including relevant experts, service providers and representatives of patient groups, etc., on such matters; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?*

The written reply provided by the **Secretary for Health** on 12 June 2024 is in **Appendix 2**.

GOVERNMENT BILL**First Reading and Second Reading of Government Bill****First Reading of Government Bill**

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Government Bill: First Reading.

RATING (AMENDMENT) BILL 2024

CLERK (in Cantonese): Rating (Amendment) Bill 2024.

Bill read the first time and ordered to be set down for Second Reading pursuant to Rule 53(3) of the Rules of Procedure.

Second Reading of Government Bill

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Government Bill: Second Reading.

RATING (AMENDMENT) BILL 2024

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Cantonese): President, I move the Second Reading of the Rating (Amendment) Bill 2024 (“the Bill”).

The Bill seeks to implement the progressive rating system for domestic tenements proposed in the 2022-2023 Budget to reflect the “affordable users pay” principle. The Financial Secretary announced in the 2024-2025 Budget that the system will be brought into effect from the fourth quarter of 2024-2025. The progressive rating system is part of the Government’s fiscal consolidation programme and is expected to increase government revenue by \$820 million each year.

Under the Bill, for domestic tenements with a rateable value (“RV”) of \$550,000 or below, rates will continue to be charged at 5% of RV. For domestic tenements with an RV exceeding \$550,000, rates will be charged at the same rate

of 5% for the first \$550,000, 8% for the next \$250,000, and 12% for the value exceeding \$800,000. Non-domestic tenements, including those tenements occupied for the purpose of business activities or social services, e.g. hotel, children's home, nursery, home for the elderly, youth hostel, holiday camp, etc., will not be subject to the progressive rating system.

The proposal will only affect domestic tenements with an RV exceeding \$550,000, i.e. a monthly rent of about \$46,000 or above. In terms of quantity, there are about 42 000 private domestic tenements that will be subject to progressive rates, which represents only about 1.9% of the total number of private domestic tenements in Hong Kong.

In addition, due to their design, mode of occupation, etc., certain types of domestic tenements are currently assessed for rates as a single tenement on an “en-bloc” basis. As a result, RVs of these tenements may exceed \$550,000. However, it is not the intended purpose of implementing the progressive rating system to apply the “affordable users pay” principle to them. In this connection, we suggest that the following domestic tenements be carved out from the scope of the progressive rating system:

- (1) public rental housing flats provided by the Hong Kong Housing Authority and the Hong Kong Housing Society, rental housing flats in Tai Hang Sai Estate provided by the Hong Kong Settlers Housing Corporation Limited as well as flats under the transitional housing or light public housing schemes, which aim at providing low-income families or target groups with affordable accommodation; and
- (2) dormitories provided by the Hospital Authority, the Chinese Medicine Hospital of Hong Kong, non-profit-making registered schools, post-secondary institutions and religious institutions, in which a substantial portion of the household facilities are designed for shared use.

In summary, the new rating system endeavours to strike a balance between upholding the “affordable users pay” principle and minimizing the number of ratepayers affected. In designing the progressive rating system, we have taken into account factors such as the market rental levels reflected by RVs, the number of ratepayers affected and the additional rates they would need to pay, the estimated increase in rates revenue, and the need to maintain a simple rating system.

President, the details of the Bill have been set out in our document issued to the Legislative Council. We hope that the Bill will be supported and passed by Members so that the relevant provisions can come into effect in a timely manner to enable the Rating and Valuation Department to bring the progressive rating system into effect from the fourth quarter of 2024-2025.

President, I so submit. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the Rating (Amendment) Bill 2024 be read the second time.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Second Reading debate is adjourned and the Bill is referred to the House Committee.

GOVERNMENT MOTION

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Government motion. Proposed resolution under the Banking Ordinance moved by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury.

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

I now call upon the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury to speak and move the motion.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION UNDER THE BANKING ORDINANCE

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Cantonese): President, I hereby move the proposed resolution on the Agenda pursuant to section 135(2) of the Banking Ordinance. The resolution seeks to adjust the fees set out in the Second Schedule to the Banking Ordinance.

The Second Schedule to the Banking Ordinance sets out the levels of various licence-related fees payable to the Government by authorized institutions, including licensed banks, restricted licence banks and deposit-taking companies, such as banking licence fees, registration fees for deposit-taking companies and

approved money brokers, and establishment fees of local and overseas branches or representative offices.

As announced in the 2024-2025 Budget, the Government will review various fees and charges in a timely manner. The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (“HKMA”) has recently completed a review of the level of licence fees. Based on the results of the review, HKMA proposes to adjust the fees specified in the Second Schedule to the Banking Ordinance.

In proposing the fee adjustments, HKMA has taken into consideration not only the “user pays” and cost-recovery principles but also other relevant factors, including general price inflation, revenue implications, the operating costs of financial institutions and the ability of financial institutions to cope with the adjusted fees. HKMA has also made reference to the corresponding fee levels in other jurisdictions and has assessed and considered the impact on Hong Kong’s competitiveness as an international financial centre.

If the resolution is passed, it is estimated that the implementation of the adjusted licence fees will generate approximately \$146 million in revenue for the Treasury each year. Based on the level of total operating expenses in 2023, the total licence fees are expected to account for less than 0.1% of the total operating expenses of authorized institutions and approved money brokers. Therefore, we believe that such adjustments should be manageable for the affected financial institutions and that Hong Kong’s financial competitiveness will not be affected.

HKMA has also consulted the industry, including The Hong Kong Association of Banks, The Hong Kong Association of Restricted Licence Banks and Deposit-taking Companies, and the Hong Kong Inter-Dealer Brokers Association, on the proposed adjustments to the licence fees. No objections were received. We also submitted an information paper on the proposal to the Panel on Financial Affairs of this Council at its meeting on 18 March 2024. Members raised no objections.

Pursuant to section 135(2) of the Banking Ordinance, the Legislative Council may, by resolution, amend the Second Schedule. I hope that Members present will pass this resolution. Thank you.

The motion moved by the **Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury** is in **Appendix 3**.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury be passed.

Mr Rock CHEN, please speak.

MR ROCK CHEN (in Cantonese): President, on behalf of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (“DAB”), I speak in support of the Government’s proposed resolution to allow the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (“HKMA”) to make appropriate adjustments to the fees payable by banks and other financial institutions to the Government as set out in the Second Schedule to the Banking Ordinance.

Under the Banking Ordinance, authorized banks, restricted licence banks and deposit-taking companies, local representative offices and approved money brokers are required to pay various licence fees to the Government, including application fees and annual renewal fees. As at the end of last year, there were 179 authorized institutions, 31 local representative offices and 40 approved money brokers in Hong Kong, with a total of 1 295 branches or representative offices.

This time around, HKMA has completed a review of the fee levels and proposed moderate adjustments. It is worth noting that banking licence fees have not been adjusted for almost 34 years since 1990 and 1991, while the relevant fees for approved money brokers have remained unchanged since 1997. Given the significant increase in price levels and operating costs over the same period, we believe that HKMA has carefully considered various factors in formulating the proposal, including the impact on the operating costs and income of financial institutions and the competitiveness of Hong Kong as an international financial centre, and has also made reference to the corresponding fee levels in other jurisdictions.

The Secretary has just pointed out that according to HKMA’s assessment, after the proposed increase, licence fees will only account for a small proportion, i.e. about 1%, of the total operating costs of financial institutions, which should be manageable. At the same time, the level of banking licence fees in Hong Kong is comparable to that of other major financial centres and will not have a significant impact on Hong Kong’s financial competitiveness. The relevant departments and the industry have been consulted on the proposed fee adjustments and have made assessments to ensure that the relevant fees reflect actual costs.

In terms of economic and financial implications, the proposed fee increase should have a minimal impact on financial institutions. As the banking industry generally considers licence fees as part of the daily operating costs, the impact of the proposed fee increase on financial institutions is minimal. It is expected that the cost increase passed on to business and individual customers will also be insignificant.

Based on the above analysis, DAB supports the passage of the resolution proposed under section 135(2) of the Banking Ordinance to adjust the licence fee levels for banks and related financial institutions appropriately in accordance with the recommendations of HKMA.

With these remarks, President, I support the passage of the resolution.

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

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): If not, I now call upon the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury to reply. Then, the debate will come to a close.

SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I also thank Mr CHEN for his suggestion and support for today's motion, and I hope that other Members will also support it.

Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury 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 the Members present.

I declare the motion passed.

MEMBERS' MOTIONS

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Members' motion on the period for amending subsidiary legislation.

Proposed resolution under the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance to extend the period for amending the Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulation 2024, which was laid on the Table of this Council on 22 May 2024.

I now call upon Mr CHAN Han-pan to move the motion.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO EXTEND THE PERIOD FOR AMENDING SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION (L.N. 78 OF 2024)

MR CHAN HAN-PAN (in Cantonese): President, I move that the motion, as printed on the Agenda, be passed.

The motion moved by **Mr CHAN Han-pan** is in **Appendix 4**.

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

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority 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.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Members' motion with no legislative effect.

Mr Benson LUK will move a motion on "Pursuing the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong' and developing Hong Kong's mega event economy".

Six Members will move amendments to the motion.

This Council will proceed to a joint debate on the motion and the amendments.

Later, I will first call upon Mr Benson LUK to speak and move the motion. Then I will call upon Mr YANG Wing-kit, Mr Kenneth LAU, Mr YIU Pak-leung, Mr Vincent CHENG, Mr SHIU Ka-fai and Mr LUK Chung-hung to speak in sequence, but they may not move the amendments at this stage.

The joint debate now begins. Members who wish to speak please press the "Request to speak" button.

I now call upon Mr Benson LUK to speak and move the motion.

MOTION ON “PURSUING THE CONCEPT OF ‘TOURISM IS EVERYWHERE IN HONG KONG’ AND DEVELOPING HONG KONG’S MEGA EVENT ECONOMY”

MR BENSON LUK (in Cantonese): President, I move that the motion, as printed on the Agenda, be passed.

First of all, I declare an interest that the organization I work for is engaged in real estate development, film and television and entertainment and catering business.

President, Mr XIA Baolong, Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, pointed out during his meeting with the delegation from HKSAR Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau in Beijing on 9 May that as Hong Kong enters the new stage of advancing from stability to prosperity, the development of the tourism industry is crucial to building a vibrant economy and striving for development. Therefore, Hong Kong must establish the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” and better polish Hong Kong’s gilded signboard as “the best tourism destination”.

The concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” put forward by Director XIA truly reflects the fact that “treasures are everywhere in Hong Kong”. It pursues the goal of “going all out to develop the economy and improve people’s livelihood”. I firmly believe that Members are very familiar with every part of Hong Kong and have unique insights on the mega event economy. I propose this motion today in the hope of gathering the valuable views and wisdom of Honourable colleagues to offer advice and suggestions on the development of the mega event economy and the tourism industry of our country and HKSAR, and to join hands with the Government and various sectors to go all out to develop the economy and improve people’s livelihood.

In fact, we have already felt the high level of concern and interest in this issue during the oral question session just now. To pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” and develop the mega event economy, I believe we can start the discussion based on three policy objectives and three strategies.

The first policy objective is to enhance the quality and quantity of mega events, and to turn popularity into prosperity.

In economic terms, the mega event economy refers to the organization of large-scale cultural, commercial and sports events with a theatrical quality and public participation that emphasize the visibility of the events. These mega events can attract visitors as spectators or participants, as well as media coverage. Various types of mega events can boost the local tourism, hotel, catering and retail industries, bringing huge economic benefits to Hong Kong. According to the Government's estimation in 2024, every 1.5 million visitors can contribute to about 0.1 percentage point of GDP growth in Hong Kong, equivalent to HK\$2.84 billion.

When we actively draw on the successful experiences of other places, I believe everyone will think of Taylor SWIFT. International media even used the term "Swiftonomics" to describe the effect of this international superstar. She has already generated economic benefits of about HK\$1.7 billion for Japan, and about HK\$2.9 billion for Australia and Singapore respectively. According to some economists, the economic benefits brought about by the singer's concerts are comparable to the economic benefits of the Olympic Games. Therefore, the concert economy has great potential.

In fact, Hong Kong can do the same. The question is how to strengthen and consolidate it. Every year in May, a well-known band holds concert in Hong Kong. According to some members of the industry, more than a hundred coaches and rental vehicles travelling between Hong Kong and the Mainland park outside the venue during each show. Some people even hire yachts to listen to the music on the water in Victoria Harbour. Based on an audience capacity of 15 000 per show, the band's income from a show at the Central Harbourfront Event Space is conservatively estimated at around HK\$16.5 million. If the band plays seven shows in a week in Hong Kong, the estimated revenue would be around HK\$110 million. This figure does not even take into account other spending by spectators in the surrounding areas. Therefore, the Central Harbourfront Event Space is the most important venue for the mega event economy. I hope the authorities will really reconsider the plan to build a six-storey, 50-metre-wide MTR ventilation building at the Central Harbourfront Event Space.

However, the above are all examples of high-quality mega events. If we want to increase the quantity, we really have to reach out proactively and compete internationally for mega events.

The second policy objective is to pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” and discover the essence of “treasures are everywhere in Hong Kong”. In addition to maintaining Hong Kong’s long-standing status as a “shopping paradise” and “gourmet paradise”, we must also embrace the emerging trend of “check-in tourism”. “Check-in tourism” does not necessarily require a lot of big attractions. On the contrary, we need to develop more new “micro-attractions”. For example, in addition to MTR station name signs which are common “check-in spots”, another unique feature must be a “street sign tour”. The Government can work with the District Councils to develop unique “check-in spots” and then launch a “check-in” route called “Hong Kong Citywalk” at Xiaohongshu and other platforms. In this way, the streets will become popular and truly manifest the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”.

The third policy objective is, of course, to promote Hong Kong as an “international events capital”. I believe many Honourable colleagues have a lot of ideas when it comes to promotion, so I will not go into detail here.

In order to actively pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”, I believe we can make efforts in four directions.

The first direction is for the SAR Government to adopt new ideas to strengthen the tripartite participation of the Government, the business sector and the community, and to employ new methods to proactively reach out to compete for mega events and tourists. The Government set up the Mega Events Coordination Group in February this year and stated that it will reach out more proactively to attract various mega events and further strengthen interdepartmental cooperation to ensure the successful organization of mega events. We also expect that the dedicated team set up by the Hong Kong Tourism Board, together with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Economic and Trade Offices, etc., will identify different types of mega events around the world, proactively reach out to organizers and intermediaries, directly understand the needs of the event organizers/agencies, and provide comprehensive support. If you ask me what is the KPI? It must be the number of mega events that can be anchored in Hong Kong.

Recently, some mega event organizers told me they wanted to hold a paragliding event and carnival on both sides of Victoria Harbour. They have tried to contact the authorities, but the response time has been relatively long. In comparison, Singapore has been more proactive in contacting them. So, in terms of initiative, I think the Government should really step up its efforts.

In fact, there is no harm in organizing some relatively niche annual events. As long as they can become a signature event in the sector, they will be effective in attracting tourists not only as spectators but also as participants. For example, thanks to our geographical landscape, the trail competitions held in Hong Kong are quite well known around the world. While the public may be familiar with events such as the Trailwalker, other similar trail competitions may need more promotion. The relevant departments must also remove the red tape, so as to make the events more exciting and attractive to sports enthusiasts around the world.

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

In order to achieve “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”, the second direction is to develop “micro-attractions”, that is, to further beautify our cityscape. I wonder if Members have noticed recently that the manhole covers at the Central Ferry Piers have been given a new look. The credit goes to the Drainage Services Department which installed colourful and unique manhole covers throughout Hong Kong. These “check-in spots” are deliberately situated in places with distinct Hong Kong characteristics and heavy flow of people to create “micro-attractions”. This practice is commendable.

The third direction is to improve the service quality of the tourism industry and promote the adoption of good business practices. According to the China Tourism Academy, in the first quarter of this year, Macao scored the highest on the satisfaction-level rankings of destinations visited by Mainland outbound tourists while Hong Kong fell to seventh place from fifth last year. In fact, Hong Kong ranked first in 2017 before the epidemic. Hence, I fully endorse the city-wide courtesy campaign launched this month, which encourages us to respond to the arrival and needs of tourists with a smile, and achieve “Tourism is everywhere, smiles are everywhere”.

The fourth direction is to make the most of the policies introduced by the Central Government that are beneficial to Hong Kong. The Central Government announced earlier that the number of Mainland cities under the Individual Visit Scheme (“IVS”) has increased to 59. However, not every city under IVS has direct flights to Hong Kong. As I mentioned in my written question last week, I hope to urge the SAR Government to coordinate with the Airport Authority and

airlines to launch direct flights as soon as possible for the convenience of tourists, and at the same time increase the number of flights and destinations, so as to do a good job in promotion and publicity.

In conclusion, to pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” and develop Hong Kong’s mega event economy, we must adopt a forward-looking and long-term strategy.

Next, I look forward to hearing the insightful views of Honourable colleagues, and I will respond to them later.

Deputy President, I so submit.

Mr Benson LUK moved the following motion: (Translation)

“That the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr XIA Baolong, pointed out earlier that Hong Kong has to establish the concept of ‘Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong’ and better polish Hong Kong’s gilded signboard as ‘the best tourism destination’; to this end, Hong Kong must implement well the concept of ‘Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong’, and drive the diversified development of industries with mega event economy, so as to go all out to develop the economy and improve people’s livelihood; places around the world have successively implemented various strategies to compete for mega events, and in order to develop Hong Kong’s mega event economy and turn popularity into prosperity, the SAR Government should not only adopt new ideas to enhance the joint participation of the Government, the business sector and the community, but also actively draw on the successful experience of other places to proactively reach out to compete for mega events and tourists with new solutions, make good use of the policies introduced by the Central Authorities that are beneficial to Hong Kong and give full play to its own characteristics, proactively explore Hong Kong’s rich tourism resources, and formulate a long-term strategy for the development of the mega event industry, with a view to enhancing the quality and quantity of the mega event economy and developing Hong Kong into an ‘international events capital’.”

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mr Benson LUK be passed.

MR YANG WING-KIT (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. I would like to thank Mr Benson LUK for proposing the motion on “Pursuing the concept of ‘Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong’ and developing Hong Kong’s mega event economy”. I have always been an advocate of promoting the concert economy because I hope Hong Kong can seize the opportunities brought about by fans and “celebrity chasing+tourism”, thereby reaping the benefits of the fan economy.

Taylor SWIFT is known as the locomotive of the concert economy. The economic benefits generated by her concert tour are comparable to those of the Olympic Games. Therefore, Singapore was willing to pay about HK\$15 million to HK\$23 million as a subsidy for the event, whether it was a single show or six shows. According to the estimation of an economist, Taylor SWIFT’s concerts generated HK\$2.9 billion in tourism revenue for Singapore, so Singapore definitely benefited. Yet, whenever we asked if the Government would proactively reach out and invite international superstars to hold concerts in Hong Kong or organize all-night New Year’s Eve concerts and DJ parties to retain tourists, the Secretary always replied that these were all commercial decisions. While government-sponsored events have brought considerable benefits to Hong Kong, their impact is not quite comparable to concerts of superstars. Therefore, the authorities must continue to make more efforts.

The benefits of concerts are often beyond our imagination. Earlier on, the concerts of the famous Mainland singer HUA Chenyu at the Central Harbourfront Event Space attracted tens of thousands of fans and boosted consumption. The Doraemon Drone Show happened to take place on one of his concert nights, leaving a deep impression on his fans. Many of them posted on social media, saying: “Doraemon please send me to Hong Kong!”, “Hong Kong is really beautiful tonight, Hong Kong is fun!”. Even HUA Chenyu said that Hong Kong was so beautiful that he did not want to leave, and that he would try Hong Kong food after the concert. I must say that HUA Chenyu’s concerts have brought a wave of visitors to Hong Kong, boosted the local economy and told good stories of Hong Kong. Therefore, we must strive to attract popular singers who have not yet held concert in Hong Kong, so that they can help promote Hong Kong and turn fans into repeat visitors.

The whole world is competing for singers, even Macao is competing for Hong Kong singers. So the Government must reach out proactively. The live music shows on a water stage organized by the Hong Kong Tourism Board were well received. Will the Government organize that event again? The Government organized the Harbour Fest after SARS. It can indeed draw on that experience and organize it again. With the opening of the Kai Tak Sports Park next year, there will be another large venue to choose from. Can the Government consider organizing the largest music festival in Asia, or even coordinating the performing arts industry to produce music shows like *Endless Melody* to attract fans to come to Hong Kong to watch the performances of their idols?

We should produce a diverse range of music shows to create synergy with other mega events. For example, Grand Prix Season Singapore includes concerts; Saudi Arabia, which has become an event capital in recent years, holds more than a hundred events and concerts during its annual signature event, the Riyadh Season, which is a cultural and entertainment event; and Gamers8, the world's largest gaming competition, also includes concerts in its programme. This is how the event is packaged and promoted to create a mega event effect.

In my amendment, I mentioned making use of the celebrity effect and competing for celebrities. I hope that the Government will compete not only for singers, but also for movie and television stars, sports stars and e-sports stars to come to Hong Kong for performances and competitions, and link up with the “1+N” mega events to make a stronger impact, so as to create a Hong Kong version of the Riyadh Season. I have always suggested that the Government should join hands with various sectors to offer “mega event+hotel+high speed train/air ticket+tourist attractions+catering” packages to attract tourists. The concert plus accommodation packages offered by Macao are very attractive to tourists. The Singapore Tourism Board even subsidized airlines, hotels and other industries to work with travel platforms to offer accommodation and catering packages to Taylor SWIFT's fans. This approach has successfully retained the spending power of this group of celebrity-chasing tourists.

The potential of “plus tourism” and “tourism plus” is unlimited. Apart from “celebrity+tourism”, “Hong Kong education+tourism” has also been very well received. Last year, my colleagues and I received many study tour groups from Mainland universities visiting the Legislative Council. In addition to visiting the Legislative Council, these university students also visited a number of

universities and various tourist attractions in Hong Kong, bringing substantial benefits to Hong Kong. Moreover, there is “healthcare+tourism”. Some Mainland visitors come to Hong Kong for medical check-ups, and surgery, if necessary, and then travel around Hong Kong before and after the check-ups. In addition to the aforementioned combinations, there are also “innovation and technology+tourism”, “exhibition+tourism”, “convention+tourism” and so on. There is nothing that cannot be linked with tourism. It just depends on whether we are willing to come up with ideas. The Government and the industry need to think about how to seize the opportunities brought about by the concept of “tourism is everywhere”, turn popularity into prosperity and double Hong Kong’s GDP growth.

Deputy President, with these remarks, I hope Members will support the original motion and my amendment.

MR KENNETH LAU (in Cantonese): Deputy President, President XI Jinping has made important instructions on the work related to the tourism sector of our country and assigned five important tasks to the tourism sector. Director XIA Baolong also put forward the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” during his earlier meeting with SAR government officials. In the face of fierce competition in the global tourism industry, places around the world are coming up with new ideas to attract money and tourists. If we are to properly implement the instructions of President XI and Director XIA, I think that Hong Kong’s tourism industry must keep abreast of the times, improve quality and quantity, and strive to stand out and get a piece of the pie.

As the world returns to normalcy after the pandemic, the global tourism ecosystem is facing tremendous changes. Unlike the previous shopping-oriented tourism pattern, tourists now focus more on a city’s history and culture, customs and traditions, and natural scenery. We should keep abreast of the times and explore more tourism resources to increase the depth and breadth of local tourism. Villages in the New Territories are rich in traditional culture and customs. For example, the Poon Choi banquet, dragon and phoenix wood carvings and rattanware are part of Hong Kong’s intangible cultural heritage. I hope the Government will promote them and actively develop rural in-depth tourism to provide visitors with a brand new and immersive cultural tourism experience.

At the same time, the historical features and natural landscape of the New Territories are also among the best in the world. These include Sha Tau Kok Town and Chung Ying Street Closed Area, which still contain a large number of unique historical buildings and cultural features; the Hong Kong UNESCO World Geopark, which covers an area of 5 000 ha and encompasses eight scenic areas; and various islands with unique characteristics, such as Lantau, Mui Wo and Yim Tin Tze. The Government has recently proposed to develop the Ex-Lamma Quarry Area and is considering introducing resort hotels and low-density residential areas to turn the site into a resort and outdoor recreation area. I think this is a good start. I hope that in the future, the Government will make better use of the rich eco-tourism resources in the New Territories, and actively cooperate with the Mainland to jointly develop cross-boundary marine tours and island tours, so as to enrich the construction of the Blue and Green Recreation, Tourism and Conservation Circle and empower the development of local eco-tourism.

Deputy President, the development of tourism must keep pace with the times. Apart from that, I also strongly agree with the proposal in the original motion to enhance the quality and quantity of the mega event economy. In terms of enhancing the quantity, I am pleased to see that the Government will organize more than 100 mega events in the second half of this year. However, to ensure the sustainability of mega events development, I think it is necessary to make early preparations and build more performance venues. As most of the performance venues, including the soon-to-be-completed Kai Tak Sports Park, are located in urban areas, I urge the Government to actively consider building a large-scale indoor and outdoor performance venue in the Northern Metropolis. This will create a geographical synergy with other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and can promote multi-destination mega event tourism.

In addition to increasing the quantity of mega events, I think we should also pay attention to the quality of the events. I suggest that the Government should focus on organizing one or two world-famous “signature events” each year to maximize the benefits of the events. Formula 1 (commonly known as “F1”) race is regarded as one of the top three mega sporting events in the world. If Hong Kong is able to host this event, it will certainly attract a lot of tourists to Hong Kong. As the Northern Metropolis and Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands are now under planning, the Government should study the feasibility of building temporary and permanent F1 race circuits and related facilities in those places, and actively seek to organize F1 races in Hong Kong, so as to revitalize Hong Kong’s economy.

Tourism is an important element to achieving the country's high-quality development. It is also a driving force for Hong Kong's post-epidemic recovery and economic growth. The ethos of "tourism is everywhere" means not only developing more tourist attractions but also promoting high-quality tourism, polishing Hong Kong's brand and building a positive image.

Deputy President, with these remarks, I support the original motion and the other amendments. I also implore Members to support my amendment.

MR YIU PAK-LEUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, first of all, I would like to thank Mr Benson LUK for proposing the original motion and the other Members for proposing the amendments. As a representative of the tourism industry, I am very pleased to see that many Honourable colleagues are so concerned about and supportive of the development of the tourism industry. I would also like to seek the permission of the Deputy President to advertise here. The consultation on the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0 will end this Friday. I hope that everyone will take this opportunity to provide their insightful views on the future development of Hong Kong's tourism industry.

Director XIA Baolong put forward the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong". According to my understanding, it does not simply mean offering tourist attractions all over Hong Kong. Instead, it refers to the concept of city-wide tourism. The whole city should be enhanced and upgraded in terms of public services, industrial development, city positioning, etc. We should regard the tourism industry as an advantageous industry and organically integrate Hong Kong's tourism resources. We should foster industry integration, promote joint construction and sharing of society, and create a tourist-friendly environment that offers diverse experiences and harmonious host-guest relationship.

There are a number of places in various districts of Hong Kong that have the potential to be developed into unique attractions. To give a few examples: the vacant site above the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Tunnel Tuen Mun Exit, which Members may not be familiar with; the Ex-Sham Shui Po Service Reservoir located on Mission Hill, which seems to have been forgotten recently; Devil's Peak in Lei Yue Mun, which also has potential; the former Yau Ma Tei Police Station, and so on. There are many such places that have the potential to be developed into unique attractions. How can we make the best use of these tourism resources with great potential? How can the community work together, tell its stories and history

well, and create a hospitable atmosphere? It indeed requires the concerted efforts of various government departments, different sectors and industries, and all the people of Hong Kong.

Deputy President, the atmosphere during the Dragon Boat Festival that has just passed was very festive, and the International Dragon Boat Races will be held next weekend, so mega events are indeed held one after another in Hong Kong. In order to maximize the benefits of mega events, mega events should crossover with different tourism-related industries to create “plus tourism” products, so that mega events and tourism can be closely integrated to create new consumption scenarios, thus enriching tourists’ experiences and encouraging them to stay longer and spend more.

Recently, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”) has strengthened its contacts with the tourism industry to discuss how best to use the activities and mega events organized by LCSD to develop cross-over products with different industries. However, according to my understanding, there is still a lack of interaction or cooperation between most mega event organizers and the tourism industry. So, to a certain extent, mega events are just mega events and tourism is just tourism.

The Mega Events Coordination Group (“the Group”), chaired by the Deputy Financial Secretary, serves as a window for the introduction of mega events. It has drawn up a calendar of mega events, which is a good start. However, in order to make good use of the “bullets” of mega events, I hope that the Group can go one step further and take on the role of linking up industries to foster cross-sectoral cooperation. In addition, when vetting mega event funding applications, the Government can give “bonus points” to applicants who have had cross-over cooperation with the industry, so as to encourage organizers to strengthen cooperation with the tourism industry and offer mega event tourism packages, thereby making the mega event “bullets” more targeted and maximizing the economic benefits generated by mega events.

Another key point in my amendment is that the Government should continue to inject resources into the development of Hong Kong’s characteristic tourism. Several Members have put forward a number of proposals on characteristic tourism programmes, including the “five-colour tourism” which I often mention, such as the development of island tours, blue tourism, heritage, cultural and historical

tourism, as well as sports tourism, which is of great concern to me, Mr Kenneth FOK and Mr Vincent CHENG. In fact, we share many of the same ideas, so I hope that we can work together in the future to take this work forward.

Deputy President, in the past two years, with the support and encouragement of the Government, the industry has made continuous efforts to transform itself, launching many innovative products and endeavouring to create in-depth tourism itineraries that showcase the characteristics of Hong Kong. Although we have good products, it needs a process of product nurturing for tourists to see and buy them and for the market to accept them. Therefore, in my amendment, I have particularly stressed that in developing Hong Kong's characteristic tourism, the Government should be expected to establish the concept of product nurturing, to continue to invest resources in product innovation, marketing, attracting and enticing tourists and reputation building, and to promote the products to tourists through effective publicity planning, so that new products can be launched on the market and become a new "name card" and new selling points of Hong Kong's tourism industry.

Deputy President, with these remarks, I hope Members will support the original motion and my amendment. Thank you.

MR VINCENT CHENG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. Deputy President, since the resumption of normal travel after the epidemic, there have been changes in the ecosystem and consumption patterns of inbound visitors. This, coupled with the fact that Hong Kong people have been going north to spend, has led to sluggish overall economic growth in Hong Kong and posed obvious challenges to our tourism, catering and retail industries. Against this backdrop, Mr XIA Baolong, Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, said early last month that as Hong Kong has entered a new stage of advancing from stability to prosperity, a well-developed tourism industry is crucial to the vigorous pursuit of economic growth and development, and therefore fully deserves the SAR Government's proactive efforts. Hong Kong's tourism industry must be fully aware of the challenges it faces and keep on exploring and innovating amid the changing environment to achieve better development. It is necessary to establish the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", fully explore Hong Kong's rich tourism resources, vigorously develop new travel itineraries and products, showcase Hong Kong's warm welcome and hospitality, and continuously improve service quality.

In fact, since last year, the SAR Government has been committed to promoting local consumption and actively seeking to drive the mega event economy and develop the tourism industry. The number of visitor arrivals has risen sharply from last year's post-epidemic level to 34 million. The cumulative total of visitor arrivals from January to April this year doubled year-on-year to 14.62 million, and the number of visitors from Indonesia, the United States ("US") and Canada in April also increased by more than 80% year-on-year. It is evident that Hong Kong's tourism industry has clearly rebounded. The Government has made a lot of efforts in this regard, including the launch of the Financial Mega Event Week and the organization of the Wealth for Good in Hong Kong Summit, a top-level mega event exclusively for family offices. In addition, a number of mega events, such as the Chubby Hearts Hong Kong and the US pop culture festival ComplexCon, have also taken place in Hong Kong. It is expected that 210 mega events will be launched this year.

Recently, the authorities have also launched the "Let's Go the Extra Mile" campaign, as well as various green and cultural in-depth tours. But in fact, these efforts are ongoing and so we must keep up the hard work.

I have the following suggestions to make and I hope to continue to lobby the Government for them. Firstly, in terms of promoting the tourism industry, I hope that the Government will strengthen the measures to connect with the Mainland, continue to strive for the Mainland's relaxation of the duty-free allowance for imported items for personal use by Mainland visitors from \$5,000 to \$10,000, and relax the "one trip per week" endorsements to make them "multiple-entry" endorsements for Shenzhen permanent residents, while at the same time seeking another gift of two giant pandas from the country.

In terms of actively developing mega event tourism, I believe that in the future, the authorities should seize the opportunities presented by mega events, such as the Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo and the 4th Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival, and launch publicity campaigns at an early stage to attract more visitors to Hong Kong. I also hope that the Government will make greater use of big data analytics to analyse the number of tourists brought to Hong Kong by these mega events and their consumption patterns, so as to make a better assessment.

Deputy President, when it comes to “Tourism is everywhere”, I believe that the “pie” of sports tourism—as Mr YIU Pak-leung just said—still has plenty of room for expansion. The global sports tourism industry is growing rapidly. According to a survey conducted by an online travel platform, one-fifth of visitors in the Asia-Pacific region expressed interest in sports and physical activities while on vacation. The three main categories of sports tourism, whether it is attracting tourists to watch sports games, attracting visitors to participate in sports-related activities while travelling in Hong Kong or otherwise, can be better developed. For this reason, Mr YIU Pak-leung, Mr Kenneth FOK and I have previously advocated setting up a dedicated team for sports tourism to give better play to public-private partnership and create more sports tourism products.

In terms of developing cultural tourism, apart from our proposal this morning, which is to develop tourism centering around the Kowloon Walled City film, the authorities can also collaborate with the Antiquities and Monuments Office and the Hong Kong Tourism Board to launch some cultural tours in partnership with travel agencies. Whether they are foodie tours, heritage tours, ancestral hall tours or church tours, these are all good ideas that I hope can be properly developed.

On the other hand, with the increasing number of visitors who are Muslims and visitors from the Middle East, we also suggest that the authorities should create a Muslim-friendly tourism environment as soon as possible, including introducing a wider range of certification items (e.g. Halal food certification) and discussing with the hotel industry the provision of a Muslim-friendly accommodation environment. All these initiatives can attract more tourists to Hong Kong.

Last but not least, regarding smart tourism, we have also proposed to the Government in the past to introduce a “Hong Kong Pass” based on the experience of London and Paris. The pass, which is available in physical or digital form, contains various discounts, allowing visitors to enjoy different offers when visiting private museums, cultural venues in West Kowloon, the Xiqu Centre, the City Hall, etc., so that the authorities can achieve better development in promoting Citywalk and in-depth tourism in multiple districts. The authorities can also consider following the example of places outside Hong Kong in developing some applications for cultural walks to enable tourists to better understand the various tourism features of Hong Kong during their self-guided travel.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the original motion and all the amendments. Other Members from the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong will also expound their other views on tourism later. Thank you, Deputy President.

MR SHIU KA-FAI (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. In the last six months, both this Council and many members of the public have kept hoping that strong impetus can be created for Hong Kong's tourism development. The main reason, I believe, is that everyone has come to realize that Hong Kong's retail and catering industries are weak. Due to changes in the consumption patterns of tourists visiting Hong Kong, as well as changes in the consumption patterns of Hong Kong people and their frequency of visits to the Greater Bay Area ("GBA"), Hong Kong is now facing a new challenge.

As many people know, Hong Kong's retail and catering industries can only rely on tourists, apart from the patronage of local people. Therefore, how to attract more tourists to Hong Kong is a pressing issue at the moment, and we need to draw on collective wisdom.

First of all, I would like to thank the SAR Government and the Central Government for adding eight more cities to the Individual Visit Scheme ("IVS") following the inclusion of Qingdao and Xi'an as IVS cities earlier, bringing the total number of cities covered by IVS to 59 now, which is extremely helpful for Hong Kong's tourism industry. However, in addition to the Central Authorities' continuous introduction of various preferential policies for Hong Kong, we also need to strengthen Hong Kong itself. Even though we are currently seeking to increase the \$5,000 duty-free allowance for Mainland visitors and hope to relax the "one trip per week" endorsements for GBA residents to make them "multiple-entry" endorsements, we must also strengthen our own development momentum to attract more tourists to Hong Kong.

I am aware that Secretary YEUNG had a meeting with Director XIA Baolong earlier. As Director XIA said at that time, in developing Hong Kong's tourism industry, it is necessary to actively understand the changes, respond to the changes and embrace the changes, and frequently adopt new ideas and methods to overcome the problems encountered. Moreover, we have to establish the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" to give full play to the advantages of Hong Kong's rich tourism resources. In fact, the SAR Government has made

tremendous efforts over the past six months or so. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and its colleagues for organizing multifarious mega events. The Policy Bureau under the leadership of Secretary Alice MAK has also promoted a large number of “Night Vibes” activities in the 18 districts, with the aim of revitalizing Hong Kong as a whole. By hosting frequent mega events, we can indeed attract a lot of Hong Kong people to spend money and foreign tourists to come to Hong Kong.

I, too, attended the S2O Songkran Music Festival which just ended last week. There were nearly 20 000 people in the venue, 20% to 30% of whom were tourists from the Mainland or other Asia-Pacific regions. I know that after partying there, many young people went to nightclubs or Lan Kwai Fong for leisure in the evening, making the venues bustling and thriving. This is the kind of event that Hong Kong needs to host more often.

As for the concert economy, many Members have discussed it and, of course, we strongly support it. We also hope that the large outdoor and indoor venues can be put to good use, and that the Kai Tak venue can be completed as soon as possible so that more concerts can be held there.

Apart from such activities, we can also consider organizing other mega events. For example, many people in Hong Kong enjoy watching snooker tournaments. If we can host a snooker masters tournament, invite players like Ronnie O’SULLIVAN and Marco FU, and make it a regular annual event, we will be able to create a sports culture in Hong Kong and attract different people. We can even consider holding Texas Hold’em tournaments, which are very popular nowadays, or guandan tournaments, a card game in the Mainland, to attract different people to come and participate in various activities in Hong Kong.

With 260 islands, Hong Kong is rich in water resources. How can we use the sunny beaches to develop water sports? We believe that in addition to government support, we also need to identify contractors who are willing to commit resources to undertake the development. If piers can be built, these island resources can be put to good use. I believe that all the above suggestions will help to make the most of Hong Kong’s existing tourism resources.

Apart from the “Night Vibes” activities in the 18 districts of Hong Kong, we should also make good use of the many existing busy districts. Hong Kong has many outstanding performing arts talents. If Members can remember, Sai Yeung

Choi Street used to be bustling and thriving, with people singing on the street. As far as I know, Miss Stacey LONG, a contestant in the current *Midlife, Sing & Shine!* show, also sang there back then, which shows the wealth of talents in Hong Kong. If we can make good use of more pedestrian precincts, demarcate the spaces properly, and allow only quality performers to perform at a distance that is not too close to each other and does not cause noise, I believe this will not only enable the performers to earn an income, but also attract a lot of people and turn these places into attractions.

As for inbound visitors, we hope to provide them with convenience by offering luggage storage at places such as the airport and MTR stations to make their travel experience more comfortable. I think these are all ways to make things easier for visitors, and I hope that the Government will consider them from different perspectives.

Thank you, Deputy President.

MR LUK CHUNG-HUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, first of all, I would like to thank Mr Benson LUK for proposing this Members' motion on "Tourism is everywhere".

The tourism industry is certainly important to Hong Kong's economy, and it is even a calling card for Hong Kong's image. It enables more international and Mainland people to get to know Hong Kong, while at the same time boosting the atmosphere in the community as well as the public's confidence in and sense of belonging to Hong Kong. Therefore, the value of developing the tourism industry goes far beyond its numerical and economic manifestations.

Tourism involves many different concepts, and Members have also proposed many types of tourism in different colours, such as green, blue, red, golden, black and white. In addition to inviting international superstars and sports stars to Hong Kong to "endorse" our tourism industry, I believe it is all the more necessary to give full play to and explore in depth the characteristics of "Hong Kong flavours". As Citywalk has become a popular form of tourism in recent years, we should think about how to make Hong Kong a city that is pleasant to walk around, and make it convenient for tourists to explore every nook and cranny. Apart from the recent hit Kowloon Walled City—which has of course been demolished, leaving only

remnants of the site in the park—there are actually a number of places in Kowloon where many people “check in” on social media, such as the Yau Ma Tei Police Station. However, people tend to leave as soon as they “check in” because there are no other links nearby. In reality, there are also the Yau Ma Tei Wholesale Fruit Market, the Red Brick Building (a heritage site of the Water Supplies Department, now used as a venue for operatic singing activities) and Temple Street in the vicinity. We should create more links for these “check-in spots”, build up a cultural IP (intellectual property), and allow tourists to participate first-hand through cultural experiences. Taking Chinese Opera as an example, we can let tourists try on the costumes to generate more interest in taking photos or even engaging in experiential learning, thereby highlighting Hong Kong’s characteristics as a small but beautiful city where the East meets the West.

In addition, the means of transport that we use every day, such as trams, double-decker buses, Light Rail and Star Ferry, also have their unique characteristics. Recently, the Light Rail has introduced Doraemon-themed train compartments, which I like very much, and many people chase after them to “check in”. These activities require planning. For example, what will be next after the Doraemon theme is over? Will we consider incorporating Hong Kong’s distinctive local IPs, and adding some features not only on the train body but also inside the train compartments?

Furthermore, we have typhoon shelter culture, walled village culture and traditional festivals. There are so many more that it is impossible to cover them all in just one hour. The question is how efforts can be made in a planned and coordinated manner, so that tourists need not wait for a particular festival to come to Hong Kong, but can appreciate and participate in activities featuring “Hong Kong flavours” no matter which week or at least which month they visit. Such activities should even become the traditional highlights of the respective districts. We should never organize one-off activities; instead, we should consolidate the stories and classic tales of different districts, compile a heritage guide, and nurture more history experts (including young people and tour guides) and enhance their abilities.

Green tourism is also an aspect of great concern to me. However, many of our green tourism destinations (including the Geopark and marine parks) face traffic problems, and another problem is electricity. As I often point out, there is currently no electricity supply to Tung Ping Chau and Po Toi Island. Can we

provide alternative means of power supply to solve the electricity problem on these two islands? Without electricity, it is impossible to provide even simple food and drink or home-stay lodgings, in which case these islands will be wasted, no matter how beautiful they are.

As for monuments, I hope that efforts can be accelerated to revitalize declared monuments, especially those currently under private ownership, such as the Dade Institute in Tuen Mun. I propose to increase the subsidy amount for revitalization, encourage the transfer of ownership to the Government and introduce public-private partnerships, so as to open up and revitalize the monuments, thereby giving them a new lease of life.

From an employment point of view, it is necessary for practitioners in the tourism industry to upgrade and transform themselves. There is a need to provide more training subsidies for them, and to create docent posts to provide guided tour and support services for tourists at designated locations to showcase Hong Kong's hospitality.

Last but not least, I am very concerned about law enforcement. Nowadays, there are some tour groups that do not hire local tourist guides or even come with "three nos", i.e. no travel agent licence, no tourist guide, and no protection. The relevant law enforcement agencies should strictly crack down on these "white-label tour groups" to safeguard the rights and interests of the practitioners and the quality of our tourism.

Thank you, Deputy President.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I am grateful to Mr Benson LUK for proposing the motion, as well as Mr YANG Wing-kit, Mr Kenneth LAU, Mr YIU Pak-leung, Mr Vincent CHENG, Mr SHIU Ka-fai and Mr LUK Chung-hung for proposing their respective amendments, so that we can take this opportunity to discuss in the Legislative Council ("LegCo") the specific details of pursuing the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", and I can once again report to LegCo on how the efforts of the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau can provide more diverse and brand new travel experiences for visitors.

Strong recovery of Hong Kong's tourism industry

Since the full resumption of cross-boundary tourism in February 2023, Hong Kong's tourism industry has been recovering at full speed, continuously injecting impetus into the local economy. In 2023, annual visitor arrivals reached 34 million, exceeding the estimate of 25.8 million made at the beginning of last year. In the first five months of 2024, the number of visitor arrivals had continued to rise, with a total of about 18.02 million inbound visitors recorded as at the end of May, representing a year-on-year increase of 78%. During the five-day Labour Day Golden Week of the Mainland this year, a total of about 766 000 Mainland visitor arrivals were recorded, and the total number of inbound Mainland visitors was in line with expectations. The daily average of inbound Mainland visitors was about 153 000, 22% higher than that of last year's Golden Week. During the Labour Day Golden Week, arrival of Mainland visitors peaked on 2 May, with around 192 000 visitors arriving in Hong Kong, a record high for this year. The above figures suffice to show the strong pace of recovery of Hong Kong's tourism industry.

Support from the Central Authorities for the further expansion of the Individual Visit Scheme

The steady development of Hong Kong's tourism industry is inseparable from the Central Government's support and care for us. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Central Government once again for its continued concern for Hong Kong's tourism industry and for actively responding to our proposals. These include the further expansion of the Individual Visit Scheme ("IVS") in May this year to cover eight more cities (namely Taiyuan in Shanxi Province, Hohhot in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Harbin in Heilongjiang Province, Lhasa in Tibet Autonomous Region, Lanzhou in Gansu Province, Xining in Qinghai Province, Yinchuan in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and Urumqi in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region) to enable residents of the eight cities to explore Hong Kong's unique appeal as a tourism destination in a more flexible and convenient way. Together with the expansion of IVS to Xi'an in Shaanxi Province and Qingdao in Shandong Province starting from March this year, IVS now covers 59 cities, including all provincial capitals in our country. This will not only boost Hong Kong's tourism industry or even overall economic development, but also facilitate the people-to-people bonds between the Mainland and Hong Kong.

According to the figures from the Immigration Department, following the expansion of IVS to cover Qingdao and Xi'an on 6 March 2024, the respective daily averages of visitor arrivals from these two cities have increased from 243 and 327 before the expansion to 339 and 420 after the expansion, representing increases of 40% and 30% respectively. We will continue our efforts to attract tourists from around the world and pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” in all aspects, so as to fully explore Hong Kong’s rich tourism resources and reinforce and strengthen Hong Kong’s position as “the best tourism destination”.

Enriched tourism products for in-depth exploration of Hong Kong’s unique appeal

Hong Kong is a diverse and inclusive cosmopolitan city that embraces both Chinese and Western cultures and combines bustling city life with unique rural charm, allowing visitors to not only pursue broad travel explorations but also engage in in-depth travel experiences. In fact, the Government and the travel trade have been sparing no effort to enrich Hong Kong’s tourism resources. In view of the changes in visitors’ preferences, habits and consumption patterns in recent years, promoting in-depth tourism in various areas has been one of the Government’s priorities in driving tourism development. The Government actively promotes a range of thematic tours and has successively launched the Cultural and Heritage Sites Local Tour Incentive Scheme, the Characteristic Local Tourism Incentive Scheme, the “Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition”, etc. to encourage the industry to develop more thematic tour products that showcase the different facets of Hong Kong. In particular, the response to the “Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition” was overwhelming, with nearly 700 entries received, including many quality signature itineraries for in-depth travel. In the end, 30 Signature Itineraries and 6 Supreme Itineraries were successfully selected from the competition, covering elements such as national history, green ecology, blue resources, and traditional and pop cultures. The Government will continue to promote the winning itineraries and encourage the industry to develop more thematic tour products.

At the same time, the Tourism Commission has also launched a series of tourism projects with local characteristics one after another. Since 2019, we have organized the Yim Tin Tsai Arts Festival and the Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival to connect different islands through arts, allowing visitors to appreciate and experience the natural landscape, history, culture and heritage of Sai Kung Hoi, as well as revitalizing the islands to boost the economic activities there. In addition, as a local creative tourism project, “Design District Hong Kong” (#ddHK) leads

visitors to embark on journeys to discover the local culture and characteristics of Hong Kong through design and cross-sectoral collaboration and with the use of public art installations and diverse thematic activities, and 2023's event was successfully held in Tsuen Wan. Meanwhile, we are also integrating technology to create unique experiences for visitors, with the "City in Time" project bringing back to life the history of individual landmarks through a mobile application to enrich visitors' travel experiences.

Melting pot of Chinese and Western cultures and culinary delights

Hong Kong embraces both the East and the West. It not only attaches importance to traditional festivals, but also celebrates foreign ones. We have always combined Chinese and Western arts, wine and cuisine and other elements with seasonal, festival and mega events to cater to the interests of different visitor segments, and we have also encouraged the industry to introduce a wider variety of tourism products. Riding on Hong Kong's diverse Chinese and Western festivals, such as New Year, Mid-Autumn Festival and Christmas, the Hong Kong Tourism Board ("HKTb") will consolidate the celebration activities across the city to attract visitors to Hong Kong to celebrate the various festive seasons with our people. The flagship events organized by HKTb, such as the Hong Kong International Chinese New Year Night Parade, the Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival and the Hong Kong WinterFest, have consistently lured tourists to Hong Kong to participate in them.

Asia's Events Capital

Hong Kong is a world-renowned events capital. The Government and HKTb have always been committed to staging and supporting more international mega events and activities. Since the full resumption of normal travel in early 2023, many mega events have taken place in Hong Kong. They include Hong Kong Sevens, Art Basel Hong Kong, FIVB Volleyball Nations League, LIV Golf, Hong Kong Cyclothon, and a fashion show presented by a renowned French luxurious brand. These events have attracted visitors to come and stay longer in Hong Kong to experience the city's charm as an events capital.

To strengthen the coordination of mega events, early this year, the Government set up the Mega Events Coordination Group, chaired by the Deputy Financial Secretary and with the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism as deputy, to vigorously promote the mega event economy. HKTb has also

established the Mega Events Development and Advancement Division, which has started operating as the first point of contact for mega events to provide first-stop support. The Government and HKTb have reached out more proactively to attract various mega events to anchor in Hong Kong, and have strengthened coordination to ensure that the mega events receive sufficient interdepartmental support. The Government has also set aside resources in the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 Budgets respectively for attracting more mega events with significant visitor appeal and tourism promotional effect to be staged in Hong Kong, so as to promote the mega event economy through a multi-pronged approach.

Promotion of multi-party collaboration to drive the long-term development of the tourism industry

To promote tourism development, collaboration and coordination among various sectors are essential, and it is therefore necessary for the Government, the business sector and the community to make concerted efforts. With this in mind, we established the high-level Tourism Strategy Committee (“TSC”), chaired by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, early this year to develop strategies to further promote the long-term and sustainable development of the tourism industry and to enhance collaboration among different stakeholders in the trade. Members include prominent figures and key leaders from the tourism sector, as well as practitioners from tourism-related sectors such as culture, sports, retail and catering. TSC aims at gathering strategic advice that can enhance the speed and quality of the development of Hong Kong’s tourism industry, as well as fostering the integrated development of the tourism and related sectors.

Deputy President, I believe that Honourable Members will take the opportunity of today’s debate to offer us many valuable views. I will listen carefully to the suggestions made by Honourable Members and will provide additional information as appropriate and respond further in my concluding remarks later.

Thank you, Deputy President.

PROF CHAN WING-KWONG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. I speak to express my gratitude and support for the original motion proposed by Mr Benson LUK and all the amendments.

Hong Kong is a renowned tourist destination with a strong appeal to both domestic and overseas visitors. Tourism has always been one of the four pillar industries of Hong Kong, and it also drives economic activities in hotel, catering, retail and other industries, thus contributing significantly to Hong Kong's economic growth. However, after the COVID-19 epidemic, there have been changes in the consumption patterns of inbound visitors. This, coupled with the trend of Hong Kong people going north to spend, has posed obvious challenges to the local tourism, catering and retail industries.

How should Hong Kong better cope with the challenges and turn crises into opportunities? Director XIA Baolong has already given the answer and specified the direction: We should establish the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", fully explore tourism resources, and vigorously develop new travel itineraries and products, while at the same time actively understanding the changes, responding to the changes and embracing the changes, and frequently adopting new ideas and methods to overcome the problems encountered, so as to pursue the path of high-quality and characteristic development.

In fact, Hong Kong is rich in tourism resources. Apart from the traditional tourist attractions, the 18 districts in Hong Kong also offer many great places for eating, drinking, entertainment and leisure. But all along, many tourism resources have not been explored and put to good use, or have not been effective in attracting tourists due to unsatisfactory planning, resulting in a waste of tourism resources.

Let me take Chinese medicine ("CM")-related attractions as an example. At present, there are quite a number of CM-related attractions in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, such as Lui Seng Chun in Sham Shui Po, Ko Shing Street in Sheung Wan, and the Museum of Chinese Medicine at Hong Kong Baptist University. All these attractions have their own unique characteristics. On ordinary days, they already attract many tourists who are interested in CM culture to embark on a journey of exploration and discovery, as they weave together tourism elements such as exploring the past, sightseeing and shopping. I believe that consolidating these attractions into thematic itineraries, along with publicity and promotional efforts, will certainly attract tourists effectively and at the same time promote the integration of culture and tourism and promote Chinese culture, which can be described as a multi-win situation.

Therefore, I believe that in order to pursue the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", the authorities should work with various sectors to earnestly explore and make the best use of Hong Kong's tourism resources to create

more new attractions with greater appeal. Yesterday, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong released the “Hong Kong’s CM Cultural Tourism Initiative”, proposing the consolidation of Hong Kong’s famous traditional CM shops, museums, historic CM buildings, the Chinese Herbal Garden, etc. for development into CM cultural tourism routes, as well as the establishment of a “CM health preservation experience centre” for visitors to personally experience the culture of CM health preservation. We are willing to jointly explore ways and make concerted efforts with the Government and various sectors to comprehensively promote tourism diversification in Hong Kong.

As for the original motion’s proposals to “proactively reach out to compete for mega events and tourists” and to “[develop] Hong Kong into an ‘international events capital’”, I also strongly agree with and support them. However, I would like to emphasize in particular that detailed arrangements must be properly made in organizing mega events. I believe Members are all aware that while the music festival held in the West Kowloon Cultural District earlier attracted many visitors from outside Hong Kong, the poor luggage storage service left hundreds of visitors stranded until the early hours of the morning as they were unable to retrieve their personal belongings after a long wait, leaving them with a negative travel experience.

Deputy President, success or failure depends on the details. I hope that in organizing mega events, the Government will supervise the contractors to ensure that they have done a good job in the detailed arrangements, so as to give visitors a good impression of feeling at home and not let some trivialities spoil their experiences.

Deputy President, I am deeply grateful to the Central Government for its continued strong support for Hong Kong’s development. In the past few months, the Central Government has twice expanded the scope of the Individual Visit Scheme (“IVS”) for Mainland residents travelling to Hong Kong and Macao, bringing the current number of Mainland cities from which the residents can visit Hong Kong through IVS to 59 and covering all provincial capital cities in the Mainland. This is undoubtedly a great boon for Hong Kong’s tourism industry. I believe that as long as we make good use of the policies introduced by the Central Authorities that are beneficial to Hong Kong and give full play to our own characteristics, we will definitely be able to better polish Hong Kong’s gilded signboard as “the best tourism destination”.

Deputy President, I so submit. Thank you, Deputy President.

PROF PRISCILLA LEUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I speak in support of Mr Benson LUK's motion and all the amendments. The topic this time is an excellent choice: "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" and the development of Hong Kong's mega event economy. This should be our highlight.

After three years of the epidemic, people all over the world are planning to travel for pleasure and relaxation, but the primary goal is, of course, to have fun. Very often, what gives us fun may be something that can evoke our childhood memories or certain emotions, or an immensely satisfying shopping experience. As for Hong Kong's characteristics, I think we need to take a "high-end approach" after all. However, the so-called "high-end approach" does not mean offering things that only the wealthiest know how to appreciate and enjoy. We should make every nook and cranny of Hong Kong, which has evolved from a fishing village to the cosmopolitan city it is today, a tourist attraction. In terms of people and things, I recently took a photo with the sculpture of GUO Jing at the airport. It happened because when I was travelling earlier, I suddenly discovered that there was a sculpture of a martial arts novel character on display at the airport, which brought back some memories for me.

I remember visiting a city called Saint Paul in Minnesota, the United States two decades ago. At that time, the whole city was decorated with sculptures of Snoopy—the main character from the English cartoon series *Peanuts* that we watched in our childhood—as well as sculptures of other different characters. They were beautifully crafted, making everyone eager to take photos with them. It is exactly because of this little anecdote that this city has become one that I always think of, even though I have been to many cities. The recent presence of Doraemon in Hong Kong has also brought back memories for many people. It is a very pleasant feeling, as one's childhood is often filled with happiness.

I would like to give another example. Recently, I have seen the community arts that have been developed all over Hong Kong in the past five years, from Tsuen Wan to Tsim Sha Tsui and other parts of the New Territories. I, too, took part in the creation of one of the murals, where Mr LAM Yuk-fai led 100 children living in subdivided units to paint their dreams into a very large mural. We also painted a mural at Minden Row, Yau Tsim Mong, depicting the entire history of 1 July. The best thing about this kind of creation is that not only can artists do the painting, but children or anyone can also paint a few strokes. So, if we are to promote family-friendly tourism, there are many places in Hong Kong that can be used for community arts activities. As long as we do a good job in promoting tourism,

I believe many young families will be willing to bring their children to experience it. Besides, this activity is not only part of a tour, but also a learning activity that enables them to gain a deeper understanding of our city.

I visited southern Xinjiang last year. As we all know, the political situation in southern Xinjiang was once very tense. But after five years of hard work by the authorities, various parts of the ancient city in southern Xinjiang have been transformed into “check-in spots” that are really worth visiting. This will leave a deep impression on tourists and make them spend money there.

The third point I would like to raise is about thematic tourism, which has also been mentioned by Members. Just now, many Honourable colleagues suggested the development of water sports tourism, underwater tourism, and diving tourism. I once went on a cruise to Okinawa and made a point of buying medicine there. Can the authorities consider developing a comprehensive tour of the Greater Bay Area (“GBA”)? Can they come up with an itinerary that starts from Hong Kong and goes all the way to GBA, with destinations being linked up by a “water” theme? Today, only the Under Secretary is present. However, I think that themed mega events should not be the sole responsibility of the Policy Bureau to which the Under Secretary belongs, but should involve the collective wisdom of all trades and industries. For example, our education sector is planning to host a mega educational event. This approach will enable people from each and every trade and industry to find enjoyment, gain knowledge and pursue development in Hong Kong. I am responsible for a number of projects in Sham Shui Po, and we are now considering where to paint in Sham Shui Po. The public housing estates in the district have flowers in different colours. If our public housing estates are beautifully designed, they can also become attractive themes in the future, and “Pang Tsai” or fabrics can be a theme too. Therefore, I believe that in order to achieve “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” and to develop the mega event economy, all trades and industries and the whole community should be mobilized and make concerted efforts to develop Hong Kong’s mega event economy together.

MR LAM CHUN-SING (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. First of all, I would like to thank Mr Benson LUK for proposing this motion. There is a decline in the demand from visitors for traditional tourism focusing on dining, shopping and entertainment, and their consumption patterns have also changed. For example, some Mainland tourists buy water spinach from the market and then

take pictures with it in front of the street name plate of Tung Choi Street¹ in Mong Kok, which is perhaps a case of “Tourism is everywhere”. In response to tourists’ prevailing demand for in-depth tourism, Hong Kong is never short of tourism resources with development potential, but the key lies in how the authorities develop and promote them. In addition, I particularly agree with Mr LUK Chung-hung’s proposal in his amendment to train more local tourism practitioners who can adapt to the new developments.

After completing the recruitment assessment and accumulating years of experience in receiving tour groups, serving tourist guides are definitely competent to introduce popular tourist attractions. However, with the trend of in-depth tourism, visitors expect a higher and more specialized level of knowledge from tourist guides, so the authorities should consider how to help tourist guides keep up with the times through the Continuing Professional Development (“CPD”) Scheme for Tourist Guides. Currently, part of the scheme is a minimum of 12 hours of self-selected activities. I am also a holder of the tourist guide pass, so I participate in CPD every three years. The courses include visits to churches, the Sikh Temple, mosques, hiking trails, Chinese restaurants, cafés and so on, which truly embodies the idea of “Tourism is everywhere” and “Learning is everywhere”. However, some of the courses lack explanation, and in the end, participants are deemed to have understood the tea-drinking culture and completed the courses simply by spending an extra half hour looking around on their own or eating in a Chinese restaurant. The degree of freedom may be too high, I am afraid. Therefore, I suggest that the Travel Industry Authority (“TIA”) should focus the self-selected activities on contents related to in-depth tourism that are popular at the time, mainly to cultivate the sensitivity of tourist guides in this area. In addition, it is necessary to train not only tourist guides in general but also tourist guides in different specialized areas. At the same time, trained docent ambassadors can be arranged at in-depth tourism attractions to attract former tourist guides who have switched careers due to the epidemic to return to the industry.

Furthermore, it is necessary for the authorities to strengthen the regulation of tourism service providers. The Travel Industry Ordinance prohibits unapproved travel agents from carrying on Mainland inbound tour group business and also prohibits the employment of unlicensed tourist guides and tour escorts. However, industry players have reflected that some foreign organizations have

¹ “Tung Choi” is the Cantonese romanization of the word “通菜”, which means water spinach.

attempted to bypass travel agents and develop their own “Tourism is everywhere” programmes by organizing illegal camping tours and study tours under various pretexts, or even hiring Mainland tourist guides without local licences. This not only affects the livelihood of local tourism practitioners, but also makes it impossible for TIA to regulate the quality of such services. I hope that the authorities will step up their efforts to crack down on unlicensed agents and tourist guides to safeguard the employment opportunities of local practitioners.

Last but not least, “Tourism is everywhere” may mean “Spending is everywhere”. It is also an inevitable trend to facilitate the use of electronic payment by visitors. The Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the Bank of Thailand have launched the link for cross-border QR payment between Hong Kong and Thailand, providing a fast and secure cross-border payment service for people travelling between the two places. The number of Thai tourists has long since returned to the pre-epidemic level. Although there is not necessarily a direct correlation between the two, I hope that the Government will consider extending this cross-border payment mode to other countries and regions to further promote the tourism industry.

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

PROF LAU CHI-PANG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. I speak in support of Mr Benson LUK’s motion on “Pursuing the concept of ‘Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong’ and developing Hong Kong’s mega event economy”, as well as the amendments of other Members.

In the wake of the epidemic, all sorts of strategies have been unveiled around the world to promote economic recovery, and the development of mega event economy has become one of the key directions. Hong Kong has long been recognized as Asia’s world city and an events capital. Over the past six months, the SAR Government has been actively promoting the mega event economy, which has not only driven the development of the tourism, hotel, catering, retail and other industries and, in turn, brought enormous economic benefits to Hong Kong, but also helped to consolidate Hong Kong’s status as an international city.

However, the promotion of the mega event economy requires specific venues and supporting facilities, and is therefore not feasible in all 18 districts. To fully realize and pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” and

to develop tourism to make it “everywhere”, we cannot rely solely on the organization of mega events and major events.

Hong Kong people all understand that “everywhere” actually refers to their daily lives. Therefore, how to combine tourism with life, integrate it into life or even make it a part of life is the key to the proposition of “Tourism is everywhere”. Intangible cultural heritage (“ICH”) is the essence of life, and the development and promotion of ICH is an important direction for putting into practice the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”. General Secretary XI Jinping has once called on us to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of the best of traditional Chinese culture through ICH, so as to enhance the appeal of Chinese culture and better present Chinese culture to the world. Hence, by developing and promoting ICH, we can not only put into practice the concept of “Tourism is everywhere”, but also tell the good stories of Hong Kong and China to the world.

Deputy President, this past 8 June was China’s Cultural and Natural Heritage Day. A group of people in Hong Kong who are passionate about ICH organized a cultural activity under the theme of “ICH June” at the Jao Tsung-I Academy, a revitalized historic building, to showcase Hong Kong’s ICH sentiments and traditional Chinese culture with a long history, while at the same time responding to the theme of “Preserving and Inheriting ICH to Pass on the Historical Legacy and Write a Glorious Chapter for the Era” set by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for this year.

There are currently 480 ICH items in Hong Kong. Among them, Cantonese opera is listed as a world-class ICH item, and the Jiao Festival of Cheung Chau and the Fire Dragon Dance of Tai Hang are listed as national ICH items. Let us take a look at the Mainland. Zibo in Shandong Province, Harbin in Heilongjiang Province, etc. have successfully attracted a large number of tourists with their local ICH items through media and government publicity. Hong Kong can draw on, apply and build on the successful examples of these cities to develop its very own positioning in ICH tourism.

Deputy President, in today’s globalized world, how to promote our own history and culture and give full play to our own characteristics to attract tourists is a crucial issue for the development of Hong Kong’s economy and tourism. ICH, which comes from life, has always been widely recognized and practised by various communities and groups. In addition to promoting the traditional spirit and values of Chinese culture, ICH can also strengthen the sense of identity and belonging

between Hong Kong and other parts of the Mainland through the shared memories of ICH, and serve as a link with the overseas Chinese communities in foreign countries and cities. At the same time, we should dovetail with the National 14th Five-Year Plan by using ICH to tell the good stories of Hong Kong and China and thereby contribute to the further development of Hong Kong into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange.

Leveraging the support from the Mainland while engaging the world, Hong Kong enjoys globally unique advantages in developing ICH-related industries. The SAR Government should actively consider adopting and implementing the “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” initiative from the cultural and historical perspectives, and formulate a long-term strategy for the development of the tourism industry by making use of the rich ICH resources in the community.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the motion and the relevant amendments.

MR CHU KWOK-KEUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. I am grateful to Mr Benson LUK for proposing the original motion and the several Members for proposing the amendments, so that this Council can have the opportunity to discuss the mega event economy and the development of the tourism industry.

The mega event economy turns popularity into prosperity, and I have a deep personal understanding of this. Earlier on, I assisted in organizing the Hong Kong concert series of HUA Chenyu, a Mainland singer, which attracted a large number of Mainland fans to Hong Kong. What surprised me, however, was that the local fans who supported their idol not only publicized the concert on their own initiative, but also shared with the Mainland fans a variety of tourism information and exclusive offers across Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. This, in turn, drove themed consumption in hotel, catering, retail and other sectors, while also allowing the Mainland fans to enjoy themselves and have a real blast as if a carnival was being hosted. It was a true embodiment of “Tourism is everywhere”.

Although the concert series was only held for a short three days, the ripple effect, consumption sentiment, economic benefits and other types of dividends generated by the mega event in the community were quite substantial. With the Government’s earlier announcement that at least 210 mega events and even more

than 80 shows of large-scale concert series are expected to be held throughout the year, it is estimated that the mega events will attract the participation of about 1.7 million visitors and bring about \$7.2 billion in spending to Hong Kong during the year. I believe that as long as our mega events are attractive, they will not only encourage enthusiastic public participation, but also lure visitors from all over the world, thus achieving both success and popularity.

Deputy President, our discussion today on “Tourism is everywhere” is a good time to reflect on the problem of iconic cultural tourism facilities being highly concentrated in the city centre in the past, which has led to an imbalance in development between the north and the south. This not only hinders the development of local arts and culture, but is also unfavourable to the expansion of the audience base. I must emphasize that the high-concentration pattern is obviously contrary to the concept of “Tourism is everywhere”. As the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism mentioned to the press after attending an event on 3 June—and I quote—“Nowadays, visitors are no longer concentrated in the tourist spots in the past, but are spread all over Hong Kong.” (end of quote)

I have advocated in this Council that the national development and achievements museum may be located in the Northern Metropolis, and the underlying idea is precisely to achieve balanced development. In fact, the same consideration applies to the development of major museums in China. For example, the Northern Branch of the Palace Museum, which is under construction, is located in the north-western suburbs of Beijing. Despite its far distance from the urban areas, we have never heard of the Palace Museum expressing concern that visitors would consider it remote and therefore not visit.

In the case of Hong Kong’s neighbour Shenzhen, its newly built arts and cultural facilities are not concentrated in the urban areas either. Nearly half of the “Ten Major Cultural Facilities in the New Era” that are under intense construction are not located in such urban areas as Luohu and Futian, but in the new development areas at the eastern and western ends. For example, the Shenzhen Hall of the National Museum of China, which will be commissioned next year at the earliest, is located in Qianhai; and the proposed Shenzhen Marine Museum is being built in Dapeng.

Examples of using major cultural infrastructure to drive the development of new areas abound both at home and abroad. The Northern Metropolis is connected by cross-boundary railways and is easily accessible by public transport. Recently, the Government has been considering rezoning part of the land in Kwu

Tung North, which was originally set aside for innovation and technology purposes. I think it is worthwhile to draw on Shenzhen's experience and develop major cultural tourism facilities to provide new attractions for citizens and visitors, thereby realizing the principle of "shaping tourism with cultural activities and promoting culture through tourism".

Deputy President, like many citizens, I love to travel. Whenever I have some rich and memorable experiences outside Hong Kong, I always have mixed feelings because I fear that Hong Kong will gradually be overshadowed. I hope that the Government will take proactive action to truly pursue the concept of "Tourism is everywhere" and develop the mega event economy.

Deputy President, I so submit.

DR CHOW MAN-KONG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, after three years of the epidemic, there have been structural changes in the travel, consumption and taste patterns of inbound visitors. If Hong Kong wants to attract visitors, it must first have stories to tell, and it must also excel in three aspects, namely carrying capacity, operational capacity, and reception capacity.

I speak in support of Mr Benson LUK's original motion and the amendments to it. Next, I will express my views on three areas, which cover optimizing promotional approaches, planning for the mega event economy and revitalizing the film and television entertainment industry.

The Central Authorities attach great importance to Hong Kong's economic development, and tourism is one of the four pillar industries of Hong Kong. As Director XIA said, we should "frequently adopt new ideas and methods to overcome the problems encountered". In my view, our priorities should be to step up promotion and expand visitor sources. In May this year, the Central Authorities expanded the Individual Visit Scheme ("IVS") to cover eight provincial capital cities, such as Taiyuan in Shanxi and Hohhot in Inner Mongolia. This not only responded to the fervent hope of all of us in Hong Kong for further expansion of IVS, but also proved once again the truth that "as long as Hong Kong asks, the motherland will surely respond". Since March this year, IVS has already covered 59 cities, including all provincial capital cities in China. It is worth noting that, according to the latest figures released by the SAR Government, the daily numbers of IVS inbound visitors from Xi'an and Qingdao cities since March have been 90

and 128 respectively, so obviously there is still room for improvement. In this regard, apart from developing more direct flights, we also need to step up the promotion of Hong Kong's tourism characteristics to these cities.

In my opinion, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and the Hong Kong Tourism Board ("HKTB") can invite more local KOLs (key opinion leaders) to step up promotion on Mainland social media platforms, including Xiaohongshu and the WeChat channel. I am pleased to see that HKTB has heeded our advice and reached a relevant agreement with Xiaohongshu. As the next move, we should seize this opportunity to launch more promotional campaigns in Mainland mega cities in a broader and deeper way, as one word from local KOLs carries more weight than a hundred words from us. Therefore, it is worthwhile for the authorities to implement this initiative.

In terms of mega events, the economic benefits brought by a single mega event are always limited. We need to link mega events to various downstream industries or activities in order to maximize the benefits. Among them, sports events have always been a source of unique cohesion. For example, Singapore plans to invest S\$165 million (approximately HK\$1 billion) in major sports events over the next four years to accelerate local economic development and raise its international status. With the Kai Tak Sports Park ("KTSP") set to be commissioned early next year, I suggest that the authorities should take advantage of the sports frenzy generated by the Paris Olympic Games and announce to the international community as early as possible the plans for KTSP for the next three to five years, including the sports events and concerts to be held, as well as the amount of resources to be allocated for the development of the related industries, so that the business community can be well prepared to contribute to a boom in popularity and prosperity when the time comes.

To be frank, if Hong Kong's tourism industry were to compete with our neighbouring cities by offering lower prices or more economical options, we would be bound to lose the competition because we are no match for Shenzhen and Shenzhen is no match for Changsha in Hunan. So, we have to compete with them in terms of "characteristics". We need to present stories, feelings, depth and taste to give domestic and overseas visitors the impression that it is value for money to visit Hong Kong. For example, Japan has long been a tourist hotspot for Hong Kong people and is immensely popular with families because it is a famous destination for anime tourism, attracting visitors of different age groups to make a "pilgrimage" there. It is therefore a worthy reference for Hong Kong. It is not

true that Hong Kong can do nothing more. As an illustration, recently there have been many local films that are story-driven and novel, and even the SAR Government holds that the film sets should be preserved and developed into “check-in spots”. However, we must remember not to lose enthusiasm so quickly. Instead, we must seize the opportunity to attract public-private partnerships, such as the development of a “film and television entertainment city” with local characteristics, and establish relevant talent schemes, so as to enrich Hong Kong’s stories, depth, feelings, and taste.

In addition, as we are developing Hong Kong into an international education hub, especially in the area of higher education, more students from the Belt and Road and ASEAN countries will come to study in Hong Kong in the future. Under this general trend, Hong Kong will only become more and more prosperous. Therefore, we must work together to develop tourism, which will greatly contribute to the overall development of Hong Kong or even our efforts in telling the good stories of Hong Kong and attracting visitors.

Deputy President, I so submit.

MR CHAN KIN-POR (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. The concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” proposed by Director XIA actually encourages us to explore the cultural treasures in our local communities from a micro perspective. The Government announced earlier that more than 210 mega events will be held this year. However, hosting mega events is only one of the strategies to promote tourism. This time, I would like to focus on discussing how we can pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere”. I would like to thank Mr Benson LUK for proposing this meaningful motion today.

Hong Kong itself has a wealth of unique characteristics and cultural heritage, which, if reinvented, can also attract tourists. All 480 items of Hong Kong’s intangible cultural heritage (“ICH”) are worthy of our preservation, among which 12 have even been inscribed onto the list of national ICH, including the Cheung Chau Jiao Festival, the Tai O dragon boat water parade, the Tai Hang fire dragon dance, the Wong Tai Sin belief and customs, the cheongsam, Cantonese opera and herbal tea. Some of them have already become famous scenic spots, such as Wong Tai Sin, Cheung Chau and Tai O. Others, such as herbal tea, the cheongsam and the arts of guqin, all of which have profound cultural heritage and many stories to tell, can also be promoted as cultural tourism destinations with

orchestrated design. In fact, cultural tourism is only a niche activity in Hong Kong, but many people in the Mainland love arts and culture and choose cultural tours when they travel. As long as we do it well, we need not worry about the source of tourists.

Hong Kong possesses cultural treasures of national and even global significance that are worthy of our vigorous development, such as Jin Yong and martial arts novels, as well as Bruce LEE and Hong Kong martial arts films. Jin Yong and Bruce LEE are both icons of Hong Kong. In recent years, the Government has attached great importance to their contributions and influence by organizing a number of exhibitions and activities to commemorate them. However, we still do not have permanent, dedicated memorial halls for them, even though they are emblematic of Chinese culture and timelessly cherished by admirers and supporters. Furthermore, as Hong Kong martial arts films and martial arts novels are famous all over the world, if we could build dedicated cultural museums, it would certainly attract a large number of tourists to Hong Kong.

In addition, in order to pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere”, we must have a deep understanding of the unique characteristics of each district. In fact, many tourist attractions are hidden in everyday life and do not need to be operated deliberately. Mainland tourists are fond of the nostalgic essence of Hong Kong. For example, a coffee shop on Peel Street in Soho, Central, has recently become a popular “check-in” hotspot. Sitting on the stone steps outside the café and taking pictures of their brunch to “check in”, this casual attitude to life is what they perceive as the “essence of Hong Kong”. Ordinary streets can also be crowded with tourists, precisely reflecting that tourist attractions do not necessarily have to be upscale; being “down-to-earth” is another distinguishing feature. Here, I would like to make one point in particular. Times have changed, yet many operators have not adapted their business models accordingly, often complaining of a lack of customers and business. In fact, as long as these small shops know how to be flexible and make good use of social media for promotion, their business will simply continue to thrive.

Hong Kong people love to travel to Japan. If they are manga fans, they must have visited the railroad crossing near Enoden Kamakurakomae Station. This is where scenes from *Slam Dunk* are depicted. In recent years, this place has attracted a large number of tourists to “check in”. Many tourists have blocked the crossing and caused danger in their pursuit of taking pictures of scenes from the

manga, adversely affecting the lives of local residents. Here, I would also like to raise a thought-provoking question: While pursuing the concept of “Tourism is everywhere”, how can we balance the development of the tourism industry and its impact on the community, thereby improving Hong Kong’s overall capacity to receive tourists?

Hong Kong’s tourism industry should actively seek change and pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere”. By making full use of Hong Kong’s unique characteristics, the industry can achieve the goal of “having tourist hotspots in each of the 18 districts”, thereby preventing the concentration of tourist traffic in only popular areas and ensuring the stable and orderly development of the tourism industry.

Thank you, Deputy President.

MR JIMMY NG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. On 9 May, during a meeting with Secretary Kevin YEUNG in Beijing, Director XIA Baolong clearly pointed out that in developing Hong Kong’s tourism industry, it is necessary to actively understand the changes, respond to the changes and embrace the changes, and frequently adopt new ideas and methods to overcome the problems encountered. He also proposed to establish the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”, which can be achieved by fully tapping into Hong Kong’s rich tourism resources and actively drawing on the successful experiences of other places to vigorously develop novel travel itineraries and products.

In fact, the global tourism industry is highly competitive. Hong Kong can no longer rest on its past laurels and rely solely on its reputation as a “shopping paradise”. It must boldly break new ground, make impressive changes and actively seek a way out. Nowadays, in-depth travel is gaining popularity worldwide. Both the Government and the industry should move with the times. Apart from hosting more mega events to attract tourists, they should also take the initiative to seek change and develop more alternative itineraries to enrich the variety of products and provide tourists with more immersive experiences, so as to truly achieve the goal of “Tourism is everywhere”.

In-depth travel focuses more on the cultural aspect. Tourists seek to experience the unique local culture and understand the local human history. They spend more time immersing themselves in the community and getting to know the

local customs and traditions according to their personal preferences. Tourists also visit unique landmarks, explore history, and broaden their horizons. Repeat visitors who have been to Hong Kong multiple times even plan themed tours and avoid superficial sightseeing.

When it comes to themed tours, one of the best options is industrial tours, which combine the elements of culture, education, economic development and leisure travel. Many places are actively developing this type of tour. According to statistics, more than 30% of the 400 million tourists visiting Germany each year have participated in industrial tours; Japan's industrial sightseeing attracts about 30 million tourists each year; and there are currently about 165 tourism factories in Taiwan, which generate an output value of more than NT\$5 billion each year.

The Mainland has also been actively developing and supporting industrial tourism in recent years. In 2020, Guangdong Province released 20 high-quality industrial tour routes. The first batch of industrial tourism resources consists of a total of 127 spots, including industrial heritage landscapes, industrial museums and modern tourism factories, covering both traditional and emerging industries.

In October last year, I proposed at a meeting of the Legislative Council that industrial tourism should be vigorously developed. I suggested that the Government should take the lead in planning and encourage manufacturers to launch production lines specifically for sightseeing purposes, so as to enable tourists from home and abroad to come into close contact with Hong Kong's industrial production process, thereby showcasing Hong Kong's achievements in innovation and technology, as well as its ability to commercialize these achievements.

Apart from attracting tourists, I think industrial tourism will bring many other benefits. It can help preserve industrial heritage while at the same time promoting Hong Kong brands and supporting start-ups. I suggest considering the establishment of an industrial museum, incorporating new technologies such as VR, to allow tourists to virtually immerse themselves in production lines and feel the essence of "Made in Hong Kong".

As to how industrial tourism can be integrated into the mega event economy, I suggest that the Government should take the lead in planning and join hands with the industry to organize the Hong Kong Industrial Festival and make it an annual mega event. On the one hand, quality products can be exhibited and sold to

promote Hong Kong brands in a down-to-earth way, and on the other hand, themed exhibitions can be held to tell the stories of Hong Kong's industrial past and showcase the development of Hong Kong's new industries. This initiative will allow tourists to shop and learn at the same time and the industry to make a profit, killing several birds with one stone.

Lastly, I call on the Government to expeditiously include industrial tourism in the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry and to hold discussions with various stakeholders to jointly develop industrial tourist attractions and exhibitions with Hong Kong characteristics, so as to open up new avenues for Hong Kong's tourism industry and create new resources for the mega event economy.

Deputy President, I so submit.

DR TAN YUEHENG (in Putonghua): Thank you, Deputy President. I thank Mr Benson LUK for proposing the motion and the other Members for proposing their amendments.

Tourism is one of Hong Kong's pillar industries. Like the retail, hotel, catering and other industries, the tourism industry is now facing many challenges. For example, the number of overnight visitors has declined and the demands of visitors have changed significantly. Shopping and consumption habits have also changed. People are more interested in culture, leisure and entertainment, and themed attractions, leading to higher expectations of service quality and travel experiences.

Hong Kong does not lack diverse natural and cultural tourism resources with development potential. For example, there are local folk events such as the Cheung Chau Jiao Festival, the Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance and the Tai O Dragon Boat Water Parade, as well as film tourism experience resources featuring Hong Kong-produced films, the film industry and Hong Kong superstars. There are also natural resources such as the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark in Sai Kung, remote hiking trails with expansive scenic views and Mai Po Nature Reserve. These are all tourism resources of Hong Kong that have local characteristics and unique advantages in the region. To tap their potential, we need to take more systematic planning and development initiatives, so as to

promote the integration of culture and tourism, create new attractions for Hong Kong as a tourism destination and build a sustainable cultural and tourism IP (intellectual property) for Hong Kong. In this regard, I have three suggestions.

Firstly, we should capitalize on the influence of Hong Kong-produced films and make good use of technology to establish a Hong Kong Studio that combines film production with cultural tourism. Recently, the film *Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In* has attracted a lot of attention from Chinese communities around the world. Hong Kong's film, television and cultural industries boast a glorious history and have accumulated rich technical and talent resources. Now is the time for us to think more boldly and take bigger steps forward. We can consider building a Hong Kong version of "Universal Studios" or a film and television base, where we can not only provide film and television production facilities and recreate landmarks and streetscapes with a retro Hong Kong flair, such as neon signs and the Jumbo Restaurant Boat, but also build theme parks based on the culture of Hong Kong-produced films, focusing on various themes such as the Kowloon Walled City and Chinese martial arts, for tourists to visit.

When developing exhibitions, amusement rides, play equipment or interactive projects there, we should adopt an innovative mindset that emphasizes creativity, curation and the development of cultural and tourism IP, and encourage the integration of visual arts and technology elements. In this way, on the one hand, the development of such projects can, to a certain extent, stimulate the enthusiasm of technical and production talents in film, television, art and other fields, leading to a concentration of talents from film and television and cultural and creative industries. On the other hand, the film studio will appeal to a wide audience, and while promoting the development of Hong Kong's creative and cultural industries, it will also add new dimensions to the development of Hong Kong's tourism and related economic industries. In the future, we can even consider exporting intellectual property and further cooperating with external parties to help Hong Kong's film and television and cultural and creative industries to foster new productive forces.

Secondly, we should promote the integration of arts and culture with Hong Kong's local folklore so as to empower the development of the New Territories' countryside and create seasonal tourist attractions. I suggest that we draw reference from the models of arts festivals held in rural areas, ancient towns and islands in the Mainland and overseas, such as the Wuzhen Theatre Festival in the Mainland, the Chishang Autumn Rice Harvest Arts Festival in Taiwan and the

Echigo-Tsumari Art Field in Japan, so that we can promote the development of arts and culture, while at the same time driving the revitalization of the countryside and generating cultural and tourism-related income. Hong Kong already has the Yim Tin Tsai Arts Festival. Based on past experience, we can explore an arts festival model that features “art + countryside + nature + folklore + cultural tourism industry” with more Hong Kong characteristics and greater influence, so as to revitalize the countryside.

Thirdly, market forces should be harnessed to promote the development and construction of new cultural tourist attractions. Despite the fact that Hong Kong is facing the pressure of budget deficits after the epidemic, many plans conducive to Hong Kong’s development, including those related to cultural tourism, still need to be pursued. We should better integrate “capable government” with “market forces” and fully play the roles of planning, steering and supervision. By introducing market capital and utilizing market resources, we can facilitate the development of large-scale tourism and cultural projects, thus injecting greater vitality into Hong Kong’s cultural tourism industry.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the original motion and the amendments.

MR CHAN HAK-KAN (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. Deputy President, I would like to thank Mr Benson LUK for proposing the motion on “Pursuing the concept of ‘Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong’ and developing Hong Kong’s mega event economy” today.

Deputy President, as an international metropolis where Chinese and Western cultures meet, Hong Kong can attract tourists from all over the world with its culture, architecture, food and more. In the past, when we travelled to a place, we always went to the most popular scenic spots of the place to “check in” and take pictures. However, when we visit the same place for the second or third time, we do not just want to take a cursory look at the scenery and take pictures, but we want to delve deeper into the city, explore some small communities and feel the lifestyle of the local people and the unique atmosphere of the city. This is precisely why, after the resumption of normal travel, we have seen many Mainland tourists coming to Hong Kong and discovering many new tourist attractions for us. These young travellers are very fond of Hong Kong culture, and they enjoy listening to Cantonese songs and watching Hong Kong films. It is through this culture, songs,

and memories that they connect themselves with Hong Kong. These tourist attractions, discovered by tourists, have become iconic tourist destinations with distinctive Hong Kong characteristics.

In fact, while we strive to pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere”, we have to attach importance to one principle, that is, “hospitality is everywhere”. I noticed that Secretary Kevin YEUNG officiated at the launch of Hospitality Campaign last week, which I think is a good start. However, we should also attach importance to striking a balance between tourist travel and the normal life of the public, so as to minimize the impact on local residents while at the same time making tourists feel at home. Only if we do a good job in this respect can the concept of “Tourism is everywhere” be promoted in a sustainable way.

In addition, I have noticed that the SAR Government has hosted many mega events in the past six months with impressive results, which have not only boosted consumption and tourist arrivals, but also enhanced Hong Kong’s image as a tourist destination. I think in the future, Hong Kong can host more mega events that focus on local traditional culture and customs. We used to have lion dances, the Dragon and Lion Dance Extravaganza, and even dragon boat races during the Dragon Boat Festival. For example, during the recent Dragon Boat Festival, dragon boat races were held in many districts, attracting many dragon boat teams from the Mainland and overseas to compete in Hong Kong. Chinese dragon boat racing will also be one of the Olympic demonstration events at the upcoming Paris Olympics, and the World Dragon Boat Racing Championships will return to Hong Kong in 2027. Therefore, in the next few years, we can organize more international dragon boat races revolving around the traditional sport of dragon boat racing and operate and build the brand of dragon boat racing on a commercial basis, so as to create more exciting and fresh experiences, and at the same time help dragon boat racing, a sport that showcases Chinese traditional culture, to officially become an Olympic event. By then, dragon boat racing in Hong Kong will not only attract a large number of foreign athletes, but also become one of the most spectacular events in Hong Kong.

Deputy President, the examples cited by me just now all illustrate that Hong Kong is endowed with very rich tourism resources. More importantly, we need to bring out the best of our creativity and execution skills to create a brand new travel experience for tourists.

Deputy President, I know that you do not drive. If some Honourable colleagues in this Council do drive, they may have noticed that a road sign in Central has become a popular “check-in” spot. The road sign reads “All Destinations”. I sincerely hope that apart from this tourist “check-in” spot, all places visited by tourists in Hong Kong will become their travel destinations. By achieving this, we can revitalize Hong Kong’s tourism industry and boost Hong Kong’s economy.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the original motion and all the amendments.

DR NGAN MAN-YU (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. Deputy President, Director XIA Baolong has put forward the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”, calling for full exploration of Hong Kong’s rich tourism resources. Various sectors of society have put forward advice and suggestions one after another. The Government has also consulted the public on different proposals to draw on collective wisdom.

It is undeniable that after the resumption of normalcy, the travel patterns of tourists have changed completely. The traditional shopping and tourist attractions are no longer popular. For young people, Citywalk has become a trend in recent years, which focuses more on in-depth travel when compared to the previous mode of visiting famous tourist attractions, which allows only a shallow understanding with a fleeting glance. During the walk, visitors can learn about the history and culture of Hong Kong and experience the humanistic atmosphere of the community. Kowloon East is also a vibrant and culturally diverse community with many places worthy of exploration by visitors.

One of them is Lei Yue Mun, which was originally well known in the world. In recent years, it has rarely been mentioned by tourists or the public. So, let me take this opportunity to talk about the development of Lei Yue Mun. Lei Yue Mun is a charming community with a long history and traditional culture. At the same time, it also displays vibrancy and modern creativity. In Lei Yue Mun, there is a variety of tourist attractions, such as Devil’s Peak Battery, which carries Hong Kong’s defence history. Lei Yue Mun was once famous for its night view. We can watch the beautiful scenery at the waterfront and enjoy the quiet atmosphere under the moonlight. Lei Yue Mun Plus also covers the three aspects of conservation, arts and culture, bringing a wealth of cultural value to the community.

Earlier on, the Tourism Commission has expanded the “City in Time” tourism project on the mobile application to Lei Yue Mun, and launched a series of measures under the Lei Yue Mun Waterfront Enhancement Project. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and the Tourism Commission for the work on software and hardware which they have been doing in Lei Yue Mun for a long period. The tourism function of “City in Time” has been updated. Apart from enabling the public and tourists to view the past scenery of Lei Yue Mun through six locations, it also contains relevant introductions so that the public and tourists can virtually learn more about the past culture and traditions of Lei Yue Mun and compare them with the present.

However, there is still much room for improvement in a number of tourism facilities, transport links, and publicity and promotion of Lei Yue Mun. I hope the Government will consider a few points. Firstly, I hope that after completion of the construction of the Lei Yue Mun public pier at the end of this year, the Government can introduce “water taxis”, or even relocate some of the existing ferry services from Sam Ka Tsuen to the new pier in Lei Yue Mun, so as to strengthen the tourism and transport facilities. In addition, the Government can consider increasing the number of coach pick-up/drop-off points, designated coach bays and tourist signs, so as to strengthen the connection between Lei Yue Mun and other tourist attractions, and provide a more comfortable travelling experience for visitors and residents. Moreover, the Government can consider organizing activities with Lei Yue Mun’s unique characteristics to attract more tourists to Lei Yue Mun.

On the other hand, the history, culture and architectural style of public housing are widely welcomed by tourists and the public. In recent years, to promote and conserve the housing estate culture, many residents’ groups and district organizations have organized quite a number of activities such as exhibitions, talks and guided tours, thus enhancing public understanding of public housing. Choi Hung Estate is a popular “check-in” spot among tourists. The design of the old estate and the old shops there have made it a popular scenic spot for young tourists to trace the past and venture.

The public housing estate culture is the collective memory of the public which carries the stories of Hong Kong. The Government should step up publicity and conservation, and enhance the relevant ancillary facilities, with a view to attracting tourists. I suggest that the Government should set up a public housing cultural centre to showcase the history and culture of public housing and the lifestyle of residents through exhibitions, interactive experiences, talks,

workshops, etc., thereby enabling tourists to gain a deeper understanding of Hong Kong's public housing culture as well as background and value. Meanwhile, the Government can consider organizing a public housing culture festival to introduce this culture to visitors from places around the world through the provision of more professional guided tours and experiential activities.

Deputy President, Hong Kong is rich in tourism resources. So long as the Government enhances the publicity and supporting facilities, we can definitely fully explore our local characteristics to enable Hong Kong's tourism industry to take off afresh.

Deputy President, I so submit.

IR DR LO WAI-KWOK (in Cantonese): Deputy President, before all else, I thank my party comrade Mr Benson LUK for moving the original motion, and the other six Members for their amendments.

Deputy President, tourism is one of Hong Kong's four pillar industries. Since the resumption of normalcy after the epidemic, a number of mega events have been held in Hong Kong, including the fireworks display at Victoria Harbour, the night parade in Tsim Sha Tsui, and Hong Kong Sevens. Moreover, the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races are going to be held shortly. While creating a festive atmosphere for the whole city, they have attracted a large number of Mainland and overseas visitors, benefiting the local tourism, hotel, catering and retail, as well as transportation and logistics industries. However, what cannot be neglected is the post-pandemic drastic changes in the global tourism ecosystem. Competition around the world has become increasingly fierce. Many popular tourist cities have been reaching out proactively. Obviously, Hong Kong's industry must not simply copy the past formula of success. The SAR Government should also play a more proactive role to enhance the overall planning and strengthen the coordination. Mr XIA Baolong, Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, pointed out earlier that in pursuing development, Hong Kong's tourism industry should actively understand the changes, respond to the changes and embrace the changes, establish the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", and better polish Hong Kong's gilded signboard as "the best tourism destination". In my view, this has established the goal and direction for the future development of Hong Kong's tourism industry.

Deputy President, Hong Kong has the unique advantage of “enjoying the strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world”. Our country strongly supports Hong Kong to better integrate into the overall development of the country. The Culture and Tourism Development Plan for Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, promulgated in December 2020, emphasized the need to seize the new trend of the integrated development of culture and tourism, and supported Hong Kong in developing into a core demonstration zone for multi-destination tourism and an international tourism hub.

The Central Authorities have continuously launched policies and measures beneficial to Hong Kong. The China State Railway Group has recently announced that starting from 15 June, the ordinary-speed train services between the Hong Kong Hung Hom Station and the Beijingxi Station/Shanghai Station will be upgraded to the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (“XRL”) sleeper train services connecting the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station and the Beijingxi Station/Shanghai Hongqiao Station, and adopt the “co-location arrangement”, thus substantially compressing the travel and customs clearance time. At the same time, a new route to Zhangjiajiexi, Hunan will be launched, with the addition of six new destinations. Together with the existing routes, XRL from Hong Kong can reach 78 destinations in the Mainland directly, connecting to more than 25 000 km of the national high-speed rail network, which is conducive to fostering exchanges between the two places and Hong Kong’s economic development. How can we ride on the development of the national high-speed rail to enhance Hong Kong’s innovation impetus and turn potential opportunities into real benefits? All sectors of society must seek innovation and changes. The SAR Government should conduct proper coordination, expeditiously enhance the supporting measures for receiving tourists, fully leverage Hong Kong’s status and advantages as a regional transport hub, encourage the industry to make full use of the first-class facilities such as XRL, flights and cruises, and develop multi-destination and diverse experience tourism projects for both Mainland and overseas visitors.

Deputy President, another party comrade of mine, Mr Kenneth LAU, has proposed in his amendment to step up “the promotion of traditional culture and heritage sites in villages in the New Territories and making good use of the tourism resources to actively develop rural in-depth tourism”. I very much agree with this. Earlier on, the Panel on Development of this Council discussed the issue of the South Lantau Eco-recreation Corridor at its meeting. When I spoke, I stressed that I basically supported the policy of “Development in the North, Conservation

for the South” of Lantau Island. However, from the tourism perspective, North and South Lantau have their own characteristics. In the north, there are Disneyland, the Ngong Ping 360 cable car, the Big Buddha, as well as the convention and exhibition facilities around the airport, etc., whereas in the south, members of the public and tourists can reach out to and explore nature. The north and the south provide tourism experiences in different forms, but they are complementary. Development and conservation can complement each other. We can absolutely achieve “Tourism is everywhere in North Lantau and South Lantau”. The authorities should liberate their mindset, adopt a broader perspective, be bolder, uphold the “infrastructure-led” principle, vastly improve the supporting facilities, promote the transport connectivity between North and South Lantau, explore local characteristic tourism and in-depth tourism projects, and open up Lantau’s tourism potential with a capacity-creating approach.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the original motion and all the amendments.

MR CHAN PUI-LEUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. Deputy President, during the long holiday of Labour Day earlier, there were 766 000 Mainland visitors to Hong Kong, bringing in more than \$2 billion in consumption returns. During the recent Dragon Boat Festival holiday, although the weather was not so good, it did not dampen the enthusiasm of tourists, with a total of 330 000 Mainland visitors to Hong Kong over the three days. The recovery of the tourism industry is in good shape, and recently, the Central Authorities have also launched quite a number of policies beneficial to Hong Kong, including the expansion of the Individual Visit Scheme to 59 cities, covering all provincial capital cities in the country, and the introduction of sleeper train services between Beijing and Shanghai on the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, with trains departing in the evenings and arriving the following mornings. All these measures have made it more convenient for tourists to visit Hong Kong. What new elements or highlights do Hong Kong’s tourist attractions have which can attract tourists to specially come for sightseeing and stay in Hong Kong for a few more days, or even a few more times?

Mr XIA Baolong, Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, put forward earlier the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”, pointing out precisely the direction for tourism development. “Tourism is everywhere”

means that any place can be a tourist attraction. Apart from the Victoria Harbour night view, Lantau Island and theme parks, which were the typical hot spots in the past, there are also a lot of natural landscapes and country parks near the urban areas in Hong Kong. In recent years, there are also quite a number of new attractions popular among tourists, such as the Hong Kong Palace Museum and M+ museum in the West Kowloon Cultural District. On Hong Kong Island, there are a number of additional Harbourfront Shared Space sites. Even a street, a piece of signage or a building carries its own unique story and culture which is worth in-depth exploration. The crux is how the Government, the business sector and the community can collaborate with each other so that Hong Kong's rich tourism resources can achieve the greatest effect and generate maximum economic benefits.

With the changes in the consumption patterns of tourists, visitors to Hong Kong are no longer only interested in shopping. Many people prefer to join Citywalk, experience Hong Kong's local culture, and pursue in-depth tourism and personalized tourism experience. Hong Kong is an international city where East meets West. Traditional as well as modern culture can be found everywhere, and characters of classic Hong Kong films are deeply rooted in people's hearts. These are precisely Hong Kong's unique attractiveness. The deep integration of arts and culture with tourism can create more enriched, diverse and fresh tourism experience for visitors.

I am pleased to see that the five itineraries in the "Hong Kong Citywalk Guide" launched by the Tourism Board and a Mainland social media platform earlier have received pretty good responses. The authorities should continue to explore in-depth the potential cultural elements in Hong Kong, further integrate the widely popular film and television productions, the historical and cultural background of buildings, etc. into cultural tourism itineraries, and conduct vigorous promotion with the aid of social media. Specific promotional activities should also be launched in collaboration with the catering industry in the vicinity, so as to further foster economic benefits. At the same time, it is also necessary to provide proper supporting facilities and order arrangements, so that tourists will have more convenient and satisfactory experience. As regards the old tourist attractions, the authorities should renew them in line with the current trend and add new elements and vitality to give tourists a sense of freshness. Such is the way to continuously attract tourists.

The Government is committed to promoting the mega event economy. I agree that this direction can create synergy with other tourist attractions in Hong Kong and attract visitors to stay and spend money in Hong Kong. However, I

consider that apart from quantity, the quality of mega events should also be emphasized. Next month, Hong Kong will host the Doraemon themed exhibition again after the passage of 12 years. The organizers has stated that the first exhibition held in Hong Kong 12 years ago was a great success and the response was far beyond expectation. For this reason, Hong Kong has been chosen again as the first stop for the exhibition this time. Last year, the giant rubber ducks also returned to Hong Kong after many years had passed, arousing the trend of “checking-in”, as well as driving the spending on souvenirs and food and beverage in the vicinity. The induced effects arising from these mega events which are sustainable and storytelling can generate more economic benefits to the tourism industry.

This year, Hong Kong will host more than 210 mega events. I have all along advocated that the authorities should select some signature events which are suitable to be held on a sustainable and regular basis. The Government and the industry should concentrate the resources on developing a series of unique tourism experiences, create a fun and enthusiastic atmosphere for mega events, tell the unique stories in mega events well, and enhance the branding effect, so as to make the mega events more memorable. Only then can tourism have sustainable development.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support Mr Benson LUK’s original motion and the amendments proposed by several other Members.

IR CHAN SIU-HUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I rise to speak in support of Mr Benson LUK’s motion on “Pursuing the concept of ‘Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong’ and developing Hong Kong’s mega event economy”, as well as the amendments proposed by several Members.

Under the global impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, the tourism ecosystem has undergone qualitative and quantitative changes. After the epidemic, the travel patterns of visitors to Hong Kong have also changed. Hong Kong should adjust the strategy for promoting the development of the local tourism industry in response to these changes.

Mr XIA Baolong, Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, has stated earlier that in tourism development, Hong Kong should actively understand the changes, respond to the changes and embrace the

changes, and frequently adopt new ideas and methods to overcome the challenges encountered so as to pursue quality development, realizing substantial enhancement in the midst of transformation. Hong Kong should establish the concept of “Tourism is everywhere”, fully explore the tourism resources, draw reference from the successful experience of other places in order to promote innovation and improve policies, drive the joint participation of all sectors of society, vigorously develop new tourism itineraries and products, extend warm hospitality to visitors, and continuously improve the service quality, so as to better polish Hong Kong’s gilded signboard as “the best tourism destination”. In my view, this has precisely given Hong Kong’s tourism industry a new development direction.

Deputy President, apart from traditional tourist attractions such as the Peak, the Big Buddha and theme parks, the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” also implies exploring new tourist attractions and leveraging Hong Kong’s uniqueness to attract visitors for sightseeing. For example, the New Praya in Kennedy Town in Western District was originally just a road along the harbourfront, but owing to its spectacular sunset scenery at dusk, it has been discovered by tourists as a new attraction for “checking-in” at the harbourfront. There are also tourists who specially go to Shantung Street in Mong Kok to take photos with the road signs, or buy hamburgers from fast-food shops and go to MacDonnell Road for “checking-in”. These are the tourists’ ways of exploring the city.

Another example is that a recent film on the Kowloon Walled City has attracted many people to look back at the history of the Walled City. The authorities may consider installing a film set at the original site of the Walled City (i.e. the present Kowloon Walled City Park) to showcase the environment of the Kowloon Walled City which is unique in the world, thereby achieving synergy with the film and turning a local park into a distinctive tourist attraction.

The Government should also actively support and attract the shooting of foreign films in Hong Kong. As these films are shown around the world, it is more cost-effectiveness than outsourcing the shooting of promotional videos. There are many successful examples of packaging tourist attractions with films, including *The Lord of the Rings* in New Zealand and *Notting Hill* in the United Kingdom. Quite a number of major foreign films were filmed in Hong Kong in the past, such as *The Dark Knight* and *Transformers: Age of Extinction*. The Government should seize the opportunities of the shooting of major films in Hong

Kong and package the filming locations well, so as to add Hong Kong's tourist attractions, while taking the opportunity to promote Hong Kong's tourism industry and sell the diversity of Hong Kong's tourism.

Deputy President, as Hong Kong is a place where East meets West, many buildings have both Chinese and Western cultural characteristics. For example, Lui Seng Chun in Mong Kok was built in the 1930s with a blend of the Chinese and Western styles. The old Yau Ma Tei Police Station, located at the junction of Canton Road and Public Square Street, was built in the architectural style of the Edwardian era with an elegant design and has all along attracted many visitors to take photos for "checking-in". At present, there are 134 declared monuments in Hong Kong which can serve as tourist attractions. The authorities can choose among them and introduce these cultural and historical monuments in Hong Kong to tourists, thereby promoting the old city culture and highlighting Hong Kong's characteristics of diversified culture and inclusiveness.

Deputy President, earlier on, the Government has announced the calendar of mega events in Hong Kong for the second half of this year. More than 100 mega events, covering various areas such as culture and arts, sports, festivals and carnivals, will be held in Hong Kong. Besides, the Tourism Board is actively exploring cooperation with Mainland social media platforms and KOLs (key opinion leaders) around the world, with a series of measures aimed at attracting more visitors to Hong Kong, and it is also hoped that visitors will stay in Hong Kong for a few more days before and after attending the mega events for sightseeing and consumption.

However, under the new tourism ecosystem in the new era, tourists' destination will not be confined to the major sightseeing spots. Rather, it can be any corner of the place. While it is important for the Government to actively promote and publicize Hong Kong's tourism, attract visitor flow and host mega events, I consider it even more important to enhance the image of good service and hospitality to visitors. The Government's proactive approach, cross-bureau collaboration, provision of comprehensive supporting facilities and promotion of sincere service from the industry are the keys to retaining tourists and boosting consumption.

I so submit. Thank you, Deputy President.

MS YUNG HOI-YAN (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I speak in support of the motion proposed by Mr Benson LUK.

In his motion, Mr LUK clearly pointed out that Hong Kong has to establish the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” and drive the diversified development of industries with mega event economy, thus developing into an “international events capital”, which precisely outlined the direction for the innovative development of Hong Kong’s tourism industry.

I see this topic as an exploration of how to drive diversified development through the mega event economy, which Mr LUK also pointed out very clearly. Two weeks ago, I held a press conference along with representatives from various industries, including the hotel industry, the catering industry, the retail industry and small and medium enterprises (“SMEs”), hoping to make some suggestions to the Government on how to use mega events to stimulate the small-scale economy that I mentioned earlier, because we all feel that despite the presence of mega events, the peripheral districts cannot be revitalized. So, what can be done about it? Throughout the press conference, I mainly suggested that the Government should set up a big data platform because, as mentioned by Members just now, there are actually many red, blue or green tourism projects at present, and “seven-colour” tourism projects are also not uncommon, but Hong Kong simply lacks a data platform, so the public does not know where to look for the information. Of course, the Government will say that this is not the case because information can be found on various online and multimedia platforms such as Xiaohongshu, Facebook or Instagram. However, if these platforms were to be relied upon as the primary source of information, it would actually be very unfavourable to the people of Hong Kong. If Xiaohongshu only promotes one- or two-day tours to Hong Kong, it will deal a great blow to the industry. What does the industry want to promote? They want to promote long-haul tours to Hong Kong, but we are precisely lacking information on long-haul tours.

Let me ask the Secretary this question: What kind of activities can we do if we have a five-day tour in Hong Kong? There are two adults and two children. We would like to eat Korean food on the first day, Middle Eastern food on the second day and Fujian food, one of the Chinese cuisines, on the third day. How can this be arranged? No one can tell us, and even if we go to travel agencies, none of them will be able to arrange it. This highlights the need to establish a big data platform.

In the future, if any technology companies approach the authorities, I hope the Secretary will listen carefully to how they will use their innovative thinking to drive the development of industries. Hong Kong has its own natural appeal, but only when people experience it can they truly appreciate it. We hope that tourists will know what kind of recreational activities are available in Hong Kong, but at present, whether I look at the platform of the Hong Kong Tourism Board or the Bureau's website, I cannot find any information, including information on mega events. I asked Mr Benson LUK if he knew of any mega events taking place in the next two months, and we all had no idea. It is already June, and the summer holidays are coming up. However, it seems that the Government has not yet launched any large-scale promotional activities to attract tourists to visit Hong Kong during the summer holidays. In fact, we also need long-term planning on how to attract tourists for the subsequent Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Establishment Day, National Day on 1 October or the Christmas season. We need to be more strategic in competing for tourists.

Mr Benson LUK pointed out in his motion that we have to compete for tourists. How can we do that? There has to be a strategy. In order to have a strategy, we must first have data, and only when we have data and analysis can we formulate a strategy. Therefore, I hope that the Government can set up a big data platform so that the public can search for government information online or on some other platforms as early as possible. This is very important.

In fact, all industries are hoping that the Government will announce the schedules of mega events earlier so that they can make preparations in advance. For example, the hotel industry can launch various marketing campaigns to let tourists know what activities will be taking place around the hotels. The SME representatives asked me, if the Government holds a mega event at Central Harbourfront, can they hold related activities during the mega event period as their shops in the Dried Seafood Street and other small shops with special characteristics are all located at Central? I know that Vinexpo Asia was held in Hong Kong two weeks ago, and it was a wine exhibition held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. I saw a lot of foreigners there, but there were no representatives of other industries in the venue to do the linking up. If the Government wants to do a good job of linking up, it must have a big data platform. I also hope that there will be an "AI tourism commissioner" to help with the coordination work and answer any questions raised by tourists.

Therefore, I hope that in the future, the Government will definitely use big data and technology to solve the information-related problems that Hong Kong is currently facing so that there can be a better flow of information and tourists can be informed about what activities are available from government sources.

Thank you, Deputy President.

MR CHAN CHUN-YING (in Cantonese): Deputy President, enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of Hong Kong's tourism through the development of mega events and thereby driving overall economic development is indeed an effective strategy to capitalize on Hong Kong's advantages and strengths. Hong Kong, with its blend of Eastern and Western cultures, has the prerequisites for the development of diverse tourism. From humanities and arts to sports competitions, from Eastern traditions to Western modernity, each aspect provides fertile ground for the emergence of mega events. By taking a "dot-line-plane" approach and weaving a "mega event economic network" for Hong Kong, I believe it will bring more prominent and immediate economic, social and cultural benefits through synergies. I would like to thank Mr Benson LUK for proposing this motion, which urges the Government to refine and expand its strategies for the development of the mega event economy.

Enriching the content of mega events, expanding the scope of mega events, and encouraging individuals and various industries to actively participate in and organize festive events are the driving forces behind the long-term prosperity of mega events. For example, a baking craze has swept the Mainland in recent years. Many cities such as Shanghai, Hangzhou, Guangzhou and Shenzhen have held back-to-back bread and dessert festivals, bringing together dozens of vendors from the same or neighbouring cities and attracting large numbers of consumers as well as food bloggers and KOLs (key opinion leaders), thus creating economies of scale. The events generate both immediate revenue from day-of-festival transactions and long-tail revenue from repeat customers and secondary promotion by KOLs.

Hong Kong has no shortage of famous bakeries. The unique advantage of combining Eastern and Western influences results in a wide variety of authentic local bakery products. If such festivals are organized, I believe they will showcase Hong Kong's distinctive characteristics. Not only bread and desserts but also Hong Kong-style milk tea can provide a fertile ground for mega events to

flourish. At present, there are already companies organizing “Hong Kong-style Milk Tea Day” events, but the number of participants is relatively small and the content of the event is relatively monotonous, so there is considerable room for enhancing the influence. The authorities can make good use of the power of the industry to encourage the emergence of mega events and festivals in various trades and industries, creating an atmosphere in which “everyone can be an event organizer”, so as to stimulate individual creativity and inject continuous vitality into festivals.

Publicity is also crucial to expanding the influence of mega events, with warm-up publicity before the events directly attracting participants and wrap-up publicity after the events creating potential participants for future events. In the age of We-media, participants in mega events, including governments, organizers, vendors and tourists, are all “publicists”. While images and text are the most basic forms of publicity, long and short videos have become mainstream, and live streaming is also a dominant trend. Publicity efforts must be adapted to the media consumption habits of today’s audiences, which means choosing different forms on different platforms both at home and abroad and carrying publicity with diversified languages and texts. In addition, as Hong Kong’s mega events cover a wide range of types of competitions, exhibitions, conferences, cultural festivals, etc., a more effective publicity strategy can be pursued.

If the organization of major events is not well thought out, it can have negative consequences. As Honourable colleagues have just mentioned, the recent response of the Waterbomb organizer to apologize and compensate for the event held early this month has also given us more warning and inspiration regarding the organization of mega events. The weather in Hong Kong is unpredictable, with high temperatures and typhoons occurring frequently. How organizers rearrange events and accommodate participants under adverse weather conditions will greatly affect the event experience and, more importantly, the participants’ impression of the place (i.e. Hong Kong) where the event is held. Therefore, it is necessary for the Government to set basic requirements for organizers to make contingency plans for emergencies such as inclement weather and to act as a gatekeeper. For example, as there has been a relatively large number of tourists bringing a lot of luggage to attend mega events recently, the authorities should urge event organizers to provide sufficient storage space in view of this trend. The actual needs of participants should be taken into account when organizing mega events.

Mega events should be linked to regular local activities so that together they can maximize their stimulating effect on the economy. In Singapore, during the Taylor SWIFT concert, a series of themed activities were launched by business operators, covering various aspects such as hotels, dining and shopping, so that the show could generate real tourism revenue for the local community, and the result was quite remarkable.

Deputy President, I believe that this “close-knit network of mega events” will only be able to give a strong boost to Hong Kong’s economy if the internal coordination network within each mega event, the interconnection network between different mega events and the interaction network between mega events and various sectors of society are well established.

With these remarks, I support the original motion and all the amendments.

MS JUDY CHAN (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. A thriving industry brings prosperity to all industries. As the tourism industry plays a key role in showcasing Hong Kong to the world, its outstanding performance will naturally have a positive impact on various trades and industries. The current-term Government has specifically established the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, which underlines the importance it attaches to promoting the integrated development of culture, sports and tourism in Hong Kong, with the aim of using sports events to promote tourism, shaping tourism with cultural activities, and creating high-quality travel experiences for tourists through mega events, thereby telling the good stories of Hong Kong to the world. Earlier on, Director XIA Baolong put forward the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”. This is not only to set a development goal but also to create a new atmosphere for us to explore the city’s unique charm and enhance its attractiveness, thereby making Hong Kong a place where business opportunities abound. Therefore, I speak to thank and support Mr Benson LUK for moving the original motion on “Pursuing the concept of ‘Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong’ and developing Hong Kong’s mega event economy”, as well as other Members for proposing their amendments.

Deputy President, according to the World’s Top 100 City Destinations for 2023 published by an overseas market research company, Hong Kong ranks among the top 20. In another ranking of the “Best cities in the world for 2024” by an overseas travel magazine, Hong Kong also ranks among the top 50. This shows that Hong Kong’s attractiveness in the international arena is evident to all. As a

matter of fact, hosting mega events is certainly an important part of pursuing the concept of “Tourism is everywhere”, and since each district in Hong Kong has its own unique characteristics, I am very pleased to see that the Government is actively hosting events in various districts, so as to make the whole city vibrant and attract tourists to visit the 18 districts. Apart from experiencing the bustling city of Hong Kong through the pleasures of dining and shopping, many tourists also come to explore the natural beauty of the territory. Many people may perceive Hong Kong as just a bustling metropolis, but in reality, 40% of our land is protected country parks where many wild animals live, so Hong Kong can be said to be an exemplar of harmonious coexistence between man and nature. Moreover, Hong Kong has over 250 islands of various sizes, making island tourism an area worthy of further development. However, the current lack of ancillary facilities has prevented tourists from fully experiencing them. I therefore hope that the Government can share with us the recommendations of the study on the future development of the Ex-Lamma Quarry as soon as possible. Furthermore, I hope that the Government can speed up the completion of the pier, accommodation, transport and various other ancillary facilities for the South Lantau Eco-recreation Corridor, so as to further activate the local blue-green tourism ecology.

In addition, making good use of the resources of local scenic spots is conducive to the development of the industry. During the last summer holidays, my children and I joined Ocean Park’s Summer Kayak Eco-Tour in the Southern District, which is only offered during the summer holidays. During the five-hour journey, we kayaked and immersed ourselves in nature. I admired sea caves from a close distance, got a glimpse of the scenery of the Southern District, and learned about the different varieties of marine life together with my children. We also learned about the ecological damage and impact caused by marine refuse, thus raising the conservation awareness of the younger generation. This is very meaningful. I believe that with further enhancements, it will attract more parent-child tourists. Last week, I took them to Lei Yue Mun Holiday Camp to enjoy the natural scenery, and the historic buildings there are also well worth a visit.

Lastly, how to make tourists regard Hong Kong as their second home and visit Hong Kong again is also an important mode of tourism development that warrants exploration by all. Therefore, I hope that the Government will incorporate more innovative elements into the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong’s Tourism Industry 2.0 to make a brighter future for us.

I so submit. Thank you, Deputy President.

MS CHAN YUET-MING (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. I speak in support of the Members' motion on "Pursuing the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong' and developing Hong Kong's mega event economy" and the other amendments. On 9 May, Director XIA Baolong pointed out that Hong Kong has to establish the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong", fully explore tourism resources, actively draw on the successful experience of other places, and vigorously develop new tourism routes and products.

The topic of "Tourism is everywhere" is highly open, with a particular focus on innovation and creativity in the tourism industry and the successful experiences of other places, allowing Honourable colleagues to express their views freely.

(THE PRESIDENT resumed the Chair)

The trade consultation on the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0 ("Blueprint") will end in two days. I believe that the collective wisdom of this Council today can help the Government to further refine the Blueprint and jointly promote the development of the local tourism industry. Regarding the topic, I have the following two suggestions.

Firstly, we should make good use of the tourism resources in the New Territories and develop characteristic tourism. In last year's Policy Address, it was proposed that the Government should promote thematic tours with local characteristics. Objectively speaking, the New Territories has a lot of resources for the development of new routes and new products. For example, Robin's Nest Country Park, which is established this year in the Northeastern New Territories, as well as Sha Tau Kok and the neighbouring outlying islands, can be used to develop blue-green eco-tourism. Additionally, many of the existing remnants of modern warfare in the New Territories, such as the Shing Mun Redoubt, MacIntosh Fort at the border and other historic buildings, can contribute to the development of national history tours.

There are 27 villages in the New Territories, each with its own unique natural environment, monuments and attractions, as well as beliefs and customs. Just as a Hong Kong-produced film was inspired by the background and scenes of the Kowloon Walled City, the culture and heritage of Hong Kong's old villages are indeed treasures waiting to be explored in depth. At present, the rural areas in the

New Territories have also retained small-scale agriculture and livestock industries, and some recreational and ecological projects can also be developed to showcase more cultural aspects of Hong Kong. However, infrastructure in the New Territories is still lagging behind; for example, some village roads need to be widened and there is a shortage of coach parking spaces. The Government needs to create routes and provide convenience for inbound tour groups and the industry.

Meanwhile, the Government should make good use of the industrial land resources in the Northern Metropolis in the New Territories to develop high-end medical tourism, sports tourism, etc. Apart from building venues to host international sports events, we should also promote participatory sports such as hiking, marathon running and cycling on waterfront cycle tracks.

Secondly, ancillary tourist facilities should be further improved, and the quality of publicity and services should be enhanced. After the resumption of normal travel, the gap in tourist arrivals between Hong Kong and the Mainland has continued to widen, and the Government should pay attention to this. Hong Kong has its own unique advantages, such as being a “shopping paradise” and offering a wide range of high-quality professional services. Amid competition among various places vying for major events and tourists, things like the “Village Super League” in Guizhou, spicy hot pot in Gansu and barbecue in Zibo, Shandong have become popular through online promotion, attracting a large number of tourists from outside the region to visit and “check in”. In contrast, Hong Kong’s approach to city promotion remains relatively conservative. The Government needs to catch up with the trend and showcase Hong Kong’s urban characteristics in an interesting way.

Furthermore, I am very supportive of “strengthening tourist-friendly and facilitative initiatives” proposed in the amendment. I hope that the Government will attach importance to the role of boundary control points (“BCPs”) as hubs for cross-border exchanges and further improve the ancillary facilities at each BCP. For example, at present, inbound tour groups mainly use the Heung Yuen Wai BCP for customs clearance, and during the recent Dragon Boat Festival, nearly 85 000 passenger trips were made daily, almost three times the maximum design capacity. In view of the existing railway planning, it is now time to implement the upgrading of BCPs, which includes the opening up of commercial, trade and service facilities at BCPs and the implementation of co-location and other facilitation arrangements. The planning of BCP ancillary facilities must be emphasized in the upcoming reconstruction of the Huanggang and Sha Tau Kok BCPs.

As Director XIA said, if Hong Kong is to promote the spirit of warm hospitality, our service attitude and service philosophy need to be constantly reviewed and improved.

Thank you, President. I so submit.

MR LEUNG MAN-KWONG (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world, and Hong Kong's tourism ecology has also undergone a dramatic transformation. Since the resumption of normalcy, the tourism industry has been transitioning towards a development focused on "in-depth experiences" and "local characteristics." Earlier on, Director XIA Baolong proposed that we should establish the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" and fully explore and make good use of Hong Kong's existing tourism resources to attract tourists.

With its rich blend of Chinese and Western history and culture, Hong Kong is particularly suited to developing immersive tourism experiences through the cultural district mode. Today, I would like to take the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station as an example. Located on Canton Road, Yau Ma Tei, the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station is built in the Edwardian architectural style and has existed for more than 100 years since 1922. It is one of the few surviving pre-war police stations in Hong Kong and was rated as a Grade II Historic Building in 2009. It is also a symbol of the history and culture of the Hong Kong Police Force.

As many classic TV dramas and movies were filmed in front of the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station in the past, it not only resonates with local Hong Kong residents, but also leaves a deep impression on tourists and people in Greater China and the Chinese-speaking regions. In recent years, it has become a trending topic on Mainland's social media platforms. Young tourists who enjoy cultural and in-depth tours will find that the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station can satisfy their desire to explore unique attractions, while middle-aged Mainland tourists who are deeply influenced by Hong Kong's film, television and pop culture will also want to visit the site of the police station for a nostalgic trip down memory lane. A large number of tourists come to the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station to pose in front of its gate and unleash their creativity to take stunning photos. They imitate scenes from TV shows and movies to create short videos to share with netizens, making them very popular with Mainland tourists and influencers. The old Yau Ma Tei Police Station can be described as a well-known "check-in" hotspot in the country.

However, due to the impact of the Central Kowloon Route project, the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station will only continue to serve as a reporting centre, and the metal gate at the main entrance is only open during holidays to sell special souvenirs. It has not been properly revitalized as a tourist attraction. In view of this, I propose that the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station be fully revitalized and promoted after the completion of the Central Kowloon Route project. While preserving its original historical elements and architectural features, we should also enhance its functionality by incorporating elements such as history, youth culture and creativity, art, dining, retail and entertainment, so as to turn the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station into “Yau Ma Tei Tai Kwun”. Additionally, it will be complemented by popular music and film culture tourism as a selling point to provide tourists with diverse travel experiences.

To further inject local tourism characteristics, the old Yau Ma Tei Police Station can also be planned together with the nearby Temple Street Night Market to host events, offering various special snacks, handicrafts and cultural performances. At the same time, popular culture and history guided tours can also be organized to cover nearby destinations such as Jade Street on Canton Road, the Cinematheque, the Yau Ma Tei Theatre and the Fruit Market, developing the Yau Ma Tei and Jordan areas into a “distinctive film, cultural and historical district”. This would allow both local residents and tourists to immerse themselves in Hong Kong’s street culture and local lifestyle.

In addition, the traditional tourist zones around Yau Tsim Mong District are full of shops and buzzing with economic activities. The congregation of citizens and tourists in the narrow streets and commercial areas will easily lead to congestion of pedestrians and vehicles. To enhance the travel experience for tourists, I suggest that the Government should study the feasibility of connecting the West Kowloon Cultural District, the West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, Jordan and the area around Tsim Sha Tsui MTR Station by underground passageways. By connecting these key tourist zones, tourists can easily move between these areas throughout the day in a convenient and safe walking environment. They can explore various attractions without fear of being affected by traffic or weather disruptions. This can help boost tourism spending, stimulate the district’s economy and revitalize the entire tourism zones in Kowloon West.

President, Hong Kong is full of treasures and rich in tourism resources. It has not only modern shopping malls and skyscrapers, but also culturally rich communities and beautiful suburban scenery. As long as the Government can

formulate appropriate policies to develop these high-quality resources into distinctive tourism products to attract local citizens as well as overseas and Mainland tourists, Hong Kong's tourism brand will definitely shine brightly.

With these remarks, President, I support the original motion and all the amendments.

MR MICHAEL TIEN (in Cantonese): President, regarding this motion today, I am most concerned about Mr Kenneth LAU's amendment, especially point (5) of it which reads, "studying the feasibility of including the construction of a temporary racetrack for Formula 1 ("F1") Races in the planning of the Northern Metropolis and of including the construction of a permanent racetrack and relevant supporting facilities for F1 Races in the planning of the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands, and actively striving for the organization of F1 Races in Hong Kong, so as to boost Hong Kong's mega event economy".

I believe Mr LAU and officials in this Chamber have noticed that over the years, I have consistently advocated reclamation at Sunny Bay for the construction of a motor racing circuit. Many Members have also followed this up on various occasions, and I am grateful to Mr Kenneth LAU for putting forward a similar proposal in most concrete terms, so that we can explore this issue from multiple angles.

This advocacy of mine all started in 2017 when the Government planned to carry out reclamation at Sunny Bay and consulted us at Roundtable on the use of land. Back then, the biggest problem of the entire society was the shortage of housing supply. As the saying goes: "Striving to get every inch of land and sticking in a pin whenever there is room". Any land available would certainly be used for developing housing—either public or private housing—so why would it be necessary to study the use of land? Then we came to realize that it was because of a very crucial restriction there and that is, this place is located within an area affected by the flight paths of the airport and so, the land can only be used for non-noise-sensitive purposes. In other words, residential development was out of the question and so, we thought that since the land was under the noise impact, it could be used for noise-creating activities. I was thinking about what uses the land could be put to for promoting Hong Kong's tourism and economy and I, therefore, thought about developing a multi-purpose venue that would include a motor race circuit and other ancillary tourism facilities.

Since this proposal was put forward, there have been quite a lot of views both in favour of and against the proposal, and so long as they are supported by justifications, I will treasure the views of both sides. But frankly speaking, I am baffled by some of the opposing views. For example, a senior member of the two Councils said that the nearby residents were concerned about the noise. The noise impact is exactly how the origin of the whole concept. Has this person who puts forward such a view really studied this proposal?

Just take a look at this picture and Members will get a clear picture. The so-called “residents likely to be affected” either live in Siu Ho Wan or Tung Chung East which are situated 6 000 m and 9 000 m away from Sunny Bay respectively. It is common sense that the so-called “racetrack noises” cannot possibly affect residents at these locations, not to mention the fact that the construction of noise barriers on highways now depends on whether the highway is situated within 300 m from the nearest residential area. However, it should be noted that these two locations are nearer to the airport, and I believe that the residents will be concerned more about the noises from the airport than those from Sunny Bay. To reiterate, I think it is fine to raise objection, and it is most important to have valid arguments and to have done one’s homework. If this Member was reflecting residents’ concerns, then this Member should present the facts rather than resorting to empty rhetoric and parroting what other people have said.

Let us further discuss the amendment of Mr LAU who has divided the entire proposal into two steps: First, to strive for the construction of a temporary racetrack for F1 Races in the Northern Metropolis and then studying the construction of a permanent venue. I think this direction is very much worthy of consideration. As I pointed out when I raised an oral question in this Council two weeks ago, Guangzhou has already proposed to build a racetrack for F1 races, and if we do not take actions, others will only vie for its construction. In the F1 races recently held in Shanghai, not only Guangzhou but also Vietnam, Thailand and Korea had sent their people there. All these places are constantly watching. How “fat” is this piece of “fat pork”? President, Las Vegas has recently released a series of figures showing that the economic benefits of these races can reach as high as US\$1.5 billion, with US\$800 million of direct tourist spending and US\$77 million of related tax revenue. Race-related visitors spent 3.6 times more than other visitors in general; they stayed an average of four nights, and the related income of local employees amounted to US\$52 million. From these figures alone, it is not difficult to understand why everyone is closely keeping an eye on these races. In this connection, I hope that the Government will discuss with Guangzhou as soon as possible. If a top-class international motor racing circuit will be constructed in

the Greater Bay Area, Hong Kong has clear advantages for taking it up. For the time being, it is best to trade time for space because we are still studying the Sunny Bay reclamation. We can first identify a place acceptable to both the Government and the race group, and engage F1 to make an assessment. Then we can examine the feasibility of building a permanent racetrack in Sunny Bay upon completion of the reclamation study and land use study by the authorities.

With these remarks, I support this amendment.

MRS REGINA IP (in Cantonese): President, I speak in support of Mr Benson LUK's original motion and the other amendments. I thank Mr Benson LUK for putting forward the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" and the other seven colleagues for expressing multifarious opinions and making so many interesting proposals.

I once again urge the Government to step up efforts to promote island tourism that I proposed in my oral question last week. Among Hong Kong's natural resources are our beautiful islands, and I believe that these islands should be extremely attractive to visitors from inland China (such as Urumqi, Shanxi, Shaanxi, etc.). Of course, we need to have planning, including alterations of piers and providing additional infrastructure facilities. I believe island tourism is very much worth our follow-up.

This aside, some colleagues also mentioned tourism with sports as the theme, such as hiking tours. Hong Kong is surrounded by mountains and the sea, and I think the Under Secretary is also aware that the hiking trails in Hong Kong are very popular. Sometimes when I go for a morning walk, I can see Mainland visitors carrying backpacks with them at hiking trails in the Mid-Levels. In fact, the authorities can organize some hiking activities and encourage visitors to join. Visitors who completed a certain number of hiking trails can be given awards for their own keeping, in order to attract more tourists to come.

Hiking may be a more budget-friendly way of travelling as it does not require visitors to stay overnight. So, the proposal made by Mr YANG Wing-kit earlier of competing for movie stars and singers to give performances is worth considering. In the past, we always entangled ourselves in why we had failed to invite Taylor SWIFT to come and were overtaken by other places. But actually we had never asked, nor did we fight for it, right? Apart from Taylor SWIFT, there are many movie stars and singers worthy of our efforts to bring them here,

such as HUA Chenyu mentioned by Mr YANG Wing-kit earlier on, and many top performers in the Mainlanders—not just Korea’s BLACKPINK—who have never come to Hong Kong to give performances. I noticed that last year, Macao organized the “A Full Moon Rising Above the Greater Bay Area” concert, featuring performances by a large number of Mainland celebrities (including top performer, XIAO Zhan) and attracting a lot of fan clubs from the Mainland to visit Macao. Another area in which Macao has outperformed us is the successful bid by a local hotel for hosting the Season 6 finale of “Street Dance of China” in which WANG Yibo was invited to give a dance performance and this has also attracted visits by many fan groups. Have we considered inviting these top Mainland performers to Hong Kong? Because they have a large number of supporters who will definitely stay in Hong Kong for a couple of days when they come to Hong Kong to support these performers and this will be helpful to our hotel business.

I have asked some friends in the entertainment industry in Macao, “Why could you do so great in being able to invite so many singers and celebrities to Macao? How come you could even have Hong Kong’s God of songs, Jacky CHEUNG, and so many others as well?”. They said, “Actually those agents are Hong Kong people. They are your people who have extensive networks, only that your Government did not approach them.” I am not asking officials of the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau to contact the singers direct. But I believe that officials must be able to get in touch with many agencies and entertainment companies which can reach these leading figures of the entertainment industry in the Mainland, Korea or overseas and invite them to come to Hong Kong to give performances. If we can hold these concerts one after another, more people will definitely stay overnight in Hong Kong to help boost our hotel business.

Some colleagues also mentioned earlier that sports are equally important, such as ball games. Both golf and snooker competitions can be very attractive, and they can attract a large number of consumers with high spending powers. I think the Secretary and Under Secretary should seriously consider organizing more of these activities.

Besides, it is also necessary to promote Hong Kong’s catering industry. It is difficult for us to compete with others by offering cheaper prices. But I believe the Under Secretary has also noticed that in the World’s Top 20 Restaurants released recently, a restaurant in Hong Kong was on the list and ranked the 20th, whereas Singapore, a city with which we are often compared, has not been shortlisted. This is also an achievement of Hong Kong.

In fact, Hong Kong's bar industry is also outstanding. Although many of the world's most beautiful bars are found in Europe, the advantage of Hong Kong is that the bars are concentrated in the same area, such as Soho, Lan Kwai Fong or Tsim Sha Tsui, which is very convenient. Last week, Mr Jeffrey LAM mentioned "bar hopping", and for people who like bar hopping, Hong Kong is even more convenient, and the locations of the bars are not too scattered (*The buzzer sounded*) ...

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mrs Regina IP, please stop speaking.

Mr MA Fung-kwok, please speak.

MR MA FUNG-KWOK (in Cantonese): President, I speak in support of Mr Benson LUK's motion on "Pursuing the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong' and developing Hong Kong's mega event economy" and the other amendments.

In recent years, there has been a change in visitors' way of travelling, and Mainland tourists no longer visit the city merely for shopping and spending. Instead, they seek for experiences of the unique cultural atmosphere and way of life in Hong Kong. Director XIA Baolong said days ago that the Hong Kong tourism industry must actively embrace changes and put forward the concept of "Tourism is everywhere", clearly stating the direction for the development of the tourism industry in Hong Kong.

The concept of "Tourism is everywhere", as I understand it, means that every part of Hong Kong can become a tourist attraction. The SAR Government and the tourism industry must innovate and seek changes. Not only should they further promote the existing tourist attractions but they should also explore local characteristic tourism and in-depth tourism projects in order to bring new experiences to tourists while stepping up efforts to develop the mega event economy at the same time. The unique East-meets-West culture of Hong Kong holds a wealth of gems for in-depth travel experiences. What may seem ordinary to the local citizens may be extraordinary in the eyes of tourists. Therefore, to achieve "Tourism is everywhere," we never worry about lacking the resources and we are only worried about lacking policy support and convenient transportation. However, a number of mega events held in Hong Kong recently have revealed

inadequacies in the operation of activities, support services, and so on. The Administration must enhance the supervision of the preparatory work for each mega event in order to develop a mega event economy in Hong Kong.

Speaking of “Tourism is everywhere”, the Kennedy Town waterfront immediately comes to my mind. This place has never been a popular tourist spot for Hong Kong people but in recent years, it has attracted many Mainland tourists to “check-in” and take photos there. This has precisely reflected that a road sign or a small shop can attract tourists to come specifically for it. It is no doubt a good thing that there are more tourist attractions in Hong Kong but we should at the same time think about whether every corner of Hong Kong is worth visiting. “Tourism is everywhere” is a good idea but the authorities must consider whether there is a need to draw a line. On the premise of fully considering the impact on the community and residents, the authorities must consider what places are suitable for development as new attractions, rather than blindly prioritizing quantity over quality.

Hong Kong is a small place where tourists can basically tour around many districts and visit many sightseeing spots in one day. How will tourists feel if they visit in this minute the heritage sites and streets with characteristics in Hong Kong but then the next minute they find themselves in dull neighbourhoods and dirty rear lanes? Therefore, apart from identifying the places to be developed as tourist attractions under the concept of “Tourism is everywhere”, the Administration should also start with beautifying the streetscape and improving the cityscape.

Street art has always been a most popular form of art creations in foreign countries, and it has the charm of turning bland, ordinary walls into street art. Amidst towering skyscrapers in the Central and Western District, street art can be found everywhere, and a notable piece is a giant mural at the intersection of Graham Street and Hollywood Road which has successfully attracted many tourists and locals alike to “check in” there. This street mural depicts the now-demolished Kowloon Walled City in vivid, colourful hues, capturing the dense and bustling life of Hong Kong in the old days and evoking nostalgic reminiscences of the past. Can the Administration consider introducing policies to beautify the streets or facades of buildings in Hong Kong? The authorities can start with government buildings, public markets, etc., and then collaborate with stakeholders such as the business sector, local communities, etc., to organize street art competitions to infuse vitality into the dull neighbourhoods and hence truly embody the concept of “Tourism is everywhere”.

Besides, as mega events have the active intervention of the Government and the Government will conduct overall publicity and promotion for such events which involve the international image of Hong Kong, I think regardless of whether the mega events are sponsored by the Government, the relevant departments are duty-bound to send their staff to follow up the arrangements of the entire event by, among others, understanding the preparation of the event, the support services, and so on. Members of the public or tourists participating in the events generally pay little attention to whether the event is organized by the private sector or government organization, or whether it is sponsored by the Government. In the event of unhappy incidents, the accusing finger will always be pointed at the SAR Government, thus giving people the impression that the Government is incapable of organizing mega events. The chaos in the recent spate of mega events have affected tens of thousands of citizens and tourists, leaving a negative impression on visitors at large. The Government has recently announced that at least 210 mega events will be held throughout the year in 2024, with over 100 events scheduled for the second half of the year. To develop a mega event economy, the Government must not blindly increase the number of mega events but rather, it has to promote quality mega events in a more refined manner. In this connection, the SAR Government should not only actively implement the concept of “Tourism is everywhere” and develop a mega event economy. Rather, it should also review the preparation and operation of every large-scale event so as to provide participants of the events with a good travelling experience, and only in this way can we take the tourism industry to a new level.

President, I so submit.

MR TOMMY CHEUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. President, today’s motion is entitled “Pursuing the concept of ‘Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong’ and developing Hong Kong’s mega event economy”. Regarding the several amendments to the motion, I would like to give a consolidated speech as follows.

To stimulate the local economy, one of the directions is to develop the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” and drive the diversified development of industries with the mega event economy, so as to go all out to develop the economy and improve people’s livelihood. This is a gift bestowed on Hong Kong people by the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of

the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr XIA Baolong, which is profoundly meaningful.

According to Director XIA's instruction, we have to support the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" with mega events, and then turn popularity into prosperity. No doubt the SAR Government is making an effort to plan a number of mega events but I think mega events should be held one after another and success cannot be achieved by relying solely on slogans. Mega events require all trades and industries to work together to map out plans and suggest policies. The amendment proposed by my fellow party member, Mr SHIU Ka-fai, has precisely incorporated this viewpoint as his amendment stated the key point right at the outset: "As one of the four pillar industries of Hong Kong, tourism can drive the local catering, retail and wholesale, transportation and logistics industries, among others, as well as economic growth, providing a large number of employment opportunities and adding impetus to the growth of Hong Kong".

As the representative of the catering industry and with decades of experience in running a business in this sector, I would say that the catering industry has no lack of brilliant ideas whenever mega events are held. First of all, I wish to take this opportunity to share with Members an idea. After months of planning, I have been preparing for a Hong Kong Creative Recipe Competition to be held at the end of this year. The highlight of this competition is that unlike ordinary cooking competitions among chefs, the focus will be "creative recipes". Firstly, participating restaurants are required to submit their creative recipes for assessment by the organizer. After the creative recipes have been shortlisted, the contesting chefs will be invited to cook according to the recipes for our tasting and then we will select winners of the Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes based on their performance. These recipes will be made public after the competition for public information. Even if some restaurants do not have enough chefs, they can still follow these creative recipes to cook their dishes.

Besides, regarding the four points made by Mr SHIU in the amendment which he urged the SAR Government to study, I think the catering element can also be included. My personal suggestions are broadly as follows.

Firstly, on "setting up pedestrian precincts in various districts across the territory and implementing a system for the orderly management of street performances", I think while these types of activities can promote the business of

the surrounding catering establishments, consideration should also be given to arranging in an orderly manner for local hawker stalls of a temporary nature to operate there in tandem.

Secondly, in developing blue tourism resources, we can fully make use of Hong Kong's natural conditions of being surrounded by waters on three sides and having many scenic islands in its vicinity and set up an appropriate number of light refreshment stalls (such as open-air cafes) to "sell" a leisurely feel. Many overseas tourism spots with characteristics have also made full use of sceneries at seaside, riverside and hillside to set up an appropriate number of cafes there, and the results are obvious to all. In fact, a decade or so ago I also proposed in different councils or commissions that the promenade should be further widened so that it would not be confined to a width of 15 m as stipulated now. It is because back then, it was said that a width of 30 m could accommodate the setting up of food stalls in the middle of the promenade.

Thirdly, on strengthening tourist-friendly and facilitative initiatives, I propose to further set up gourmet zones in some major stations or terminals. Take the airport as an example. The authorities can draw reference from Japan in setting up "food streets", "souvenir streets" and special shops in the terminal buildings of international flights. The more the number of dinning outlets, the better; and there can be a mix of affordable and upscale restaurants. The key is to ensure a thriving market and when these places can gain popularity, prosperity will naturally follow.

Fourthly, in order to continuously promote the development of the night economy, "food" is one of the elements. Now that there are already night food markets and this, I think, should continue, and we can also act in a timely manner and seize the opportunity of other mega events to promote these night activities, with a view to giving full play to the synergistic effect. Take night drone shows as an example. The Government should make public the timetable for these activities as early as possible, so that on the one hand, food establishments in the vicinity can have sufficient time to make preparations and on the other hand, arrangements can be made for setting up an appropriate number of temporary snack food stalls.

President, I speak in support of the motion.

MR ROCK CHEN (in Cantonese): President, first of all, I thank Mr Benson LUK for proposing this motion today. At present, the SAR Government is actively striving for the Central Government's policy to raise the duty-free allowance for Mainland visitors and increase the number of cities under the Individual Visit Scheme in order to promote the tourism industry and inject momentum into the Hong Kong. In this connection, the SAR Government will need to expeditiously put into practice the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" by making every place in Hong Kong a highlight of tourism. This can not only divert tourists away from certain popular tourist attractions but also showcase the diversified cultural characteristics of Hong Kong. To realize this concept, I have the following suggestions.

Firstly, we can turn some cinema scenes in Hong Kong into tourist attractions. Movies are a kind of soft power that can drive the take-off of the tourism economy of a place. After watching the movie *Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In*, many audiences have visited the Kowloon Walled City Park which is located at the original site of Kowloon Walled City. In reply to a question that I asked earlier urging the Government to keep the movie sets with characteristics and develop them into tourist attractions, the authorities said that the film sets had been demolished and that they would explore the possibility of organizing an exhibition of the film-related materials. I think in the future, the Government can discuss with the film production companies as early as possible to facilitate the preservation of the film scenes for reprovisioning as tourist attractions.

Secondly, there should be a special feature in every district. Many districts in Hong Kong have distinctive architectural features, such as the "Monster Building" in Quarry Bay, basketball courts at Choi Hung Estate, New Praya at Kennedy Town, some road signs with interesting names such as Macdonnell Road, and the walls made of mosaic tiles at MTR Stations, etc. All these can attract tourists to specifically go there to "check in". The authorities should step up the promotion of these attractions with characteristics, as well as improve and upgrade various ancillary tourism facilities to complement the development of the mega event economy and implementation of the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong".

Thirdly, incentivizing consumer spending through concerts and sports events in order to turn popularity into prosperity. A concert or sports event can drive consumer spending in areas such as transport, hotels and catering, as well as from visits to tourist spots and the surrounding places. As we all know, American pop diva Taylor SWIFT held six concerts in Singapore earlier this year, which attracted

more than 300 000 visitors and generated a tourism revenue of HK\$3.9 billion. Therefore, the SAR Government should endeavour to enhance the consumption experience in concerts and sports events, capitalize on the celebrity effect and seize the opportunities brought about by the fan economy, and organize in-depth tours of various themes to attract fans to stay and spend in Hong Kong. To avoid any undesirable situation, the Government should carefully plan and enhance its supervision on all mega events disregarding whether they are organized by the Government or otherwise, so as to ensure that every detail is properly taken care of to provide consumers with quality experiences.

Lastly, it is necessary to enhance the manpower and standard of the service industry. According to a report recently published by the China Tourism Academy, Macao is the most preferred destination for Mainland visitors and Hong Kong is ranked the seventh. But Members may not know that back in 2017 before the pandemic, Macao ranked the 10th whereas Hong Kong was ranked second to none. Why has Hong Kong's ranking dropped over the past few years? Of course, there are quite many reasons for it and, in particular, according to some visitors, the servers in Hong Kong have a sullen, displeased look; they are impolite and always urge customers to pay the bill. These unpleasant experiences spreading on the Internet and Xiaohongshu may have turned some tourists away from us. According to the Hong Kong Federation of Restaurants & Related Trades, there were about 600 000 frontline staff before the epidemic, comparing to only some 200 000 or less than 300 000 now. The shortage of manpower has resulted in heavy work pressure on frontline staff and explained their poor service attitude. In this connection, the authorities should speed up the importation of supplementary labour, provide systematic training courses, and support the wide use of technologies by small and medium enterprises, in order to alleviate the pressure on frontline workers.

With these remarks, President, I support the original motion and the amendments.

MR SUNNY TAN (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. The Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office, Mr XIA Baolong, pointed out last month the need to establish the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” and better polish Hong Kong's gilded signboard as “the best tourism destination” and this, in my opinion, has provided new inspirations and a new direction for the development of the tourism industry in Hong Kong.

Tourism is traditionally a main pillar of the Hong Kong economy. As Asia's most internationalized city, Hong Kong boasts top-notch tourism infrastructure, including first-class passenger airport and transport services, hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, etc. Coupled with its unique and profound cultural and historical heritage, Hong Kong definitely has the foundation to develop as a destination where "everywhere is a tourist attraction".

Sham Shui Po, for instance, is a new fabric market, as well as a design and fashion base. This, coupled with the surrounding hotspots for consumer spending and streets with unique features relating to fashion, precisely presents significant opportunities for developing "Tourism is everywhere" and for opening up new tourism routes.

President XI Jinping has put forward the important strategy of developing new quality productive forces. Hong Kong enjoys the best institutional protection under "one country, two systems", and the National 14th Five-Year Plan clearly supports Hong Kong in building into "eight major centres". In my opinion, Hong Kong can give full play to its strengths and adopt a new mindset and new solutions to pursue a path of high-quality characteristics, thereby achieving a major upgrading for the development of the tourism industry.

In particular, to better polish Hong Kong's gilded signboard as "the best tourism destination", a key approach is to develop mega event economy. For some time in the past, the SAR Government has spared no effort in promoting mega event economy. More and more international events have been held in Hong Kong, and we can all see the determination and efforts of the Government.

In order to introduce more international mega events and enhance the quality and quantity of mega event economy, I think the Government should continue to proactively take actions by, for instance, formulating a long-term development strategy to enhance long-term competitiveness. In the meantime, the Government should promote cooperation among different industries and trades, in order to make the mega events more internationalized and elevate their scale.

The French Open just concluded is a good example of harnessing the power of cross-industry collaboration to create a spectacular event. Attending the tournament as a spectator goes beyond simply enjoying the tennis matches. The expansive venue offers well-developed facilities for dining, leisure, retail, etc. Visitors can take guided tours to step foot on the courts and visit the players' locker

rooms, immersing themselves in a vibrant and joyous festive atmosphere. It is a holistic experience for the body and mind of every participant. Each year, the event attracts a large number of high-spending visitors who come to France specifically for the matches. Some even spend tens of thousands of Hong Kong dollars to secure VIP packages and invest thousands of Hong Kong dollars to purchase souvenirs designed by local designers for that year's tournament.

I think integrating mega events with related industries such as tourism, dining, retail and fashion is definitely a good approach for Hong Kong to draw reference from. Both the industry and I are eagerly looking forward to the Hong Kong Fashion Design Week to be held at the end of this year. Through cross-industry collaboration and by using the Fashion Week as a platform, we aim to attract more visitors with spending powers to Hong Kong in order to directly boost the overall market in Hong Kong. By providing an immersive fashion experience, we can showcase to the international community Hong Kong's image as a capital of style and fashion in Asia.

To realize "Tourism is everywhere" and foster the image of being an "Events Capital", I think it is important not only to tap into and utilize existing tourism and cultural resources but we should also take a more forward-looking perspective and properly invest in the future for Hong Kong's tourism industry. For example, it is necessary to study the construction of more performance venues and exhibition facilities that are up to international standards. By utilizing existing land resources or land vacated through urban redevelopment, we should develop venues including large-scale concert venues, opera houses, music halls, theme parks, resorts and family-friendly activity centres, endeavouring to enhance the long-term competitiveness of the tourism industry.

I believe that with the full support of the Central Government and the best institutional protection of "one country, two systems", coupled with the cooperation between the Government and various sectors of the community, Hong Kong can certainly seize the opportunity presented by our country's new quality productive forces and high-quality development to better polish Hong Kong's gilded signboard as a tourists' paradise and an Events Capital and make it even more glamorous.

With these remarks, I support the motion.

MR CHAN YUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you, President, and my thanks also go to the Secretary. We very much thank Mr Benson LUK for and support him in proposing the motion entitled “Pursuing the concept of ‘Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong’ and developing Hong Kong’s mega event economy”.

President XI Jinping gave important instructions on tourism work in May this year, stating the need to accelerate the building of China into a country strong in tourism, so that tourism can better contribute to meeting people’s needs for a better life, economic development, the building of a spiritual home, the showcasing of China’s image, and mutual learning among civilizations. Director XIA Baolong’s “Tourism is everywhere” has also become a catchphrase. He urged and encouraged the Hong Kong tourism industry to actively understand, respond to and embrace changes and to follow the path of high-quality characteristic development. Besides, in the 2022-2023 Policy Address, Chief Executive John LEE also emphasized using events to promote popularity and then using popularity to achieve prosperity. Mr Vincent CHENG of our Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong also proposed in his amendment to “promote tourism diversification in Hong Kong and develop in-depth tourism with different themes”, which includes “developing blue, green, red, golden and ancient tourism and making Hong Kong a place where tourism is everywhere” as stated on this display board put in front of me today.

Speaking of red tourism, I have a book with me now in which I myself had played a part in its publishing. This book entitled *Tracing the Footsteps: Hong Kong’s Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Forces* (《帶您尋蹤：抗日游擊隊香江足跡》) was edited and published by the East River Column History Research Association and contains typical red tourism routes. Developing different tourism projects of a wide spectrum can expand capacity and increase the number of visitors for tourism projects in Hong Kong without affecting the residential areas where local people live.

Regarding blue tourism, it is easy to understand that it is the development of the marine economy, and in this cosmopolitan of Hong Kong, it is even easier to understand that it means the development of harbour (i.e. both sides of Victoria Harbour) tourism projects.

Green tourism refers to eco-tourism in Hong Kong. In this international metropolis of Hong Kong, no matter in which direction you are driving, in less than an hour you can enjoy the beauty of green sea and mountains. This is our strength,

which enables us to attract and accommodate more international and Mainland visitors.

As for red tourism mentioned just now, Dr SUN Yat-sen, Madam SOONG Ching-ling who was former Honorary President of the People's Republic of China, and Premier ZHOU Enlai all had struggled and fought in Hong Kong, leaving behind numerous awe-inspiring footprints of patriotic martyrs and revolutionary heroes in this place that has always belonged to the Chinese nation. All of these are worth promoting. In particular, the national heritage site at Wu Kau Tang and the Memorial Monuments for Sai Kung Martyrs During World War II in Tsam Chuk Wan have been incorporated into the country's second and third lists of state facilities and sites marking the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression respectively. By linking up these historical sites and relics, we can provide more tourism projects. From the experience of the Mainland, we can see that red tourism alone has already attracted hundreds of millions of visitors in the past year, generating a huge economic value.

Some people may ask, "What does golden tourism mean?" Hong Kong is an international financial centre attracting visitors from all over the world (especially high-end business travellers) to come to "hunt for treasures", including buying gold. This is what golden tourism means. Hong Kong's financial services are of first-class standard globally. We need to attract more people to come to Hong Kong for listing and business development in order to better promote golden tourism and this is certainly a strength of Mr Benson LUK.

Then what is the meaning of "ancient tourism"? It means the charm of the ancient times. Hong Kong has a long history. It is a melting pot of the Chinese and Western cultures. The Hong Kong Palace Museum houses many historical artefacts and showcases different exhibits every month. This is what ancient tourism projects are about. Moreover, the Sung Dynasty Village, Sung Wong Toi, and the latest Walled City culture in Hong Kong can all be developed into a wide array of tourism projects.

Hong Kong is a small city with an area measuring only about 1 000 sq km. Our ultimate goal is to enhance tourism projects in breadth and in depth with the same capacity, so that while more visitors are attracted to visit the city, we can minimize the impact on people's lives as far as possible. This way, we can achieve the development of diverse tourism projects and increase the people's flow in different districts, thereby stimulating the economy and striving for economic

growth to the benefit of the people's livelihood, while at the same time contributing to the building of China into a strong country and the rejuvenation of the nation.

Thank you, President.

MR YIM KONG (in Cantonese): President, Mr Benson LUK's motion on "Pursuing the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong' and developing Hong Kong's mega event economy" has a positive bearing on the further expansion of Hong Kong's tourism market.

Tourism is an important pillar for the sustainable development of Hong Kong's economy. Hong Kong used to be the preferred outbound destinations of Mainland tourists. However, according to the recent survey conducted by the China Tourism Academy, Hong Kong has been replaced by Macao. This result is worthy of attention and reflection by all sectors of the community. Comprehensively pursuing the concept of "Tourism is everywhere" as put forward by Director XIA Baolong is the key to rebuilding Hong Kong's gilded signboard as "the Pearl of the Orient".

There are many tourism attractions in Hong Kong, but the objective problem is that they are not well connected. Therefore, in the process of promoting diversified, distinctive and in-depth tourism, actively developing transportation and related tourism services will become a major focus for the development of tourism economy. Take the hexagonal rock columns in Sai Kung listed as a UNESCO Global Geopark as an example. Due to traffic congestion, a large number of people, especially tourists who are drawn by the reputation of the site, are unable to see the columns in person. The Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark, comprising the Sai Kung Volcanic Rock Region and the Northeast New Territories Sedimentary Rock Region, spreads over eight extensive scenic areas. If a comprehensive and convenient sea, land and air transport network can be established, it has the potential to become a natural geological museum and a leisure attraction that can attract many tourists. The improvement of transport facilities can also promote distinctive sports tourism, such as yachting, gliding, diving, surfing, and even education tourism.

Various countries have introduced working holiday visa schemes in recent years. In response to that, on the basis of the 14 countries and regions with allocation quota, I suggest that the Government should further expand the scheme

to cover Mainland university students, so as to attract Mainland university students to visit Hong Kong during peak tourism seasons like summer and winter breaks. They may ease the shortage of manpower in a number of industries, while expanding our source of visitors and improving the service quality.

Of course, according to market trend, especially young people's celebrity-chasing craze, singing contests such as "*The Voice of Hong Kong*", short-term training courses on performing arts hosted by local celebrities, gastronomic tourism with local characteristics such as Poon Choi banquet, rural and village experience tourism, classic movie scenes tourism, etc., are also options to give full play to the strengths of our local tourism resources.

Moreover, the Government should meet the demand of tourists proactively by improving free public network service, expanding the coverage of free Wi-Fi at major tourist areas and upgrading the network speed. Meanwhile, it should repair and install clearer signage, enrich and enhance the contents of tourist guides distributed at the major boundary control points and at the airport; encourage major shopping malls to introduce more attractive lucky draws for tourists; motivate the 18 districts to develop their own urban and countryside walking routes; and step up publicity on online platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Douyin to establish "18 scenic areas in Hong Kong".

In conclusion, it is necessary to closely follow the market trend, respond to market demand, and create diversified tourism projects with characteristics, appeal and selling points, so as to make every district in Hong Kong an attraction, pursue the concept of "Tourism is everywhere", attract more tourists and create a space for high-end consumer tourism.

President, with these remarks, I support the motion and all the amendments. Thank you.

PROF WILLIAM WONG (in Cantonese): President, I speak in support of Mr Benson LUK's motion on "Pursuing the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong' and developing Hong Kong's mega event economy", which gives this Council the opportunity to discuss the concept of "Tourism is everywhere" put forward by Director XIA Baolong.

Tourists visiting Hong Kong can experience Hong Kong's cosmopolitan culture and appreciate the oriental culture of the local community. In recent years, immersive technology has become a global trend. Hong Kong can also use immersive technology to highlight its tourism characteristics, so as to enable tourists to experience the different facets of Hong Kong.

In recent years, many events in Hong Kong have adopted innovation and technology ("I&T"), especially the application of Augmented Reality ("AR"). AR technology was adopted in the activities commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Jin Yong held earlier to showcase the characters and scenes in his novels, giving the public, readers and tourists an immersive experience, which was a breakthrough from the traditional way of exhibition. Another example is the "Comic Wall" at the "Hong Kong Avenue of Comic Stars" which features comic characters created by more than 30 local artists. Visitors may take photos with the characters by scanning the QR codes. In addition, the Tourism Commission has been increasing the number of "City in Time" attractions which use AR technology to enable visitors to explore the history of Hong Kong. Cinema elements and a selfie function are also added recently to further enrich visitors' experience.

Whether it is to recall historical memories or to promote the film industry, immersive AR combining virtuality and reality has shown enormous potential. Preliminary studies by academics have found that immersive tours can leave visitors longer-lasting impression with lower cognitive load, which can greatly enhance visitors' experience.

In my opinion, the Government can make wider use of I&T to promote tourism. It may consider the issue from three perspectives. Firstly, the scope of technology tourism should be expanded. Virtual space is another canvas for Hong Kong. Except for a few attractions, many places are still blank. We should utilize AR and other technologies to integrate real, historical, and artistic elements, in order to build a diversified culture for the enjoyment of visitors. Therefore, AR should continue to expand outwards to explore the characteristics and essence of non-downtown areas, so as to attract the public and tourists to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of Hong Kong.

Secondly, the content and depth of technology tourism should be enriched. The virtual space of the city can accommodate a variety of elements, not limited to just historical scenery. It can also be extended to local arts creations and

ecological environment. For example, one can take a dynamic tour of Hong Kong in the past on a tram or the Star Ferry; learn about the marine biodiversity and endangered species in the Victoria Harbour; and even see the courageous martyrs at the site of the defence force during the War of Resistance. Multi-dimensional contents can satisfy the preferences of different people to the greatest extent possible for the enjoyment of both tourists and local visitors.

Thirdly, we need to increase the variety of technology applications, such as using holograms to attract tourists. Holograms create lifelike images and can provide tourists with an immersive experience. Imagine a holographic projection on the surface of the water near the Victoria Harbour. The content of the projection combines local movies, comics, songs and other cultural and creative arts, which can not only attract tourists, but also promote the development of local arts and culture, thus killing two birds with one stone.

President, Hong Kong must make use of technology to achieve the breadth and depth of “Tourism is everywhere”.

With these remarks, I support the original motion and all the amendments.

MS DOREEN KONG (in Cantonese): President, I speak in support of the motion proposed by Mr LUK.

A separate chapter was dedicated to the development of tourism in Hong Kong in the Chief Executive’s Policy Address in 2023. Industries developed around tourism, such as retail, catering and hotel, were also given extra attention by the Government. However, after more than one year of implementation of the policy, there are still many details that need to be addressed. Looking at the Government’s policy statements, the mainstream thinking for local tourism still appears rather traditional and conservative. For example, the concept of night economy to boost Hong Kong’s vibrancy is still based on the stereotypical image of Hong Kong as a shopping paradise, a fashionable metropolis and a commercial hub. As the times and trends evolve, the Government’s tourism strategy also has to adapt to the changes to a certain extent.

In fact, Hong Kong should be more than a thin business card for tourists from all over the world. I wrote a column in Ming Pao about this last week. In addition to its commercial aspect, Hong Kong’s ecology, nature, culture and history

all have their own unique characteristics and are valuable resources. We are particularly rich in natural scenery and resources. Although Hong Kong is relatively small in size, it has abundant coastal resources and numerous islands that form a unique natural landscape. According to the statistics from the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Hong Kong has an abundance of natural resources. Country parks occupy around 40% of Hong Kong's total area and the city is famous for its biodiversity. However, all these are seldom regarded as Hong Kong's labels.

According to a professional research on tourism trends, a study on the travel trend of people around the world in recent years indicated that slow travel would become or was becoming a development trend in the global tourism industry due to the epidemic and the global economic situation. Slow travel means travelling less frequently but for a longer period of time per trip. It is in line with the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" mentioned in this motion. In fact, the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures, the coexistence of commercial developments and natural environment, as well as the compatibility of modern and traditional elements are all innate resources that enable tourists to engage in slow and in-depth travel. In other words, compared to handing out consumption vouchers to tourists on a one-off basis, Hong Kong will get twice the result with half the effort if it truly leverages its own characteristics and strengths to retain tourists.

Lastly, I would like to talk about the Victoria Harbour. There are actually not many coastal international cities like Hong Kong in the world. I often ask myself whether we have already taken full advantage of the Victoria Harbour. Other harbour cities all focus on the development of the marina, placing the best catering and entertainment facilities near the water and fully highlighting their advantages. In Hong Kong, our harbourfront is mostly quiet. Only when there are firework displays or drone shows will the crowd gather there. After the 20 to 30-minute show, the crowd will disperse and no one will stay behind. No matter how beautiful is the view of the Victoria Harbour, tourists will not want to return if there are no recreational facilities and quality dining options. No matter how pretty a girl is, she still has to dress up. The same applies to the Victoria Harbour. I suggest that the Government should consider revamping the Victoria Harbour, so as to cater to the new generation of tourism development.

Whether we are to pursue "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" or "excitements are everywhere in Hong Kong", we must strengthen the Government's administrative structure and tourism strategies, so that every

department is fully committed to the development of tourism. The tourism industry is inseparable from the community and the business sector. To successfully develop tourism, we need to work together with all stakeholders, including private enterprises and members of the public, to formulate a tourism strategy that is suitable for Hong Kong. A tourism strategy that is suitable for Hong Kong cannot be focused solely on tourists. It must give Hong Kong people a sense of belonging and make them willing to embrace and support it.

President, I so submit.

MS STARRY LEE (in Cantonese): President, first of all, I would like to thank the Central Government for its support for Hong Kong, in particular for its support for Hong Kong's tourism industry. The Hong Kong community has repeatedly expressed to the Central Government its wish to increase the number of cities under the Individual Visit Scheme ("IVS"). After the Central Government increased the number of IVS cities twice, we could clearly see that tourists' desire to visit Hong Kong has become stronger. I also recognize the efforts made by the SAR Government in promoting mega events and setting up a high-level committee.

Of course, after so much work, we need to review the results. In terms of figures, the Secretary mentioned in his reply that the number of inbound tourists has shown a steady growth. However, we all know that every city is competing for tourists. The competition is very fierce. Every city is trying to come up with different ideas to attract tourists. Therefore, we must not be complacent with the existing figures. We must constantly innovate to satisfy tourists and provide them with new experiences.

I have listened to Members' speeches just now, and I think that Members have made many good suggestions, such as island tourism, rural tourism, sports tourism and mega event tourism, which we are now promoting. We are not short of ideas. The key is how to implement them. Of course, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau is the main responsible Policy Bureau. The SAR Government has also appointed Deputy Secretary Michael WONG to ensure proper coordination for the mega event economy, in the hope of maximizing its benefits. However, apart from organizing mega events—and I agree with many colleagues that we should not simply turn activities into mega events—the key is to have "signature events" that are memorable and make people remember Hong Kong.

Apart from mega events, I also hope that the Deputy Secretary or the Hong Kong Tourism Board will encourage various government departments to support economic development in their respective policy areas, and tourism development should be a top priority. For example, in today's question session, Mr Rock CHEN pointed out that many pet lovers would like to travel across the districts with their pets. However, if we pay attention to the replies given by the officials today (i.e. Secretary TSE Chin-wan and the Under Secretary for Transport and Logistics), we would find that they did not think from the perspective of promoting tourism, so a lot of rules and regulations have been set. If we want to unleash this tourism potential, whether to develop inter-district travel or to create more possibilities (including developing island tours and making good use of Victoria Harbour), I expect that despite repeated discussions in the Council, progress will be very slow as we are relying solely on the existing manpower support and structure.

I think the Secretary may have to think about how to break through these bottlenecks. I can see that you have been working very hard, so expectations are high. Various departments are responsible for promoting economic growth (especially promoting tourism), and they should try their best to unleash the potential of inter-district tourism within their respective purviews and generate more possibilities for consumption. I hope the Secretary can think about this.

Secondly, I hope that the Secretary will continue to seek support from the Central Government. Of course, we understand that we have to do our work well first. As Director XIA said, we need to be able to understand the changes. We also need to review ourselves. Not only the Government, the industry also needs to review itself, especially when many Mainland companies are adopting innovative ways to attract tourists, we should also strive to improve ourselves. In addition, we can work together to seek an increase in the duty-free allowance from RMB5,000 to RMB30,000, and to increase the number of IVS cities, so that people from Mainland residents (especially those from the cities in the Greater Bay Area) can come to Hong Kong with a "multiple trips per week" endorsement or multi-entry endorsement, thereby expanding the source of visitors. I believe these are all very important measures, and I hope the Government will continue to make efforts. Moreover, we must bear in mind that we should continue to attract overseas tourists because Hong Kong is an international city. If we only attract Mainland tourists, I am afraid it will affect Hong Kong's status as an international city. We should continue to work hard and do a good job in this regard.

I hope the Secretary will continue to work hard, and I look forward to more coordinated efforts. Other departments can also fully cooperate in the work of promoting “Tourism is everywhere” to show the world the beauty of Hong Kong once again.

President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I remind Members that according to the time limit for motion debates set out in the House Rules, this debate will end at around 5:20 pm at the latest. After Ir LEE Chun-keung has finished speaking, I will call upon the mover of the motion to speak on the amendments, and then the remaining proceeding of the motion debate will be dealt with.

Mr Edmund WONG, please speak.

MR EDMUND WONG (in Cantonese): President, Director XIA Baolong has proposed earlier that Hong Kong should establish the concept of “Tourism is everywhere” and fully explore the tourism resources of the 18 districts, so as to better polish Hong Kong’s gilded signboard as “the best tourism destination”. This is undoubtedly the main direction for the future development of Hong Kong’s tourism industry. Therefore, I would like to thank Mr Benson LUK for proposing this motion, and the other Honourable colleagues for proposing the amendments, so that we can draw on collective wisdom in this Council.

Undoubtedly, President, after the COVID-19 epidemic, the consumption and travel patterns of inbound tourists have changed drastically. After the epidemic, inbound tourists have changed from preferring the previous shopping-oriented experiences to preferring the current in-depth cultural tours. We all know that Xiaohongshu is one of the tools that tourists often refer to. When we promote the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”, how can we make our tourists feel the hustle and bustle of Hong Kong? This is an important step in supporting in-depth tourism and new travel patterns.

Regarding the sharing and experiencing of the hustle and bustle that I just mentioned, it is of paramount importance to allow our tourists to share their travel experiences conveniently. Hence, I wrote an article earlier suggesting that the Government could cooperate with telecommunications companies to provide data

cards to tourists to facilitate their search for travel information and sharing of travel experiences on social media platforms. In this way, more tourists will know the best places to eat, drink and have fun in Hong Kong. This is actually not new, as Korea has already started doing this.

At the same time, I suggest that the SAR Government should set up a sharing platform for inbound tourists to share their travel experiences during their stay in Hong Kong with people of their home countries or regions who are about to come to Hong Kong. A sharing reward scheme can also be set up. When a post reaches a certain number of views, likes, comments and reposts, it can receive more discounts, thereby allowing these tourists who have visited Hong Kong to become our tourism ambassadors, sharing their experiences with citizens of their own countries or regions. In this way, these tourists who have been to Hong Kong will become our tourism ambassadors, and share their experiences with the people of their home countries or regions.

The SAR Government may obtain the big data of inbound tourists from this platform, and make targeted adjustments in relation to travel preferences, programmes and ancillary facilities, so as to provide inbound tourists with a better experience. In my opinion, this is one of the ways to help the Government develop tourism with the help of tourists.

Of course, apart from the software support for in-depth tourism, the tourism industry has to adopt a new mindset, and more large-scale new tourist attractions have to be built in the long run. The Government should also support distinctive local culture and further enhance the appeal of our intangible cultural heritage. We have already done a lot of work in this regard, but we may not have the necessary support to step up publicity. For example, the fire dragon dance in Tai Hang, Kwun Yum Treasury Opening and even “Petty Person Beating” underneath Ngo Keng Kiu are actually distinctive events in the eyes of tourists. We should give more thoughts to these and consider whether there is room to commercialize these tourism resources and make them our signatures, so as to enhance our unique tourism features.

President, in this last part, I would like to talk about our taxi drivers. In fact, tourists can become our tourism ambassadors to promote “Tourism is everywhere”, but the role of taxi drivers is also very important because tourists do not know their way around in Hong Kong, and the most common means of transport for them is, of course, taxi. I am glad to see that some taxi organizations

have recently launched a courtesy campaign, but the campaign does not cover all taxi drivers. Only one case of refusing hire or overcharging will probably turn “Tourism is everywhere” to “Black taxis are everywhere”. Therefore, I hope taxi drivers will understand that they are not just taking passengers from point A to point B. They are also Hong Kong’s tourism ambassadors who can give tourists a good travel experience and make tourists feel at home. This will enable the SAR Government to achieve twice the result with half the effort.

With these remarks, I support the original motion and all the amendments.

DR JOHNNY NG (in Cantonese): President, tourism is one of Hong Kong’s pillar industries. However, after more than three years of epidemic, Hong Kong’s tourism industry is facing various challenges. Mr XIA Baolong, Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, put forward the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”, which pointed out the direction and roadmap for the development of the tourism industry in Hong Kong.

The Central Authorities have recently introduced a series of measures to support Hong Kong, including increasing the number of cities under the Individual Visit Scheme (“IVS”) and increasing the frequency of high speed rail service. This shows the Central Authorities’ support and care for Hong Kong’s tourism industry. The SAR Government also goes all out to pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” and develop the mega event economy. According to the Government, more than 210 mega events are expected to be held in Hong Kong throughout the year, with more than 100 in the second half of this year alone, to consolidate Hong Kong’s position as the “Events Capital of Asia” and polish Hong Kong’s tourism brand.

However, in some subtle areas, the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong” can be implemented in a better and more down-to-earth manner, so that tourists will feel more at ease and more at home in Hong Kong. I would like to make three points.

First, a multi-pronged approach must be adopted for promoting the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”. The service attitude towards tourists is an important part of it. Public transport services are the first point of contact for tourists in Hong Kong and will also affect their first impression of Hong Kong. In particular, inbound tourists have a high demand for “point-to-point” transport

services. Taxi is the most common mode of transport for tourists and represents a part of the city's image. I believe that there is still a lot of room for improvement in the quality of taxi service in Hong Kong when compared with other tourist cities in the neighbouring regions.

In fact, tourists often share their unpleasant experiences of taking taxis in Hong Kong on social media. I think the Government must take further measures to enhance the quality of "point-to-point" transport services in Hong Kong. I notice that with the advancement of network technology, inbound tourists have become accustomed to online ride-hailing services. In my opinion, the SAR Government should expeditiously study the regulation of online ride-hailing services and introduce electronic payment to cater for the demand of the society.

Second, the Government has recently launched a city-wide courtesy campaign to promote hospitality, which I believe will help improve Hong Kong's image as a tourist city. In addition to courtesy, I think the hygiene at tourist spots also deserves our attention. There have been complaints from locals and tourists about the dilapidated facilities and poor hygiene in public toilets at some tourist spots. The SAR Government has been actively improving the situation in recent years by introducing "smart toilets", which is worthy of commendation.

However, I have heard many voices saying that the hygiene conditions of the toilets in some local restaurants and eateries are still far from satisfactory. This is especially important, because in recent years many inbound tourists like to travel in-depth in various districts of Hong Kong and enjoy Hong Kong style cafes, "yum cha" and "Chiu Chow dishes" which are all very appealing, but they hesitate to go to the toilets in these places. This situation seriously affects Hong Kong's tourism image and I think it must be improved.

Third, as an international financial and trade centre, Hong Kong is also one of the best cities in the world for conventions, exhibitions and business tourism. However, there is a serious shortage of venues for events and exhibitions. After the epidemic, various places around the world are competing for opportunities to develop the exhibition industry. Yet, Hong Kong is lagging far behind many neighbouring Asian regions in terms of convention and exhibition facilities, which is tantamount to turning tourists away. This will not only cause loss to the convention and exhibition industry, but also affect the tourism industry and hinder the implementation of the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong". In the long run, I think Hong Kong must build and redevelop more convention and exhibition venues.

In conclusion, the tourism industry is closely related to Hong Kong's economic growth. The return of tourists to Hong Kong is also conducive to the consumer market, thereby injecting impetus into the local retail industry. Pursing the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" and developing the mega event economy in Hong Kong can boost Hong Kong's development momentum within a short period of time. I support the motion proposed by Mr Benson LUK.

Thank you, President. I so submit.

IR LEE CHUN-KEUNG (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I thank Mr Benson LUK for proposing this motion, which enables us to discuss how to pursue the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong". Although Hong Kong is a small place, it has a lot of fun activities that are suitable for people from different parts of the world. Different economic activities and tourist attractions are available 24 hours a day. For example, we used to say that we are going to Lan Kwai Fong in the evening for entertainment or Soho for dinner. However, the businesses in these places are often closed at 9:00 pm or 10:00 pm now. Why is that? The main reason is probably manpower, especially when there is a lack of customers. Therefore, we are pleased to see that the SAR Government recently announced that 210 mega events will be held this year to attract more tourists to Hong Kong. However, how to make tourists stay longer and spend money in Hong Kong is exactly the question we need to think about together today.

"A smile brightens the world". This lyric from the theme song of the Hong Kong Tourist Association has been familiar to everyone since the 1980s. Tourists travelled thousands of miles to Hong Kong, so surely, they want to see Hong Kong people showing friendly smiles, greeting them and providing them with assistance. Sometimes when I see people with luggage or accompanied by elderly people or children at MTR stations, I would go up to them and ask if they need help. Tourists would greatly appreciate it if Hong Kong people can be a bit more proactive, ask a few more questions, greet tourists with a warm smile, welcome them to Hong Kong and introduce them to the best places for entertainment, dining, shopping and sightseeing, and essentially act as "tour guides". Many Hong Kong people are biliterate and trilingual, so we should give full play to our capabilities and strengths to share with friends from home and abroad about all the attractions that Hong Kong has to offer.

Take country parks as an example. Country parks cover an area of 44 842 ha, or 40% of Hong Kong's land area, and attract 13 million visitors annually. However, there are still a lot of undeveloped areas in the country parks. Besides, there are 260 islands in Hong Kong. It can be said that Hong Kong is surrounded by sunny beaches. How should we make use of these hardware and the natural conditions of Hong Kong, which is surrounded by waters on three sides, to give full play to our tourism potential? Is it possible to outsource tourism projects, or even resorts, water sports centres, etc., to qualified non-governmental organizations or private enterprises on a tenancy agreement basis?

Nowadays, different types of competitions are popular in the market. For example, Members may already know that the "Guandan" game is very popular in the Mainland. Can we organize "Guandan" activities to attract Mainland tourists to come to Hong Kong for demonstration, so as to promote this Mainland pop culture to the rest of the world? Hong Kong has a lot of selling points too, such as the "sneakers street" in Mong Kok, "toys street" in Wan Chai, jade market in Yau Ma Tei and "Little Thailand" in Kowloon City. Have we done proper publicity?

President, promoting Hong Kong is very important. Nowadays, promotional tools are not limited to traditional media like television. We should make good use of social media platforms, including social media in the Mainland like Xiaohongshu and Douyin, and work with social media influencers and celebrities to promote Hong Kong. We should impress Mainland and overseas tourists with our smiles and attract them to come to discover new attractions in Hong Kong. We should not stick to the old rut. When foreign travellers come to visit certain places in Hong Kong, we should not be unwelcoming to them. To give a simple example, Yick Fat Building in Quarry Bay, where *Transformers 4* was filmed, used to be a "check-in" hotspot, but it is now cordoned off and photo-taking is not allowed there. So, how can tourists take photos at this attraction? In the past, tourists came to Hong Kong to buy powdered formula, but now the milk powder restriction is in place. What can they shop here? Therefore, Hong Kong must remove all the barriers and restrictions, make itself more attractive, and be welcoming to attract more tourists to Hong Kong.

Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Benson LUK, you may now speak on the amendments.

MR BENSON LUK (in Cantonese): President, I am very grateful to the 40 Honourable colleagues for speaking enthusiastically on my motion. I know that eight Honourable colleagues are still waiting to speak. At the same time, I also thank the six Honourable colleagues who have proposed amendments to enrich my original motion. I will now share my views on the amendments.

However, before I share my views, I would like to thank the Mr LAU, Under Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism for spending an afternoon listening to Members' views. I understand that Secretary YEUNG has other official commitments. He is travelling aboard for the tourism industry, so I would also like to thank him for that.

President, first of all, I would like to thank Mr YANG Wing-kit for his suggestion of competing for celebrities and leveraging the celebrity effect to promote mega events, which is in line with the concert economy I have proposed. Soliciting international stars to Hong Kong for concerts and carnivals, and even filming will effectively promote Hong Kong to the world and bring economic benefits.

I would also like to thank Mr Kenneth LAU, a fellow party member of mine, for his suggestions of rural and heritage in-depth tourism, etc. I strongly agree that we should make good use of the tourism resources in the New Territories. For example, Chung Ying Street in Sha Tau Kok has a great potential for tourism development. If the Closed Area can be opened, it would be a very attractive tourist attraction. Moreover, if the proposal to build a Formula 1 race circuit in Hong Kong can be successfully implemented, I believe that the event will be on a par with international sporting events such as the Rugby Sevens and the Standard Chartered Marathon currently held in Hong Kong. Race circuits have been completed and put into operation one after another in neighbouring cities. Therefore, the proposal of building a race circuit should not be stuck at the feasibility study stage. It should be proceeded with immediately.

I thank Mr YIU Pak-leung for his suggestion of linking up different trades to develop mega event tourism products. Continuous development of characteristic tourism will bring opportunities to the mega event economy. Hong Kong's domestic market is facing a difficult time. We can see that the retail,

catering and hotel industries have been affected by the decline in the number of tourists and the trend of Hong Kong people travelling to the Mainland for consumption. Therefore, we must promote the development of tourism and mega events in collaboration with all sectors and trades of the community.

I thank Mr Vincent CHENG for proposing various diversified tourism elements, such as in-depth tourism, cultural tourism, Citywalk, sports tourism, Chinese medicine tourism, low-altitude sightseeing tourism, family-friendly tourism, pet-friendly tourism, Muslim-friendly tourism and so on. I think all these suggestions have great development potential and merit study and response by the authorities. We need creative and characteristic tourism now, and we have to keep coming up with new ideas to cultivate repeat visitors, so that they will maintain a sense of novelty even after multiple visits and are willing to come back. Only in this way can business be sustained.

I thank Mr SHIU Ka-fai for putting forward a number of specific suggestions. I agree that street performances can boost the atmosphere of the community. Street performances by young people, in particular, can really attract the public and tourists. They can also enhance the vibrancy of the city and implement the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”. Of course, street performances need policy support of the authorities. Meanwhile, there are many sunny beaches and beautiful islands in Hong Kong, such as South Lantau and the outlying islands where there are some holiday resorts or small guesthouses. I hope the authorities can integrate these scattered tourism resources and hardware to create a larger-scale tourist attraction and achieve the scale effect. Can we make South Lantau comparable to Singapore’s Sentosa Island in terms of scale within the next 10 years? I believe this may be the future KPI (key performance indicator) of the SAR Government.

I thank Mr LUK Chung-hung for his suggestion of focusing on tourism talent training, in particular, providing value-added training to all frontline service personnel of the local tourism market, including hotel, catering and retail personnel. Frontline personnel are the key drivers for the mega event economy and for pursuing the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”. I believe that training in this area is very important. It enables frontline personnel to upgrade themselves and share the fruits of economic development.

President, I implore Members to support my original motion and the amendments. I so submit.

SECRETARY FOR CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM (in Cantonese): President, I thank Mr Benson LUK once again for moving the motion and the six Members for proposing the amendments. I also thank the other Members for their valuable views and speeches. In fact, from Members' speeches, we understand that Hong Kong definitely does not lack tourism themes, be it red, blue, green, gold, technology, industry, culture, history, culinary and so on. The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau has been actively following up on Members' suggestions and will continue to report its work to the Legislative Council. I would like to thank Members for joining us in our efforts to pursue the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" and proactively explore Hong Kong's rich tourism resources, so as to present Hong Kong's unique charm to the world.

Over the past few months, a number of Members have put forward many different views on the development of Hong Kong's tourism on various occasions, including in motion debates and question sessions in the Legislative Council. The Government and various sectors have been committed to providing tourists with more tourism products and brand new experiences, so as to enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness as a world-class tourist destination. In planning tourism projects, such as tourist attractions or events, we must bear in mind the following few points. First, the projects must be appealing to local people in order to be able to attract tourists to explore the unique experiences and local characteristics. Second, the projects must be supported by proper transport arrangements and ancillary facilities, so as to facilitate access by tourists. Third, the projects should be able to stimulate economic activities in the neighbourhood and bring economic benefits to the community. Fourth, the impact of the projects on the neighbouring community should be manageable and should not cause excessive nuisance to the residents. Of course, in addition to these four points, due to limited public resources, the Government must consider the priority of the projects and even make choices. Under normal circumstances, the main role of the Government should be to "set the stage" and act as the "director" or "producer", while the industry should be responsible for playing the scripts, gaining popularity and ultimately bringing in box office revenues, thereby turning popularity into prosperity.

I strongly agree with Prof Priscilla LEUNG's concept of "a city-wide campaign to promote tourism development". In fact, Ms Doreen KONG, Ms Starry LEE and other Members have also put forward the same point of view. Tourism development requires not only the concerted efforts of different departments, but also a lot of cross-sectoral cooperation. The Government, the

business sector, the community, every department, every enterprise and every citizen are all stakeholders in tourism development. Everyone should take a step forward in their own areas to attract tourists and render good services to tourists.

Just now, Mr Benson LUK mentioned in his opening speech the initiative of the Drainage Services Department to beautify manhole covers. Mr Tommy CHEUNG also mentioned that he was actively liaising with the catering trade to organize a creative recipe competition. These are good examples of proactive efforts. I also hope that more members of the trade will join hands to make efforts for this purpose.

Capitalizing on natural tourism resources

Some Members mentioned the development of rural in-depth tourism in their speeches and amendments. In fact, blue and green tourism is one of the areas that we are actively pursuing. Hong Kong has many islands and rich natural tourism resources. Some islands in the northeastern part of the New Territories and Sai Kung are even included in the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark. We encourage the industry to capitalize on these resources to develop more relevant itineraries and products, and continue to actively develop and promote island tourism. The Tourism Commission will play a coordinating role and work with relevant Policy Bureaux and departments to assist private organizations or individuals in developing various tourism facilities, such as accommodation, catering, etc., so as to promote island tourism and make full use of Hong Kong's precious blue and green resources.

Continuing to promote popular tourism projects

Riding on the trend of blue and green tourism, we will organize the "Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival 2024" in November, which features an integration of arts with the islands and allows visitors to experience the natural landscape, history, culture and heritage of Sai Kung Hoi.

We will also actively promote other popular tourism projects. The City in Time tourism project has been extended to Lei Yue Mun at the beginning of this month. The mobile app features have also been upgraded, including adding filters and video recordings to the selfie function and advancing the animation of the historical panoramas to 3D. In addition, the initiative has also incorporated film elements at its existing designated locations, allowing locals and tourists to watch

classic Hong Kong film clips at filming locations. We will extend the project to Tai Hang and Kowloon City, as well as other districts in Hong Kong. The new phase of “Design District Hong Kong” will be held in Tsuen Wan and Sha Tau Kok in December to further develop and promote these two emerging tourist destinations and enhance their appeal, so as to guide tourists to learn about Hong Kong’s local culture and characteristics and promote in-depth tourism.

Just now, Members mentioned Chinese medicine tourism. This experience element is included in one of the “Signature Itineraries” of the “Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition”. We will promote it.

Some Members also mentioned the possibility of using intangible cultural heritage to drive tourism development. In fact, we have all along been working on this, including promoting the Cheung Chau Jiao Festival and the Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance. We will definitely continue to work on this in the hope of doing a better job.

Tourism in Sha Tau Kok

Some Members also mentioned further exploring the tourism resources in the New Territories. As a matter of fact, there are many traditional towns in the New Territories which are rich in landscape resources and have great potential for recreational and tourism development. Take Sha Tau Kok as an example. The Tourism Commission will, together with relevant Policy Bureaux and departments, formulate an action plan within 2024 for fostering the establishment of the Sha Tau Kok Cultural Tourism Zone under the principle of “low density, high quality” and through enriching its historical and cultural elements. Meanwhile, we will continue to promote the two “signature itineraries” relating to tourism resources in Sha Tau Kok under the respective theme of “Great Green Escapes” and “Journey Through National History” selected from the “Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition”, so as to highlight the tourism characteristics of Sha Tau Kok to visitors.

Construction of large-scale performance venues

A number of Members advocated in their speeches and amendments the construction of more large-scale performance venues, so as to ensure that there are sufficient venues and ancillary facilities to support the organization of mega events in Hong Kong. The Kai Tak Sports Park will provide modern and multi-purpose

sports and recreation facilities upon completion, including a 50 000-seat Main Stadium, a 10 000-seat Indoor Sports Centre and a 5 000-seat Public Sports Ground, which will definitely become “the destination” for local and international large-scale sports and entertainment events and add more vibrancy to Hong Kong as an events capital.

As for the planning of new large-scale performance venues, as it involves many considerations, including scale, location, ancillary facilities, transport, finance, market demand and supply, etc., we will keep a close eye on the utilization of the Kai Tak Sports Park upon its completion before studying the construction of new venues to meet the long-term needs.

Continuing to promote the vibrant atmosphere of mega events

A number of Members mentioned in their speeches and amendments various mega events, including the concert economy and so on. The Government has earlier announced the calendar of mega events in Hong Kong for the second half of 2024. It is expected that more than 210 mega events will be held throughout this year, an increase of 60 events or more than 40% over the 150 events expected at the beginning of the year. It is estimated that approximately 1.7 million tourists would participate in the mega events throughout the year. Their spending is estimated to be about \$7.2 billion. The more than 100 mega events to be held in the second half of the year cover a wide range of areas, including new mega events and returning mega events. New mega events include the Chinese Culture Festival, the Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo, the Hong Kong Fashion Design Week and the transport-related Super Terminal Expo.

Some Members mentioned that the Government should ensure that events organized by private organizations can be held smoothly. In fact, the Government welcomes private organizations to hold large-scale events in Hong Kong, and the Government is willing to provide various kinds of assistance to them. Having said that, the organizers have the primary responsibility to make appropriate arrangements and plans to ensure that the events are held in an orderly manner. The Government will step up supervision in this regard.

In the coming months, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (“HKTB”) will continue to launch a series of festive activities and mega events, including the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races to be held on the 15th and 16th of this month, as well as the Hong Kong Cyclothon, the Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival,

the Hong Kong WinterFest, the Hong Kong New Year Countdown Celebrations, etc., to create a vibrant atmosphere that will attract tourists to come to Hong Kong for the experience.

Integrated development of culture and tourism

Some Members suggested that we should promote the integrated development of culture and tourism, and create a new culture and tourism IP (intellectual property) for Hong Kong. We have been actively organizing various cultural and arts events to showcase the rich and diversified cultural and arts landscape in Hong Kong, including the Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival, which is a key annual event for the promotion of pop culture; the inaugural Chinese Culture Festival to be held this year; the Asia+ Festival with a focus on Asia and to celebrate the cultural diversity of the continent and Belt and Road regions; and the Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo and the 4th Greater Bay Area Culture & Arts Festival to be held at the end of this year. These events are expected to attract many locals and tourists. Meanwhile, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau has been promoting cultural tourism based on the principle of “shaping tourism with cultural activities and promoting culture through tourism”. We noticed that the recent film *Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In* has been very well received. Many tourists would like to learn more about the history of the Kowloon Walled City and the story behind the film production. Therefore, the Government is now actively discussing with the film company to explore the possibility of exhibiting the materials of the film, such as stills, clips and props, with a view to promoting the integration of culture and tourism and driving the development of cultural tourism.

Regarding the baggage delivery service mentioned by some Members, the Hong Kong International Airport provides baggage delivery service from the airport to downtown or from a designated location downtown to the airport, so as to let passengers travel hassle free in Hong Kong. Besides, baggage delivery services are provided on selected homeport ship calls at Kai Tak Cruise Terminal. The services enable debarking cruise passengers to send their baggage to the airport or other locations in Hong Kong before exploring the city hassle-free. Hotels in general will offer their guests free baggage storage services and assist them to arrange baggage delivery services. Of course, we can do a better job on this front and we will see how we can strengthen cooperation with different sectors in this respect.

Regarding the Muslim segment mentioned by Members, HKTb will work with the tourism industry to further publicize our infrastructure for Muslim tourism, with a view to developing Hong Kong into a “Muslim-friendly” destination. We have also stepped up promotion in the Middle East source market to attract tourists from there to visit Hong Kong.

Some Members mentioned the management of street performances. In fact, the public could apply for permits for playing musical instrument in public street or road under the existing mechanism. The Police will consider different factors when assessing an application. Where public interests are not compromised, the Police will grant permission to the application and impose appropriate conditions as necessary. The Government will continue to encourage departments and enterprises to open up their premises for street performances.

Regarding the celebrity effect mentioned by Members, HKTb has been inviting popular television and movie stars as well as Internet celebrities to come and experience the diverse culture and different facets of Hong Kong. We hope to tailor-make personalized itineraries for them to showcase our unique characteristics, and tell the good stories of Hong Kong through their first-hand experiences. They include famous Hollywood movie stars, popular Japanese superstars, popular Korean actors and actresses, etc. They would experience Hong Kong’s popular attractions, cultural treasures and gourmet destinations from a first-person perspective, and film travel vlogs to share with fans and tourists around the world.

Training of talent

In addition to a wide variety of activities and products, talent training is also very important to the long-term and steady development of the tourism industry, just as Members have pointed out. We have been nurturing talents to support the development of the local tourism and service industries. At present, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and The Chinese University of Hong Kong offer publicly-funded bachelor’s degree programmes in tourism and hospitality management. The Vocational Training Council, the Caritas Institute of Higher Education and some other self-financing tertiary institutions also offer relevant programmes at different levels. Meanwhile, the Employees Retraining Board also provides market-driven and employment-oriented programmes related to hospitality and tourism. The Government has also earmarked \$100 million in 2022-2023 to support the training and development of travel industry practitioners,

with which the Travel Industry Authority launched a three-year training subsidy scheme for practitioners of the travel industry in October 2022, with a view to enhancing the professional standards and service quality of the travel industry.

Hospitality Campaign

In order to make tourists from around the world feel at home in different parts of the Hong Kong community and better embody the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, together with relevant bureaux and departments, as well as representatives from HKTb, the tourism and related industries, the education sector and the districts, attended the launch of the Hospitality Campaign on 3 June this year to spread the hospitality spirit to every corner of the community, in the hope that every Hong Kong citizen will become a warm and hospitable host. The campaign will cover all 18 districts, schools, businesses, transport operators and various trades and industries. HKTb will also launch a new publicity programme and step up hospitality promotion and training to the industry, with a view to better polishing Hong Kong’s gilded signboard as “the best tourism destination”.

Formulation of the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong’s Tourism Industry 2.0

As I mentioned earlier in my speech, the promotion of tourism development requires cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination. Therefore, it is necessary to engage various Policy Bureaux and departments in the pursuit of the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”. In order to encourage different industries to work together to enhance the speed and quality of the development of Hong Kong’s tourism industry, we are reviewing and updating the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong’s Tourism Industry (“the Blueprint”) published in 2017. We have also collected a lot of valuable views during the consultation process. We will carefully consider the suggestions made by various sectors and formulate forward-looking development strategies and measures in the light of the relevant analyses. Our target is to publish the Blueprint 2.0 within this year.

President, I would like to thank Members once again for their valuable views on the development of tourism in Hong Kong. The Government will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach to promote the development of tourism, boost the economy, tell good stories of Hong Kong and pursue the concept of “Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”.

President, I so submit.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now call upon Mr YANG Wing-kit to move an amendment.

MR YANG WING-KIT (in Cantonese): President, I move my amendment.

The amendment moved by Mr YANG Wing-kit (See the marked-up version at Appendix 5)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment moved by Mr YANG Wing-kit be passed.

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority 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 amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Kenneth LAU, as the previous amendment has been passed, you may move your further amendment.

MR KENNETH LAU (in Cantonese): President, I move my further amendment.

The further amendment moved by Mr Kenneth LAU (See the marked-up version at Appendix 6)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the further amendment moved by Mr Kenneth LAU be passed.

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority 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 amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr YIU Pak-leung, as the previous amendments have been passed, you may move your further amendment.

MR YIU PAK-LEUNG (in Cantonese): President, I move my further amendment.

The further amendment moved by Mr YIU Pak-leung (See the marked-up version at Appendix 7)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the further amendment moved by Mr YIU Pak-leung be passed.

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority 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 amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Vincent CHENG, as the previous amendments have been passed, you may move your further amendment.

MR VINCENT CHENG (in Cantonese): President, I move my further amendment.

The further amendment moved by Mr Vincent CHENG (See the marked-up version at Appendix 8)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the further amendment moved by Mr Vincent CHENG be passed.

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority 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 amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr SHIU Ka-fai, as the previous amendments have been passed, you may move your further amendment.

MR SHIU KA-FAI (in Cantonese): President, I move my further amendment.

The further amendment moved by Mr SHIU Ka-fai (See the marked-up version at Appendix 9)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the further amendment moved by Mr SHIU Ka-fai be passed.

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority 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 amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LUK Chung-hung, as the previous amendments have been passed, you may move your further amendment.

MR LUK CHUNG-HUNG (in Cantonese): President, I move my further amendment.

The further amendment moved by Mr LUK Chung-hung (See the marked-up version at Appendix 10)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the further amendment moved by Mr LUK Chung-hung be passed.

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

(Members raised their hands)

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

(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 amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Benson LUK, you still have 49 seconds to reply. Then, the debate will come to a close.

MR BENSON LUK (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I thank Honourable colleagues once again for their speeches and sharing. After listening to Members' insights, I think that in order to pursue the concept of "Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong" put forward by Director XIA Baolong, it is indeed necessary to formulate an all-round strategy for the development of a tourism city. This is a serious issue because it concerns the lifeblood of Hong Kong's economy. This is also a fun issue because we have to come up with some chill and creative ideas. This issue is about win-win cooperation because the community can enjoy the fruits. I hope that the SAR Government and various sectors will work together to explore the ideas and implement them.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the Central Government once again for introducing policies that are beneficial to Hong Kong and for fully supporting Hong Kong's economic development. We firmly believe that with the best institutional safeguard of "one country, two systems", the future of Hong Kong will definitely be bright. I implore Members to support the motion.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mr Benson LUK, as amended by Mr YANG Wing-kit, Mr Kenneth LAU, Mr YIU Pak-leung, Mr Vincent CHENG, Mr SHIU Ka-fai and Mr LUK Chung-hung, 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 as amended passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Members' motion with no legislative effect.

Ms LAM So-wai will move a motion on “Reviewing Hong Kong’s mental health policy”.

Three Members will move amendments to the motion.

This Council will proceed to a joint debate on the motion and the amendments.

Later, I will first call upon Ms LAM So-wai to speak and move the motion. Then I will call upon Ms Lillian KWOK, Mr CHAN Pui-leung and Dr Hoey Simon LEE to speak in sequence, but they may not move the amendments at this stage.

The joint debate now begins. Members who wish to speak please press the “Request to speak” button.

I now call upon Ms LAM So-wai to speak and move the motion.

MOTION ON “REVIEWING HONG KONG’S MENTAL HEALTH POLICY”

MS LAM SO-WAI (in Cantonese): President, I move that the motion, as printed on the Agenda, be passed.

Hong Kong has experienced the COVID-19 epidemic and social unrest over the past few years. Now that society has resumed to normalcy, but the economic recovery has fallen short of expectations. Quite a lot of people are facing various pressures on their livelihoods, and their mental health problems have become increasingly serious. Without realizing it, a year has passed since the incident of knife attack in Diamond Hill. Recently, there have also been a number of tragedies involving persons in mental recovery in Hong Kong, which have caused great concern in society. However, the longest waiting time for new cases of psychiatric specialist outpatient services in public hospitals reached 99 weeks last year, which is a worrying situation.

The country’s 14th Five-Year National Health Plan has identified seven tasks, including improving mental well-being and mental health services. It is also time for Hong Kong to review its mental health policy. By moving this

motion, I hope to throw a sprat to catch a mackerel, pooling together the wisdom and valuable views of Members, so that we can make concerted efforts to improve the inadequacies in the existing policy.

President, why is it necessary to review Hong Kong's mental health policy? The core problem lies in the exceedingly long waiting time for patients to seek consultation. The triage system currently adopted in specialist outpatient clinics ("SOPCs") can ensure that patients with urgent medical conditions who require early treatment are accorded priority in follow-up and treatment. Yet, patients of new cases have to wait for an excessively long time. President, it turns out that the waiting time of stable new cases is almost two years. The longer the waiting time, the more serious the patients' medical conditions would become, which will in turn increase the burden on the healthcare system.

For this reason, the Government should allocate additional resources to the public sector to, first of all, prevent the wastage of professional staff. Nevertheless, we may not be able to address the shortage of manpower in the short to medium term. It is hence extremely important to implement the new service model on a pilot basis with a view to shortening the waiting time for services. I am glad to see that the Hospital Authority has launched a public-private partnership programme for psychiatric services, but how effective is it? It has been reported by the media that as at October last year, only 52 patients participated in the programme. But the total number of attendances of psychiatric SOPCs reached 967 000 last year. I think that there is much room for improvement regarding the programme, and the Government should conduct a review in a timely manner in order to minimize the mismatch of resources.

Co-payment is one of the means. The Government may not need to subsidize patients to seek consultation from private doctors on a fully-funded basis. Instead, is it feasible for the Government and patients to pay part of the fees on their part? For example, the Government subsidizes part of the fees so that those who do not want to wait for a long time can seek consultation from private psychiatric doctors by paying \$200 to \$300 out of their pocket. This would provide an alternative choice for the patients, so that they would not have to wait for as long as 99 weeks in public hospitals, nor would they have to pay the relatively high fees charged by private practitioners. The efficiency of treatment and satisfaction of patients would also be enhanced at the same time.

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

On the other hand, for patients with psychosis who received long-acting injections, the various risks with them (including relapse, hospitalization and suicide attempts) are lower than those with psychosis who are treated with oral drugs. A study has pointed out that half of the patients with psychosis would not take the drugs even though they know that the drugs are effective. As a result, nearly 80% of them have suffered from relapse of symptoms within one year after discontinuing the medication, and each relapse would cause further damage to their brain. The use of long-acting injections can prevent patients from discontinuing the medication by themselves, and can effectively reduce the risks of hospitalization and suicide attempts by 40%. That said, according to a study, only 6% of the patients in Hong Kong are receiving long-acting injections. In addition, certain misunderstandings about long-acting injections exist in the community that only patients with serious conditions need to receive injections, or the injections are even stigmatized as “doping injections”, thus hindering the popularity of such injections among patients.

The Government and healthcare institutions can explain to the public the advantages and scientific basis of long-acting injections through education and publicity campaigns, so as to dispel these misunderstandings and prejudices. At the same time, a subsidy scheme for dedicated treatments can also be launched to subsidize patients who cannot afford the high fees to receive long-acting injections administered by private doctors, so as to alleviate their financial pressure.

In addition, the non-invasive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (“TMS”) technology, which I have mentioned earlier, has rather good efficacy in treating depression. But in the past, many psychiatrists told me that many patients had actually proactively enquired about TMS services from private doctors. However, ordinary families can hardly afford it due to the high cost of treatment, so they can only give up on this treatment, just as they know clearly that there is a cure but cannot receive it. More importantly, although some public hospitals do have TMS devices, as far as I know, their utilization rate is extremely low. The Government should really think about how to increase the utilization of this technology in public hospitals.

Deputy President, mental health problems are rather common, and they would change with people’s age and role: From adolescents to elderly persons, and to carers; from patients to persons in recovery. The mental health conditions of different individuals would change at different stages, especially when persons in mental recovery are transferred from hospitals to the community, the heavy

pressure of taking care of persons in mental recovery will be transferred from hospitals to their families and carers. I am glad to see that the Government has implemented a number of measures to support the carers in recent years, including the “District Services and Community Care Teams—Pilot Scheme on Supporting Elderly and Carers”. However, they need to better understand the special needs of carers of the persons in mental recovery. In particular, some members of the Care Teams should know mental health first aid in order to provide more comprehensive and targeted support.

Deputy President, I have spent most of my speech today talking about treatment. However, prevention is better than cure after all. Apart from formulating measures and reviewing the mental health services in Hong Kong, it is more important for the Government to do a good job in prevention through promotion, consultation and educational activities. In fact, there are already a number of relevant programmes in Hong Kong, including the “Shall We Talk” initiative, the HealHorizon Project, and so on. These programmes have indeed gained a certain level of public awareness. Nevertheless, I hope that the Government can pursue further strategic development, review the effectiveness of the programmes in a timely manner, effectively disseminate mental health information, and raise the insight of the relevant patients through online and offline promotional activities, as well as encourage those in need to seek assistance and intervention at an early stage.

As a matter of fact, policies relating to mental health often straddle across the powers and responsibilities of different Policy Bureaux and departments, rather than being the sole responsibility of the Health Bureau. Hong Kong needs to set up an interdepartmental, interbureau leadership mechanism with executive capabilities in order to ensure comprehensive and holistic policy coordination as well as effective policy formulation and implementation.

Deputy President, I so submit.

Ms LAM So-wai moved the following motion: (Translation)

“That the 14th Five-Year National Health Plan has identified seven tasks, including improving mental well-being and mental health services; recently, quite a number of tragedies relating to persons in mental recovery have occurred in Hong Kong, arousing extensive concern in society; the waiting time for psychiatric specialist outpatient (‘SOP’) services at Hong Kong’s public hospitals is long, and according to the information of the

Hospital Authority, from April 2023 to March 2024, the waiting time for new psychiatric SOP cases in the New Territories East Cluster is the longest, reaching 99 weeks, which is a worrying situation; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to:

- (1) review the existing mental health policy;
- (2) allocate additional resources to public healthcare institutions for improving mental health services;
- (3) strengthen the cooperation between public and private healthcare institutions in the area of psychiatric treatment, so as to shorten the waiting time for psychiatric SOP services; and
- (4) subsidize persons in mental recovery to seek consultation at private healthcare institutions, so as to alleviate the pressure on the psychiatric services of public healthcare institutions.”

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Ms LAM So-wai be passed.

MS LILLIAN KWOK (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. I am very grateful to Ms LAM So-wai for proposing the motion on “Reviewing Hong Kong’s mental health policy”. Mental health is very important to us, but according to the figures of the Hospital Authority (“HA”), on average, one in seven people in Hong Kong has suffered from a common psychological illness. There are currently over 300 000 people in the community suffering from depression. After the Government has implemented the Three-Tier School-based Emergency Mechanism in secondary schools, 237 referral cases have already been received within just four months. Cases of young people committing suicide, tragedies arising from the emotional problems of carers, and unfortunate incidents caused by patients with severe mental illness have taken place one after another in society. However, there is a gross imbalance in the doctor-to-patient ratio of HA’s psychiatric departments at present, in that a doctor has to take care of 761 patients on average. There is also a serious manpower shortage in terms of case managers and psychiatric nurses, reflecting that a comprehensive review of the existing mental health policy in Hong Kong must be conducted without delay.

In fact, HA has already launched the community psychiatric services for patients diagnosed with mental illness, which cover three tiers of services, namely the Intensive Care Team, Case Management Programme and Standard Community Psychiatric Service. After those in need of support have been identified, social workers of the integrated family service centres, medical social workers and psychiatric medical social workers will follow up the cases in the capacity of case managers. If members of the public are found to have mental health problems, they will be referred to the hospital by social workers or general practitioners. They will be assessed by psychiatrists and clinical psychologists, and then provided with professional intervention with medication or other medical treatments. That means they would directly jump from the first tier to the third tier, which is tantamount to the current situation that the first tier and the third tier are performing the work of the second tier, and the support at the second tier is actually absent. Therefore, I have proposed to optimize the three-tiered service model in my amendment. Apart from the top-down approach, the bottom-up approach can be adopted as well.

A lot of overseas data have shown that 80% to 90% of mental health cases can be handled at the first and second tiers without the need for referral to the third tier. Therefore, if intervention can be provided for semi-urgent, moderate and mild cases at the second tier to provide supplementary mental health treatment and individual or group counselling services, including professional counselling, play therapy, art therapy and music therapy, and if the support structure and professional services at the second tier can be improved, I believe this will reduce the number of referrals to the third tier, thereby alleviating the pressure on manpower of psychiatric departments. I have proposed that the three-tiered support should be enhanced in a bottom-up manner, and that the support services for supplementary treatment and individual counselling at the second tier should be strengthened. The Legislative Council passed the Members' motion on "Improving the mental and psychological health of the public and promoting the development of Hong Kong's counselling profession" proposed by me on 8 February last year. The seven universities in Hong Kong have been offering degree and master's degree programmes in professional counselling for many years, with more than 7 000 graduates over the past two decades. I hope that the Government will expeditiously recognize the qualifications of professional counselling in Hong Kong, and make good use of these professional counselling talents to enable patients and those seeking help to receive appropriate treatment and assistance at an early time.

In addition, many countries and regions around the world have incorporated mental health services into their primary healthcare system. At present, the District Health Centres (“DHCs”) in Hong Kong are mainly tasked with promoting health education, preventing and identifying potential chronic diseases and health risks, with the core team mainly focusing on nursing care and physiotherapy, etc. As the front line of the primary prevention system, DHCs should focus on providing mental health consultation, assessment and psychological counselling services. Therefore, I have proposed in my amendment that the posts of professional counsellors be created for providing mental health services to those in need, so as to alleviate the pressure on the waiting time in the psychiatric departments of public hospitals.

Deputy President, the country passed the Mental Health Law of the People’s Republic of China in 2012, which covers strengthening the psychological health promotion and mental disorder prevention as well as improving the level of psychological health of the public. Earlier on, I have joined the Professional Counseling Volunteer Team of the Vitality Charity Fund to assist service recipients in understanding themselves and regulating their emotions by using arts as the medium in the community. I have also visited the Hong Kong Children’s Hospital to explore the feasibility and options of providing support in the form of art therapy. Therefore, I hope that the Government will adopt a multi-pronged approach when devising mental health support policies in the future, so as to formulate a long-term mental health policy and build up a line of defence for psychological and mental health in the community.

With these remarks, I hope Members will support the original motion and my amendment. Thank you, Deputy President.

MR CHAN PUI-LEUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I proposed a motion on “Improving the mental health of children and young people” in the legislature last year, in the hope of drawing the attention of the Government and society to ensure that children and young people can grow up healthily. In view of the recent spate of tragedies relating to patients with mental illness in Hong Kong, I would like to thank Ms LAM So-wai for proposing this motion, which gives us another opportunity to discuss ways to improve the mental health of Hong Kong people.

In recent years, many surveys have reflected that the mental health of Hong Kong people is not satisfactory. What I am concerned about more is that the Government has commissioned The Chinese University of Hong Kong to conduct

a survey on the mental health of children and young people over a duration of four years. The findings have revealed that 24.4% of the respondents suffer from at least one mental illness, with half of them suffering from two or more mental illnesses at the same time; 6.9% of the respondents have suicidal thoughts or even suicidal behaviours, and the figure for secondary school students is even close to 15%. What worries me even more is that almost half of the carers have indicated that they are reluctant to seek help from professionals even if they find that children and young people show clinical symptoms of mental illness. The reasons include: they think the problem is not serious, they are worried about negative labelling, or they have no knowledge of the channels through which they can seek assistance, and so on.

Deputy President, I think this survey has sounded an alarm for society. The Government's long-standing position is to adopt an integrated approach to promote mental health at three levels, namely prevention, identification and intervention. However, in practice, owing to the inadequacies in primary mental health nursing and the lack of public awareness of mental illness, many patients tend to rely directly on services of the third tier, i.e. specialist intervention and hospital support.

I think it is necessary to do a good job in public education and primary healthcare in order to achieve early prevention and intervention of patients. The Government plans to launch a pilot scheme in three District Health Centres ("DHCs") in collaboration with community organizations to provide mental health assessments for the public. I hope that the details will be announced as early as possible. I also believe that DHCs should accord priority to making referrals for high-risk cases, then focusing their resources on supporting stable cases. Besides, the Care Teams can be trained to play a collaborative role in identifying hidden cases in the community. At the same time, exchanges and cooperation between DHCs and Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness should be strengthened for making concerted efforts to help the patients.

Deputy President, another key task of the authorities is to enhance public awareness of mental health by stepping up publicity and public education. There are a lot of misunderstandings and negative labelling about mental health in the community, and outsiders would from time to time link mental illness with propensity to violence. But in fact, the number of mentally ill persons with violent behaviours accounts for less than 5% of the total number of patients, and the risks can be greatly reduced as long as they can receive appropriate treatment.

Therefore, we should promote mental health first aid courses at the community level, so as to provide professional knowledge and training for those who are interested in understanding mental health, and build up a correct concept in the community through publicity and education. In this way, whether people are facing a mental patient or experiencing the symptoms themselves, they would be able to face them positively and seek help, thus truly achieving prevention, identification and intervention.

Of course, the core problem is the serious shortage of psychiatric healthcare manpower in Hong Kong, with the doctor-to-patient ratio in the psychiatric departments of public hospitals reaching as high as 1:760. This has led to the direct consequence that a lot of minor cases cannot receive treatment at an early stage, thus imposing a heavier burden on the healthcare system when they have deteriorated into severe cases, resulting in short supply of specialist services.

I understand that it takes a long time to train up professional personnel, but the authorities can follow the overseas practices of nurturing local mental health practitioners at the primary healthcare level, with a view to alleviating the pressure on manpower through the provision of simple and low-intensity assessment, identification, intervention and follow-up services. Strengthening the prevention and management of mental health illness at the primary healthcare level may reduce the number of unnecessary new cases on the waiting list, so that we can focus our efforts on handling the moderate and high-risk cases.

The Government should also study the promulgation of a blueprint on mental health in Hong Kong. It is only when the entire community refuses to stigmatize and marginalize patients with mental illness, and when early detection and treatment can be achieved, that the costs of treatment can be reduced and the effectiveness of treatment can be enhanced.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support Ms LAM So-wai's original motion and the other Members' amendments.

DR HOEY SIMON LEE (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. I would like to thank Ms LAM So-wai for proposing today's motion. Although this subject has been discussed for a long time, it is indeed not easy to come up with a proper arrangement. The original motion and the two amendments proposed by Ms Lillian KWOK and Mr CHAN Pui-leung focus mainly on treatment, and the

support for the grass roots has also been mentioned in particular. I have made an addition which mainly relates to children, proposing to provide daytime child-minding services for children with mental health problems, so as to support the primary carers of these families, thereby achieving complementarity in various aspects.

The World Mental Health Day falls on 10 October, and last year's theme was exactly "Together we can create a brighter future for young people's mental health". It seeks to call on society to show common concern for the mental health of children and young people, and to promote the health and well-being of children and young people. The mental well-being of children and young people usually needs to meet the following criteria, including: normal intelligence, emotional stability, sound will, complete personality, correct self-evaluation, harmonious interpersonal relationship, good social adaptation, psychological characteristics appropriate to the age stage, etc. The most common psychological problems among children and young people include mood problems, interpersonal relationship problems, learning and adaptation problems, and problems relating to the use of Internet. These problems are most commonly manifested as depression, anxiety, compulsion, bipolar disorder, etc., with depression being the majority. Some children may be extremely depressed and irritable at times, and they may be unusually excited at other times. They may even have their daily routines reversed, not sleeping at night and not waking up during the day. Some children may feel inexplicably depressed and irritable at times, and they may lose interest in daily recreational activities, have no interest in learning, have difficulties in concentrating, feel tired, be reluctant to speak and lazy to move, be unwilling to go out and socialize with others, etc. In severe cases, they may even have suicidal tendencies when they feel depressed.

Faced with the health problems of children and young people, we need to tackle them at source and in collaboration with various parties. We should step up efforts to prevent and control mental health illness among children and young people, raise the awareness of psychological illnesses, consolidate resources for treatment, establish a regional network for screening and treatment of children and young people with mental health and psychological problems, strengthen education and publicity efforts, minimize stigmatization, and provide strong support for the rehabilitation of these children and young people with mental health needs on various fronts.

Mental health problems themselves are already complicated, and the treatment and care of children with mental health problems is even more complicated, placing enormous psychological and life stress on these families and their primary carers. Inadequate support from society may even bring harm to the carers themselves, which would undermine social stability to some extent. Appropriate daytime child-minding services will not only provide primary carers with the opportunities for self-adjustment, but will also provide them with the relevant professional treatment knowledge and counselling, so that they can acquire more professional knowledge and skills to enhance the effectiveness of treatment.

In the past, daytime child-minding services were seldom included in the support measures. But according to a study, daytime child-minding services are of great help to both the carers and the children with illness. I hope that daytime child-minding services and support will be included when the Government makes planning for mental health services in the future.

With these remarks, I support the original motion and the amendments. Thank you.

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I am very grateful to Ms LAM So-wai for proposing the motion and to Ms Lillian KWOK, Mr CHAN Pui-leung and Dr Hoey Simon LEE for proposing their amendments to express their concerns and suggestions on Hong Kong's mental health policy.

Introduction

The Government attaches great importance to the mental health of the public. I recognize that mental health goes beyond medical care services. Policies on mental health have to be implemented across different Policy Bureaux and departments, which are closely linked with one another. The Government adopts an integrated approach in the promotion of mental health through coordination and collaboration among the Education Bureau ("EDB"), the Health Bureau ("HKB"), the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority ("HA"), the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the Social Welfare Department ("SWD"), non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") and other stakeholders in the community to provide multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral services to persons with mental health needs, including the promotion, prevention, early identification, intervention, treatment and rehabilitation services, self-care, and community support relating to mental health.

The Government published the Mental Health Review Report (“the Review Report”) in 2017, putting forward recommendations on enhancing the overall mental health services. To monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Report, the Government set up the Advisory Committee on Mental Health (“ACMH”) in December 2017, which comprised professional members from the healthcare, social service and education sectors, as well as lay members with concerns over mental health. The members, relevant stakeholders, NGOs, as well as relevant Policy Bureaux and departments of the Government have been working closely through the platform of ACMH to assist the Government in formulating policies and measures to enhance mental health services on all fronts.

Provision of mental health services through medical-social collaboration

Apart from timely intervention, treatment and rehabilitation services for patients with mental illness, mental health support services must be provided by the community where people live. Therefore, we need to have a multi-disciplinary team to bring together the efforts of social workers, teachers, trained non-healthcare professionals (including the counselling professionals that Ms Lillian KWOK is concerned about) and healthcare professionals, etc., as well as a clear delineation of roles in order to provide comprehensive support for the general public, persons in mental recovery and their carers. Relevant Policy Bureaux and departments of the Government have been promoting the provision of mental health support services at the community and primary healthcare levels through medical-social collaboration and the stepped care model. We will continue to explore ways to enhance the roles of non-healthcare professionals, including counselling personnel, in the multi-disciplinary team for mental health services.

In response to the needs of society and the views of stakeholders, a number of mental health services have been introduced for the general public at the community level in recent years. Here, I would like to cite some examples briefly.

On supporting persons with mental health needs and their carers, SWD operates, through subsidizing NGOs, 24 Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness across the territory to provide one-stop and district-based community mental health support services, ranging from prevention to crisis management, for persons in mental recovery and persons with suspected mental health problems, as well as their families and carers. SWD has also subsidized an NGO to operate a parents/relatives resource centre for family members and relatives of persons in mental recovery to provide support services for the carers.

In view of the problem of student suicide, EDB, HHB and SWD have, through interdepartmental cooperation, pooled together the efforts of the education sector, the social service sector and the healthcare services sector to implement the Three-Tier School-based Emergency Mechanism in December 2023 to identify students with higher risk and provide support for them as early as possible.

On the other hand, the Government also provides prevention, early identification and appropriate intervention services. At end-2023, the Government launched the “18111—Mental Health Support Hotline” and established a service centre to provide emotional support and counselling for ethnic minorities. The “18111—Mental Health Support Hotline” provides one-stop, round-the-clock support for people suffering from emotional disturbance, rendering them emotional and mental health support, and makes referrals to appropriate service providers according to the nature of the cases. The emotional support and counselling centre for ethnic minorities provides emotional support and counselling services to ethnic minorities in their languages, and refers those cases in need to other service platforms for receiving additional support or treatment.

The 2023 Policy Address has proposed that the Government will launch a pilot scheme in three District Health Centres within this year in collaboration with community organizations to provide mental health assessment for those in need, and to provide early follow-up and referral for high-risk cases. We expect that the pilot scheme will be formally launched in the third quarter of this year. Under the pilot scheme, we will provide on a trial basis intervention and counselling through counselling personnel for mild and moderate cases of common mental disorders screened out by mental health assessment. Besides, the Government will soon provide Care Team members with mental health support training, including training on mental health first aid, to assist in the early referral of persons in need in the local communities for support.

Psychiatric services of public healthcare institutions

The motion proposed by Ms LAM So-wai particularly highlights the concern about the psychiatric services of public healthcare institutions. In this connection, HA’s psychiatric multi-disciplinary team involving doctors, nurses, clinical psychologists, occupational therapists, medical social workers, peer support workers, etc., has been delivering comprehensive and continuous medical services,

including inpatient, outpatient, day rehabilitation training and community support services, to patients with varying degrees of mental health problems. I will give a brief introduction as follows.

(1) Allocating additional resources to public healthcare institutions for improving mental health services

HA has an established triage system for new cases at its psychiatric specialist outpatient clinics (“SOPCs”) to ensure that patients with urgent medical needs are given appropriate treatment within a reasonable time. New referrals to HA’s psychiatric services would be triaged into Priority 1 (urgent), Priority 2 (semi-urgent) and Routine (stable) cases. In general, patients with urgent medical needs, such as those with a high propensity to violence or strong suicidal tendency, would be triaged as Priority 1 cases in psychiatric SOPCs for arranging follow-up. Last year, HA met its targets for the median waiting time for new cases at psychiatric SOPCs, with the median waiting time for those triaged as Priority 1 being kept within one week and that for Priority 2 being kept within four weeks. In addition, HA also provides clinic services managed by psychiatric nurses to follow up patients while they are waiting for specialist outpatient services or follow-up consultations.

(2) Strengthening the cooperation between public and private healthcare institutions in the area of psychiatric treatment

Ms LAM So-wai’s motion also mentions the support provided for persons in mental recovery. The Government recognizes that the occurrence of individual cases involving persons in mental recovery would arouse extensive concern in society. To strengthen the support for persons in mental recovery, and to alleviate the pressure on HA’s psychiatric services, HA has since mid-2022 introduced the Co-care Service Model in the General Outpatient Clinic Public-Private Partnership Programme. Patients with common mental disorders (e.g. anxiety disorder, depression, adjustment disorder, etc.) who have received treatment at HA’s psychiatric SOPCs for 12 months or more and are suitable to be followed up in primary healthcare setting would be invited to receive private healthcare services and continuous care in the community, so as to shorten the waiting time for HA’s psychiatric specialist services and better allocate resources to deal with the more complicated mental illness cases.

Nevertheless, not all persons in mental recovery are suitable for follow-up under the public-private partnership model. The severity of the patient's medical condition, the medication and support services required would have a bearing on whether the case is suitable for follow-up under the public-private partnership model. As patients with severe mental illness require more comprehensive medical support and additional resources for follow-up, it is generally more appropriate for persons in mental recovery with severe mental illness to continue to be followed up in the public healthcare system. Besides, the medical-social collaboration model ensures that they will continue their recovery journey in the community in accordance with the goals and recovery plans that have been set.

(3) Community psychiatric services

In recent years, HA has been actively promoting a number of community mental health programmes to enhance its community psychiatric services, as well as collaborate with community partners and carers to support persons in mental recovery living in the community. Community psychiatric services cover three levels of services, namely the Intensive Care Team, Case Management Programme and Standard Community Psychiatric Service. Based on the medical conditions as well as clinical needs and risks of persons in mental recovery, the multi-disciplinary teams provide persons in mental recovery with appropriate community support, such as mental health assessment, symptom management, relapse prevention, medication management, crisis intervention, stress management, physical healthcare and psychoeducation, etc.

Through regular outreach or home visits, as well as close collaboration with community partners, case managers under the Case Management Programme help persons in mental recovery set goals and draw up recovery plans to facilitate their re-integration into the community, and also offer support and advice to their carers and families while endeavouring to promote mental health in the community. Earlier on, HA has further optimized the ratio of case managers to patients with severe mental disorders to no higher than 1:40.

Concluding remarks

Deputy President, the Government recognizes the public's concern about psychiatric services. As I have mentioned at the very beginning, the Government's mental health services straddle the purview of different Policy Bureaux and departments. The Government also needs to coordinate and

collaborate with different NGOs and other stakeholders in the community to meet the ever-changing mental health needs of society. The Government will continue to explore ways to address mental health issues in Hong Kong with a more integral, safe and comprehensive approach, and provide multi-disciplinary, fully integrated and coherent mental health services to persons with mental health needs having regard to society's demand for psychiatric services of public healthcare institutions.

Deputy President, I will gladly listen to Members' views and give a detailed reply later.

Thank you.

MR YANG WING-KIT (in Cantonese): Thank you, Deputy President. I speak in support of Ms LAM So-wai's motion on "Reviewing Hong Kong's mental health policy".

In the past, the Government lacked a long-term mental health policy, often addressing issues only as they emerged. The knife attack at Plaza Hollywood in Diamond Hill last year, along with several subsequent family tragedies, have drawn widespread public concern. The Government, in an attempt to remedy the situation, has proposed 10 enhanced measures to support persons in mental recovery or with mental health needs. However, these measures primarily focus on improving post-treatment services and fail to address the underlying issues.

I have always said that the Government must collect data on the mental health of the public in order to fundamentally reform mental health policy. The Population Census, conducted every five years, presents a great opportunity to include a comprehensive mental health survey. With this data, policies can be precisely tailored to address the issues. Furthermore, the Government should review the annual health assessment service provided by the Department of Health. Currently, students only need to complete a questionnaire to pass the mental health assessment, and many of them take it lightly. As a result, the questionnaire may not accurately reflect students' true mental health status and there is no follow-up on the answers by psychiatrists, making the assessment a merely formality. I suggest that the Bureau require frontline staff to monitor students as they complete the mental health questionnaires, take their answers seriously, assess the psychological conditions of students, and promptly report and refer potential patients to psychologists for treatment.

The crux of Hong Kong's mental health policy lies in the shortage of psychiatric doctors. According to the World Health Organization, the psychiatrist-to-population ratio should be at least 1 to 10 000. This means Hong Kong should have at least 700 psychiatric doctors, but in fact, we only have about 400 psychiatrists. With a doctor-to-patient ratio in public hospitals as high as 1:761, the waiting time for stable new cases in psychiatry is as long as two years, while the consultation time is only tens of minutes. The shortage of psychiatrists may result in serious cases being overlooked. In the long run, the only solution to this problem is to ensure a sufficient influx of new blood. However, efforts are still needed to improve the effectiveness of admitting non-locally trained psychiatric doctors through the special registration pathway. It is necessary for the Government to adopt a targeted strategy for recruiting psychiatrists and increase the number of training places for psychiatrists in order to meet the demand. At the same time, more resources should be allocated to train clinical social workers and counsellors with psychiatric qualifications who can provide mental health services at the District Health Centres and identify potential patients.

In the face of manpower shortage, technology can help bridge the gap. Utilizing artificial intelligence ("AI") in mental health diagnosis and treatment provides an alternative solution. Take depression diagnosis as an example. Taiwan has developed an AI brainwave-assisted diagnostic system. This system measures brainwaves to determine if a patient is experiencing low mood. In addition to serving as an objective clinical tool to help doctors in making accurate diagnoses, it also enhances patient trust and adherence to medication. We can also introduce AI diagnosis, such as AI platforms for patients to chat and interact with while waiting for the specialist outpatient services. The AI can analyse their language and keep a constant watch on their health conditions. It can also assist in recording various physiological and psychological data, and automatically forward analysis reports to the physician in charge, reducing the physician's workload and facilitating accurate diagnosis and treatment.

In addition, a number of international studies have shown that the effectiveness of providing telehealth services in psychiatry has exceeded expectations. The Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital ("PYNEH") has now regularized the provision of tele-consultations in its psychiatric units. The Government can draw on the experience of PYNEH to expand telehealth services for psychiatric units across all public hospitals in Hong Kong for stable new cases, thereby resolving the overload problem of the psychiatric specialist outpatient services at public hospitals, and establishing a mechanism of early intervention for psychiatric patients.

In view of the shortage of medical manpower, the Government should take preventive measures by educating the public on how to relieve stress and care for those around them. As for persons in mental recovery, they often resist taking traditional psychiatric drugs due to significant side effects, such as headaches and sluggishness. When I was working in the districts, I have dealt with a number of cases where the persons in mental recovery did not take their medication on time and subsequently had conflicts with their neighbours. Some of the cases have even taken up to 10 years to resolve. Will the Government consider including long-acting injections with fewer side effects in the scope of subsidized drugs, so as to encourage persons in mental recovery to take medication on time and help them integrate into the community? After all, improving mental health services can prevent tragedies from happening again. The more support and care we provide, the fewer regret there will be.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the original motion and all the amendments.

REVD CANON PETER DOUGLAS KOON (in Cantonese): Deputy President, the mental health of students has aroused concerns in recent years. Data indicate that in the past five years, the number of primary and secondary school students suffering from mental illness has increased twofold from 600 to 1 980. Last year, the Education Bureau received 32 suspected student suicide cases, an increase of 7 cases over the previous year and a five-year high. In addition, the results of the self-administered questionnaire of students attending Student Health Service Centres revealed that the percentages of students who had planned to commit suicide and attempted suicide in the past year were as high as 2.8% and 1.3% respectively, which are quite alarming. This reflects that the negative emotions of our students have reached a critical point, sounding an alarm for the community. Deputy President, what kind of difficulties is our young generation facing that would drive them to commit suicide?

Deputy President, although the Government implemented a three-tier emergency mechanism in December last year in the hope of identifying and supporting students with higher suicide risks at an early stage, the effectiveness of the mechanism remains unknown for the time being. Meanwhile, the emergency mechanism is only a remedy for students experiencing mental health problems, and relying solely on the support from school social workers as a stopgap measure is clearly insufficient. As the saying goes, “life is precious”. Everyone should

cherish the meaning of life and strive to live a more fulfilling life. In view of the worsening problem of student suicides, the Government should understand the underlying causes to find the right remedy, thus tackling the problem at its root.

Deputy President, to further improve the mental health of students, the Government must adopt a multi-pronged approach to provide more comprehensive and in-depth preventive services in terms of family education, school and teacher support, so as to identify and intervene in the emotional health problems of children and adolescents at an early stage and at the source.

Deputy President, family education is very important. “Family is the first school, and parents are their child’s first teachers.” In order to write a successful life script for a child, the importance of parents acting as role models cannot be overstated. The role of parents is crucial for children and adolescents at every stage of their development. Therefore, apart from reviewing the effectiveness of the existing parent gatekeeper programme, the Government should strengthen parent education. This includes teaching parents effective communication and knowledge skills, encouraging them to listen patiently to their children’s voices and needs with an attitude of “listen more and criticize less”, encouraging parents to address their children’s mental health problems with a positive mindset, thereby fostering a supportive family culture. In addition, the Government should subsidize schools to launch more parent education activities on mental health.

Deputy President, as for school support, given the low attendance rate of the existing Student Health Service (“SHS”) by the Department of Health, the Government should consider discussing with schools to change the current practice. Instead of voluntary participation, schools should coordinate and arrange for students to visit the Student Health Service Centres for health assessment and follow-ups, so as to increase the participation rate. In addition, the Government should allocate more resources at source, strengthen home-school cooperation, and encourage schools to establish parent support groups to jointly address children’s mental health issues and find the appropriate solutions at an early stage.

Deputy President, lastly, in respect of teachers, I believe that apart from strengthening the training of school staff in mental health knowledge and skills, the authorities should create more space and opportunities for teachers to interact and spend time with students. By building close and trusting relationships, teachers can provide timely counselling and support to students in need.

With these remarks, Deputy President, I support the original motion and all the amendments.

MR EDWARD LEUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President. I speak in support of the original motion moved by Ms LAM So-wai and the amendments proposed by Ms Lillian KWOK, my party member.

As the spokesperson for health affairs for the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, I have always been deeply concerned about the development of healthcare services. In the past, I also proposed a Members' motion on "Shortening the waiting time for specialist outpatient services at public hospitals", addressing, among others, the lengthy waiting time for psychiatric specialist outpatient services and the long-standing problem of manpower shortage. According to the territory-wide mental health data released by the authorities in the past few years, the mental health index for Hong Kong people has failed to reach the passing level for five consecutive years, among which 15% and 12% of the respondents suffered from anxiety disorders and depression respectively.

For citizens who are under psychological or emotional distress, their mild emotional problems can easily escalate into serious mental illnesses if they have to wait for up to 99 weeks to receive psychiatric specialist treatment. I believe this will pose serious challenges to the patients, their families and even the society as a whole. Therefore, I hope the authorities can address this problem squarely to prevent the recurrence of tragedies.

Deputy President, the Panel on Health Services of this Council happens to discuss the issue of healthcare manpower this week. Take psychiatric nurses as an example, the latest report indicates that manpower shortage can only be expected to be resolved by 2030 at the earliest. Therefore, the next six years will be a very crucial period, and I strongly support the amendments proposed by my party member to incorporate mental health in the scope of primary healthcare services. In my opinion, such a proposal can plug the loophole that exists during this critical period.

In fact, emotional problems are less likely to escalate into serious mental illnesses if they can be resolved at a relatively early stage. As the Buddhist saying goes, "Each flower, a world of its own; and each leaf, a Tathagata." A slight

change in mindset can indeed bring about a completely different feeling. The key lies in whether or not one can deal with and resolve the problem timely, so as to avoid getting into a dead end and sinking deeper and deeper.

In light of this, in response to a very unfortunate incident last year, the authorities proposed 10 enhanced measures to support individuals with mental health needs, and I support such action. The Policy Address delivered subsequently further proposed that a pilot scheme be launched in three District Health Centres to provide mental health assessment for the public at the district level, so that prompt follow-up actions can be taken. However, it seems that there has been no further updates and announcements on the relevant progress of the pilot scheme so far. Therefore, I would like the authorities to explain to us the current development and the timetable of the scheme concerned.

In addition, at present, the authorities have provided a range of self-assessment tools (such as Body Mass Index and diabetes risk assessment) on the websites of District Health Centres, promoting public awareness of self-testing, which is a good approach. For anxiety disorders and depression, it is the usual practice of the industry to first use assessment tools for preliminary identification. Can the authorities consider adopting the same approach by uploading such information and tools onto a relevant web page? This would enable the public in need to conduct self-tests, and even their family members can also make use of such a method to help those around them to conduct simple assessments. Of course, we should not blindly trust this method, but it is still a tool worthy of reference for early identification of these issues within the society.

Deputy President, the World Health Organization has once pointed out that “there is no health without mental health”. The amount of mental health support a society offers can provide insights into its healthcare level. I hope that the SAR Government can take proactive measures to address this issue, and the Hong Kong Mental Health Index Survey can yield passing or even satisfactory results.

I so submit. Thank you, Deputy President.

MR DENNIS LEUNG (in Cantonese): Deputy President, I speak in support of the original motion and all the amendments.

The Legislative Council Panel on Health Services (“the Panel”) convened a special meeting on 19 June 2023 to discuss the treatment, rehabilitation services and support provided to persons in mental recovery and persons with mental health needs. As stated in the Panel paper, having considered the views of the Advisory Committee on Mental Health, the Government has proposed 10 measures to enhance mental health services in a bid to offer more comprehensive support to persons in mental recovery with a history of severe mental disorders and other persons with mental health needs. The Chief Executive’s 2023 Policy Address also includes dedicated contents on the work on mental health. Paragraph 145 stated that “the Government attaches great importance to mental health, and will continue to adopt an integrated approach to promote mental health, which covers prevention, early identification, as well as provision of timely intervention, treatment and rehabilitation for persons in need”. Therefore, I believe that the Government is determined and has plans to help persons with mental health problems, including the family members of such patients, by providing them with prompt treatment and support, with the objective of “achieving genuinely healthy well-being”.

(THE PRESIDENT resumed the Chair)

What is meant by health? Health, as defined by the World Health Organization, is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. There are still a lot of misconceptions about mental health worldwide, and not much importance has been attached to mental health. Hong Kong is no exception. Let us first look at some figures. Firstly, the figures in 2019 indicated that 61% of Hong Kong people were experiencing relatively poor mental health, with one in every seven Hong Kong people developing a common mental disorder in their lifetime. Secondly, the number of people with mental illness in 2014 doubled, compared to that of 10 years ago (i.e. 2004). Thirdly, 74% of people with mental illness did not seek any professional assistance.

In that case, will work affect mental health? Surveys revealed that lack of physical or mental space, limited opportunities to take breaks, unstable employment, as well as tense workplace cultures resulting from workplace conflicts and bosses all contribute to poor mental health. What are the relevant figures then? Firstly, Hong Kong has one of the longest working hours in the

world, with the average working hours per week reaching 51.1 hours, and nearly 40% of Hong Kong people work overtime for 4 to 8 hours per week. Secondly, 46% of Hong Kong employees worked more than 50 hours a week in 2018. Furthermore, Hong Kong employees lost an average of 77.4 days (i.e. about two and a half months) of productive time per year. Thirdly, Hong Kong ranked 45th out of 50 participating regions in the 2020 Work-Life Balance Index. What is even more noteworthy is that Hong Kong ranked first in the Top Overworked Cities ranking. Fourthly, 1 in every 4 Hong Kong people is suffering from anxiety disorders or depression, which is 2.5 times of the world's average, with nearly 20% needing psychotherapy.

Therefore, as a Member from the labour sector, I hope that the SAR Government will expeditiously follow up on the regulation of working hours, so as to help the 3.8 million wage earners in Hong Kong to have a healthy working environment and a healthy body with a healthy mind. To make Hong Kong more vibrant and healthier, I have the following suggestions.

First, expeditiously regulate working hours and set standards, and establish a pay compensation mechanism for overtime work.

Second, the Government is expected to publish the Mental Health Review Report again so as to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of its work and formulate more targeted mental health policies for the present and the future.

Third, train more psychiatrists to meet the number recommended by the World Health Organisation for the population of Hong Kong, that is, at least 800 psychiatrists.

Fourth, psychiatric beds are currently provided only by public hospitals, which is not conducive to giving patients the choice to seek other medical help. The Government should formulate a policy to require private hospitals to set up psychiatric beds, so that patients have a choice and private hospitals can help patients resolve their conditions.

Fifth, regarding mental health treatment arrangements for young people, in order to properly take care of and cherish the next generation of Hong Kong, the Government should explore public-private partnership, so that young people with early-stage illnesses can receive timely treatment and rehabilitation.

Sixth, the Government should step up efforts in promoting mental health campaigns and mental health education. By doing so, more Hong Kong people can learn more about mental health and every Hong Kong people can lead a life with a healthy mind.

President, I so submit.

MR DUNCAN CHIU (in Cantonese): President, before I begin my speech, I would like to declare that I am a member of the Hospital Authority (“HA”) and the Chairman of the Hospital Governing Committee of Kwai Chung Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Ms LAM So-wai for proposing today’s motion. Indeed, mental health has become a common concern worldwide. In recent years, the SAR Government has also attached great importance to the mental health of the public. The Mental Health Review Report (“the Review Report”), published in 2017, has put forward 40 recommendations, and the Advisory Committee on Mental Health was also set up to assist the Government in formulating mental health policies and measures, as well as following up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Report. However, as mentioned by quite a number of Members earlier, mental health issues and cases have continued to arise in society recently, posing a significant challenge to all of us.

Theoretically, by allocating more resources to increase the number of psychiatric beds, and to hire more psychiatrists and nurses in public hospitals, the Government can alleviate some of the backlog of cases and reduce the waiting time of patients. It may seem simple, but in reality, it is a highly complex issue. The Secretary has just shared various examples, including the implementation of a patient triage system. However, the shortage of psychiatrists remains a challenge. Investing resources today does not immediately result in an increase in the number of psychiatrists, and it takes time for resources to yield results.

According to the information provided by HA, in recent years, there have been an average of around 370 psychiatrists in public hospitals in Hong Kong each year. In 2022-2023, there were 381 psychiatrists, compared to 351 psychiatrists in 2018-2019. This represents an increase of 30 psychiatrists over a four-year period, with a growth rate of approximately 8.5%. However, in terms of patients, the number of psychiatric patients in public hospitals has increased year-on-year

from 261 800 in 2018-2019 to 296 900 in 2022-2023. Over four years, there has been an increase of 35 100 patients, with a growth rate of approximately 13.4% or an annual increase of 8 775 patients. The doctor-to-patient ratio has also increased from 1:746 in 2018-2019 to 1:779 in 2022-2023. As mentioned by some Members earlier, according to the standard of the World Health Organization, there should be 1 psychiatrist for every 10 000 people. Based on Hong Kong's population of approximately 7.5 million at the end of 2023, we need 750 psychiatrists in Hong Kong. However, at present, there are only about 430 psychiatrists in Hong Kong in both the public and private sectors, and the shortage of psychiatrists remains a challenge that needs to be addressed. Taking Kwai Chung Hospital, where I serve as the Chairman of the Hospital Governing Committee, as an example, with 80 psychiatrists, the number of consultations reached 240 000 last year. Hence, how to increase the number of psychiatrists is a pressing issue that we have to face.

Apart from increasing the number of psychiatrists, Ms LAM So-wai has also raised some issues in relation to her original motion, such as public-private partnership programme in healthcare. Taking Kwai Chung Hospital as an example, the Government has been promoting and implementing public-private partnership in healthcare, and there has been certain progress. However, psychiatry differs from other specialties in that it is a highly person-oriented field, and many patients prefer to continue consulting the same psychiatrist rather than being referred to another psychiatrist in the private sector. As a result, there are many cases where patients eventually return to public hospitals. Is this a very successful direction? I believe it is still under adjustment. As for the introduction of overseas doctors, psychiatry is a specialty that heavily relies on effective language communication. If there is a language barrier, even with the introduction of overseas doctors, the problem may not necessarily be resolved.

Therefore, in order to effectively address the problems in psychiatry, as well as to handle and triage the mental health cases which are ever-increasing, I suggest taking a two-pronged approach. Firstly, as mentioned by the Secretary earlier, we should recruit more personnel who are equipped to deal with and follow up on the issues of mental patients at the community level. This involves effective division of labour and collaboration among healthcare, social work, and education sectors, with the participation of school teachers, social workers, counsellors and social organizations, with a view to properly dealing with the issues of mental patients. Besides, relevant organizations should be provided with professionally-trained personnel to assist in handling mental health cases at different levels.

Secondly, the role and functions of Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness can be enhanced. The Centres can collaborate with various NGOs (non-governmental organizations) in order to train more case managers in the community, who can assist in handling mild cases or conducting early intervention work, thereby helping to identify and manage early-stage patients for hospitals. I hope the Bureau will consider these relief measures.

With these remarks, President, I support the original motion and the amendments.

MR ROBERT LEE (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. I speak in support of Ms LAM So-wai's motion on "Reviewing Hong Kong's mental health policy".

There are currently over 300 000 mental health patients in Hong Kong, accounting for about 4% of the population. The situation cannot be overlooked, and it warrants the Government's effort to review its mental healthcare service policy. I will give my views on three aspects: reviewing the services for people with mental illness of different ages, increasing healthcare manpower, and encouraging the private market to give attention to mental health.

People of different ages face different stages in life, which affect their mental health. In the past, I came across an elderly woman who lived alone. Her husband took care of all the daily routines and also took good care of her. After her husband passed away, she had suicidal thoughts as she lost her pillar of support. A primary school principal also told me that a student once planned to jump off the school rooftop. These examples made me realize that suicide cases among mental health patients are not just ice-cold figures. There is a story behind each case that needs more attention from all sectors of society.

Therefore, the SAR Government needs to introduce comprehensive policies that target mental health issues in different age groups. For example, in December last year, the Government implemented a Three-tier School-based Emergency Mechanism targeting mental health problems among young people. The mechanism has shown initial results. The Government can consider using it as a basis to make the mechanism a permanent policy and consider expanding it to primary schools. In addition, the Government should also formulate measures and set up a team to take care of the mental health of the elderly, especially the widowed and those living alone, as well as long-term carers. These people need

care from society. The Government can organize social workers and Care Teams to make regular visits and provide mental health counselling. I also support Mr CHAN Pui-leung's proposal to "strengthen mental health support services in primary healthcare and enhance public awareness of mental health", so that the public will understand the importance of mental health and will not label themselves negatively, and be encouraged to seek professional help proactively.

In addition, the Government set targets for psychiatric manpower and waiting time of psychiatric specialties last year, and the waiting times for urgent and semi-urgent cases have now met the targets. However, Hong Kong still faces a shortage of psychiatric healthcare workers. The turnover rate of psychiatric doctors in Hong Kong has reached 6.4%, and the turnover rate of psychiatric nurses is also as high as about 8.3%. In the future, the Government needs to increase manpower, provide resources and benefits, and find out the reasons for the high turnover rates to retain more psychiatric healthcare professionals.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has pointed out that mental health problems can impose a heavy burden on society and the economy, accounting for up to 4% of the Gross Domestic Product. The Government can encourage the private market to develop measures to care for the health of employees, and should emphasize to the market that such measures will help improve the efficiency of employees. It can even provide subsidies to employers who recruit elderly employees, thereby improving some of the mental problems of the elderly caused by loneliness.

Overall, the Government's increased allocation of resources for the treatment and prevention of mental illnesses will not only help patients, but also bring benefits to the economy. The Government can consider this expenditure as an investment to increase the sense of fulfilment of the people.

I also agree with the other proposals put forward in the motion and amendments, and I hope that the Government will continue to improve mental health care services and introduce more preventive policies.

With these remarks, President, I support the motion.

IR CHAN SIU-HUNG (in Cantonese): President, the World Health Organization points out that "there is no health without mental health". Mental health does not only affect personal development. Family harmony, social stability and economic

prosperity also hinge, to a large extent, on the mental health of individuals and the public at large. As such, a timely review of Hong Kong's mental health policy is necessary.

Suggestions made by Ms LAM So-wai in her motion and several other Members in their amendments include, among others, urging the Government to review the existing mental health policy, allocating additional resources to public healthcare institutions, strengthening the cooperation between public and private healthcare institutions, subsidizing persons in mental recovery to seek consultation at private healthcare institutions, optimizing community psychiatric services, and incorporating mental health in the scope of primary healthcare services. These suggestions are aimed at shortening the waiting time for psychiatric specialist outpatient services at public hospitals so that persons with mental illness can be assessed and treated by doctors as soon as possible. I concur with their views.

In 2017, the Government published the Mental Health Review Report, putting forward some 40 recommendations covering such areas as publicity and public education, studies on capacity building, and the provision of support to persons of different age groups to enhance mental health services. Psychiatric specialist outpatient clinics of public hospitals and the 24 Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness ("ICCMWs") subvented by the Social Welfare Department are the major providers of the relevant services at present.

In my opinion, the tragedies involving persons in mental recovery in recent years are attributable to the delay in seeking medical care by patients for fear of discrimination and the lack of appropriate support for persons in mental recovery upon their return to the community. The Government should review whether there is seamless service transition for discharged patients, that is, whether they can continue to receive the necessary treatment and have their case followed up by the case managers of ICCMWs, ensuring that they are linked with different community organizations, so as to understand their progress of adaptation.

With regard to treatment, psychiatric specialist outpatient services at public hospitals are the preferred choice of members of the public as services provided by the private sector is costly. However, the long waiting time will add to the anxiety of the patients. If primary care providers and private institutions can be engaged in the provision of support, the waiting time for receiving diagnosis and treatment will be shortened.

With reference to the Hospital Authority's Smart Patient Website, common mental diseases such as depression, anxiety disorder, panic disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder mainly affect patient's life and emotion, but patients can gradually recover with medication or psychological treatment. Even with serious mental disorders caused by changes in brain functions, such as bipolar affective disorder and schizophrenia, stabilization of condition is still possible with early detection and appropriate treatment.

President, the Government should enhance public awareness of mental health and encourage them to undergo rapid assessment so that persons with suspected serious mental disorder can be identified and accordingly receive assessment by public hospitals or psychiatrists at the first opportunity.

As for patients with mild mental illness, the Government should encourage healthcare and social welfare service units in the community to enhance collaboration, such as making good use of District Health Centres, community pharmacies, Care Teams, clinical psychologists, social workers or counsellors of private counselling centres and other professionals to provide assessment, referral and psychological counselling services for distressed individuals.

I am also concerned about whether support from case managers of ICCMWs and community nurses is available to persons in mental recovery after they are discharged from the hospital. In this connection, the case registration and referral processes should be set out specifically so that no patients will be left out due to excess demand for the services. Besides, recovery plan developed by seasoned professionals and proper follow-up consultation are important for mental health patients. Although the Government has already planned to lower the ratio of case manager to patients with a view to providing better support to patients, the manpower shortage and turnover in the healthcare and social welfare sectors after the pandemic has impeded the implementation of mental health services.

I hope that the Government can, in addition to allocating additional resources, encourage public and private healthcare institutions, community organizations as well as subvented and private organizations to work closely with each other, strengthening the role of psychologists and counsellors in the community on assessment, triage and intervention for all parties concerned to jointly cater for the needs of patients for psychological treatment and medication. In the long run, this will lower the cost of receiving mental health assessment and treatment so that the public will attach greater importance to their mental health, which will in turn improve the mental well-being of members of the public.

With these remarks, I support the original motion and all the amendments. Thank you, President.

PROF WILLIAM WONG (in Cantonese): President, after the establishment of the review committee on mental health in 2013 in Hong Kong, we have achieved remarkable success on mental health services.

The Government has introduced various measures such as “Joyful@HK campaign”, the Student Mental Health Support Scheme and the Dementia Community Support Scheme. These measures help expand the scope of mental health services and upgrade their professional standards, with a view to providing members of the public with a comprehensive and detailed support.

Besides, the Government has launched the Case Management Programme to provide comprehensive support to patients with severe mental illness. This programme provided a more attentive services for patients through a multi-disciplinary service delivery to enhance the quality of clinic services.

However, the statistics show that the average score of Mental Health Index for Hong Kong in 2022 was only 47.64, which is far below the passing score of 52 recommended by the World Health Organization. The index score not only reflects the mental health problems of Hong Kong people, but also signifies the need to further intensify and enhance our mental health services. For this reason, I suggest that the Government should consider employing artificial intelligence (“AI”) to solve these problems.

Let us look at how Singapore introduced AI for mental health diagnostic assessment. Taking Opsi system as an example, this is an emotion AI software designed to diagnose potential mental health problems by capturing and analysing human reactions and facial expressions from video calls. Recently, the Faculty of Medicine at The Chinese University of Hong Kong has also developed a mobile depression assessment app that deploys AI to conduct an integrated diagnosis through the analysis of a user’s facial expressions, voice, and language, as well as rest-activity statistics measured by actigraphy. It has over 80% accuracy. These AI tools allow doctors to better understand the patients’ condition, enhance the effectiveness of treatment and enable patients to get well soon.

The Government attaches great importance to the mental health issue and has indicated to enhance the ratio of case manager to patients. At the same time, some academics have also pointed out that case managers are largely social workers without necessary medical training to meet the needs of patients suffering from moderate to severe mental illnesses.

Therefore, I think the Mainland AI therapist EmoGPT is useful in mental health treatment and worth reference. As an AI-based counselling platform, EmoGPT can provide 24-hour service to compensate for a lack of time and resources in traditional mental health services. By analysing massive user data, EmoGPT can also provide personalized advice and support, thereby further improving its quality of services and effectiveness.

Of course, EmoGPT cannot replace professional mental health service. But it is an effective complement to provide timely and convenient mental health support services. I believe that, with the Government's support and the integration of innovation and technology, we can better cope with mental health challenges and safeguard the public's physical and mental well-being.

With these remarks, President, I support the original motion and all the amendments.

MR CHAN KIN-POR (in Cantonese): Thank you, President. In recent years, tragedies related to patients with mental illness have occurred from time to time in Hong Kong, the most horrifying of which was the murder case in Diamond Hill. At that time, the Government introduced 10 measures to enhance support for patients. Despite achieving some success, due to the large number of patients and limited resources, it is still difficult to completely prevent violent incidents.

I would like to express my gratitude to Ms LAM So-wai for moving today's motion. In the face of this ticking time bomb in society, the Government should introduce measures to enhance the manpower of doctors and social workers. At the same time, it should consider allowing more patients to receive long-acting injections, which have been proven effective in reducing the chances of relapse. As these injections are expensive and difficult to make widely accessible, the Government can consider seeking national support to join the Mainland's drug bulk procurement mechanism to purchase drugs at affordable prices for the benefit of patients.

As of the middle of last year, there were approximately 290 000 patients with mental illness in Hong Kong but only 380 government psychiatrists, meaning that each of them has to take care of as many as 760 patients on average. Among the 50 000 new cases each year, some of the extreme cases have to wait for 81 to 99 weeks to receive treatment, which is far from satisfactory. Symptoms of mental illnesses may fluctuate at any time. While new patients with other illnesses can seek immediate assistance from hospitals in case of contingencies, patients with mental illness may not be able to seek help on their own if their condition worsens. Therefore, the Government should expeditiously increase the manpower of specialists and consider recruiting them from overseas when necessary.

Furthermore, the Government has increased the manpower of case managers under the Case Management Programme (“the Programme”), and each case manager will only be responsible for no more than 40 patients. However, data shows that the Programme can only follow up on around 18 000 patients each year, while the number of cases with severe mental illness remains at around 50 000 annually in Hong Kong. Certainly, if the patients are able to attend follow-up consultations and take their medication on time, not all of them need to be followed up by a designated team. However, as the current follow-up rate is just over 30%, it may be necessary for the Government to review the effectiveness of the Programme on a regular basis, and increase the manpower of the case managers as far as possible if the results are not satisfactory.

Moreover, at the end of last year, the Health Bureau launched the Mental Health Support Hotline (“the Hotline”), which is, for the very first time, fully managed by the Government, to provide one-stop support for people with mental health needs. In the first three months, the Hotline answered a total of about 30 000 calls, of which 200 cases required follow-up actions and 2 cases required police intervention. In fact, the initiative has shown initial results. The Government can consider comprehensively optimizing the initiative in the future and even explore leveraging the convenience of the Hotline to proactively contact or reach out to those in need (such as new cases awaiting a long time or patients who have missed follow-up appointments), aiming for timely intervention and reducing the risk of potential crises.

Lastly, I must discuss the issue of long-acting injections. Regarding the so-called long-acting injections, the older generation of these injections only needed to be administered once every two weeks. The new generation can even be administered once a month or even once every three months to eliminate the

need for daily medication. These injections provide great benefits for patients. It is stated that up to half of the patients failed to fully comply with the doctor's instructions to take their medication, and some of them stopped taking medication on their own as soon as they felt slightly better. Their relapse rate reaches 90%. Additionally, according to research conducted by the University of Hong Kong, these injections can reduce the relapse rate by 48% and the suicide risk by 44%, which is quite remarkable.

However, long-acting injections are expensive. Currently, out of 50 000 severe patients, only 5 000 are prescribed the new generation of injections, and another 8 300 are prescribed the older ones. The usage of these injections is not yet widely accessible. In fact, in recent years, more and more patients have been going north for medical treatment because pharmaceutical products are more affordably priced in the Mainland than in Hong Kong. For example, the same cancer drug costs \$60,000 per month in Hong Kong but only \$16,000 in the Mainland. Dr KO Wing-man, a member of the Executive Council, once pointed out that with a relatively small market size, Hong Kong is no match for the Mainland in bargaining power for bulk procurement of drugs, resulting in significant differences in drug prices between the two places. I suggest that the Government should seek to join the Mainland's drug bulk procurement mechanism, so that patients can purchase drugs at lower prices.

Since mental illness is a ticking time bomb in society, and the injections have been proven effective, they should be made widely accessible. If the price of these injections is indeed much lower in the Mainland, the Government should consider adopting this suggestion. Before successfully joining the Mainland's drug procurement mechanism, the Government can also explore subsidizing stable patients to receive injections at hospitals in Shenzhen, thereby allowing more patients to receive injections as soon as possible.

Thank you, President.

SUSPENSION OF MEETING

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now suspend the meeting until 9:00 am tomorrow.

Suspended accordingly at 6:28 pm.

WRITTEN ANSWER

Written answer by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism to Ms Joephy CHAN's supplementary question to Question 3

The Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency (formerly known as Create Hong Kong) under the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau has been actively promoting the Film Financing Scheme (Scheme) for Mainland Market through different channels, including promotion at different film festivals in the Mainland. For example, in April 2024, a press conference was held at the 14th Beijing International Film Festival to introduce the Scheme. The Scheme was also promoted at the Guangdong Film Annual Conference and Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao- Greater Bay Area Film Industry Exchange and Promotion Conference in Zengcheng, Guangzhou in May 2024 and the Shanghai International Film Festival in June 2024. During our visits to the Mainland, we met with the Mainland officials and representatives of the Mainland film industry to introduce details of the Scheme. For local promotion, we organised a sharing session during the Hong Kong International Film & TV Market in March 2024 and invited seasoned Mainland screenwriters, film directors and Mainland film distributors as sharing guests.

2. The industry very much welcomed this Scheme and we have received a number of inquiries before its launch. The Scheme was launched on 6 May 2024, a total of two applications have been received. One of the applications is at the assessment stage, while the other one is awaiting the submission of supplementary information and documents from the applicant. As the Scheme has only been launched for less than two months, we believe that more applications will be received in the future.

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 7

(Written Reply)

Asked by : Hon Steven HO

Date of meeting : 12 June 2024

Replied by: Secretary for Development

Reply:

President,

The Government strives to implement the New Territories Cycle Track Network (NTCTN) in stages, with an aim of connecting the cycle tracks in the New Territories East and West. Currently, the Tuen Mun to Ma On Shan backbone section of about 60 kilometers (km), the section from Tsuen Wan Riviera Park to Bayview Garden of about 2 km, and the branching off section of cycle track in Sam Mun Tsai in Tai Po of about 1 km, are open for public use. To facilitate the enjoyment of cyclists, the Government provides ancillary facilities along the cycle tracks, including cycling entry/exit hubs near public transport interchanges to provide bicycle parking spaces, bicycle rental and repairs kiosks, practising areas, first aid stations or information kiosks, as well as resting stations and public toilets at suitable locations. Public toilets along the NTCTN are mainly managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), while those in the parks and recreational facilities along the route are managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and those in the Wetland Park and country parks along the route are managed by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD).

In response of the Hon Steven Ho's question, having consulted the Environment and Ecology Bureau, FEHD, LCSD, AFCD and the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), the Development Bureau's consolidated reply is as follows:

(1) When planning for the provision of public toilets, the Government will consider the number of existing nearby public toilets, utilization data, land requirements, feasibility, as well as the opinions and requests of nearby residents, local community and District Councils. The public can locate public toilets available along the NTCTN through the "HKeMobility" app. In the course of planning and design for the NTCTN, CEDD consulted and obtained support from relevant District Councils and cycling groups regarding the number, locations and

facilities of the newly provided public toilets. Apart from about 100 existing public toilets in the vicinity of the NTCTN, CEDD has provided a total of 8 public toilets stated below at cycling entry/exit hubs and suitable resting stations. These public toilets are in use and handed over to FEHD for management.

Serial No.	District	Name and location of Public Toilets
1	Tuen Mun	Siu Hong Public Toilet Siu Hong Court near Ng Lau Road (located at the Tuen Mun Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)
2	Yuen Long	Tin Fuk Road Public Toilet Tin Fuk Road, Tin Shui Wai (located at the Tin Shui Wai Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)
3	Yuen Long	Small Traders New Village (1) Public Toilet Long Wo Road, Yuen Long (located at the Yuen Long Town Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)
4	North	Ho Sheung Heung Public Toilet (III) At Side of Cycle Track, Ho Sheung Heung Pai Fung Road, Sheung Shui (located at the Sheung Shui Sheung Yue River Resting Station)
5	North	Shek Wu Hui Public Toilet San Wan Road, Sheung Shui (located at the Sheung Shui Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)
6	Sha Tin	University Station Public Toilet Chak Cheung Street, Sha Tin (located at the University Station Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)
7	Tsuen Wan	Hoi Hing Road Public Toilet Cycle Track, Hoi Hing Road, Tsuen Wan (located at the Tsuen Wan Waterfront Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)
8	Tai Po	Sam Mun Tsai Road Public Toilet Sam Mun Tsai Road, Tai Po (located at the Sam Mun Tsai Resting Station)

Note : All public toilets are equipped with accessible toilets

(2) Based on the above-mentioned considerations in planning for the provision of public toilets, the distribution along the route varies and they are not rigidly provided at a fixed interval. Based on the total length of 63 km and about 100 public toilets along the route of the cycle track, the average distance between public toilets is about 0.6 km. The farthest distance between two public toilets is about 7 km, which are located between Yuen Long Town Cycling Entry/Exit

Hub and Mai Po Tsuen. Calculated from the midpoint of these two public toilets, the journey of the nearest public toilet is about 3.5 km which requires not more than 20 minutes to cycle (about 50 minutes for cyclists who choose to walk under special circumstances). Currently temporary toilets are provided by FEHD at Pok Wai South Road for that section, so that users can reach a toilet with half the time required.

(3) For temporary public toilets in the villages along the cycle track network, there are currently temporary toilets provided by FEHD at three locations, including Pok Wai South Road in Yuen Long, Ting Kok Road near Ting Kok Tsuen and near Tung Tsz Road in Tai Po, as well as temporary toilets provided by AFCD at three locations in Long Valley Ecological Park near to the cycle track.

(4) and (5) FEHD and AFCD inspect temporary toilets and arrange their service contractors to regularly clean them and repair damaged facilities so as to ensure the hygiene and normal operation of the toilets. FEHD and AFCD will also arrange staff to follow up upon receipt of complaint(s).

FEHD and AFCD will review the provision of temporary toilets on need basis, and based on considerations such as utilization data, land requirements, feasibility, as well as the opinions of nearby residents, local community and District Councils, etc., propose and explore with relevant Government departments the need and feasibility of converting temporary public toilets to permanent public toilets. Considering these factors, FEHD and AFCD currently have no plan to convert those temporary toilets mentioned in part (3) above to permanent public toilets.

- End -

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 8

(Written Reply)

Asked by Prof Hon CHAN Wing-kwong

Date of meeting : 12 June 2024

Replied by : Secretary for Health

Reply

President,

The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address (Policy Address) announced that the Government will leverage the medical strengths of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) with the long-term objective of establishing an authority that registers drugs and medical devices (medical products) under the "primary evaluation" approach, i.e. to directly approve applications for registration of drugs in Hong Kong based on clinical trial data without relying on registration approval from other drug regulatory authorities, and start approving applications for registration of medical devices. This will help accelerate the clinical use of new medical products so as to enhance healthcare standards, and foster the development of industries relating to the research and development (R&D) and clinical trials of medical products, developing Hong Kong into an international health and medical innovation hub.

In the past six months or so following the announcement of the Policy Address, the HKSAR Government has implemented measures in all respects and achieved results.

Firstly, with the support and guidance of the National Medical Products Administration (NMPA), Hong Kong, China has become an observer of the International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH) on 31 October 2023. This allows Hong Kong to familiarise itself with the latest developments in the drug regulation regime, to further align Hong Kong with the World Health Organization (WHO)-Listed Authority.

Secondly, the HKSAR Government implemented a new mechanism for the approval of new drugs (the "1+" mechanism) on 1 November 2023. Under the "1+" mechanism, holders of registration from one of the recognised drug

regulatory authorities (instead of two) for drugs containing new chemical or biological entities could apply for registration in Hong Kong, on the condition that they could provide local clinical data that complies with the requirements and information recognised by local experts.

Thirdly, the HKSAR Government has established the Preparatory Office for the Hong Kong Centre for Medical Products Regulation (CMPR) under the Department of Health (DH) on 5 June this year. The Preparatory Office for the CMPR will comprehensively study and plan a regulatory and approval regime for medical products suitable for Hong Kong; and put forward proposals and steps for the establishment of the CMPR.

The HKSAR Government will continue to actively follow up on the relevant work, to attract more pharmaceutical and medical device enterprises, both locally and from around the world, to conduct R&D and clinical trials in Hong Kong, and build the capacity, recognition and status for ensuring that the eventual approval mechanism of medical products in Hong Kong would be widely recognised internationally and by the Mainland, and develop Hong Kong into an international health and medical innovation hub.

In consultation with the DH and the Hospital Authority (HA), the reply to the question raised by Professor the Hon CHAN Wing-kwong in relation to the “1+” mechanism is as follows –

(1)

Under the “1+” mechanism, applications for registration of new drugs in Hong Kong that are beneficial for treatment of life-threatening or severely debilitating diseases, and are supported with local clinical data and scope of application recognised by local experts, are only required to submit approval from one reference drug regulatory authority (instead of the two).

The requirements for local clinical data and recognition by experts for application for registration (i.e. the “+” under the “1+” mechanism) will continue to ensure all drugs approved for registration fulfil the stringent requirements of safety, efficacy and quality. It will also strengthen the local capacity of drug evaluation and enhance the development of relevant software, hardware and expertise.

Since the commencement of the “1+” mechanism (i.e. 1 November 2023) till 31 May 2024, two drugs for treating cancer have been approved under the mechanism. They are oral targeted drugs in different dosages for treating metastatic colorectal cancer, for treatment of patients for whom conventional chemotherapy has been ineffective or inapplicable. Besides, the DH has received

over 210 enquiries involving around 70 pharmaceutical companies. Several of these companies have expressed interest in applying for registration under the “1+” mechanism. Applications would be submitted once the necessary information is ready. At present, no new drug applications under the “1+” mechanism have been rejected.

(2)

As at 31 March 2024, 19 patients in the HA are already using abovementioned new drugs for treating metastatic colorectal cancer registered under the “1+” mechanism. The HA will encourage drug manufacturers or suppliers to apply for local registration of unregistered drugs with ongoing needs and continue to liaise closely with the DH in the light of the “1+” mechanism. Through the “1+” mechanism, the number of drugs successfully registered would increase, thus enabling clinicians to enjoy a wider choice of drugs to support their service needs. Clinicians may initiate application for new drug listing on the HA Drug Formulary to the HA Drug Advisory Committee according to the clinical service needs. In addition, when a new drug can be registered in HKSAR under the “1+” mechanism and listed on the HA Drug Formulary and is proven to have significant clinical benefits, it may be considered to be covered by the Samaritan Fund or the Community Care Fund.

(3)

After the announcement of the Policy Address, the HKSAR Government has been actively seizing various opportunities to publicise the initiatives related to the development of Hong Kong as an international health and medical innovation hub (including the “1+” mechanism) to counterparts locally and in other places.

Last year, the HKSAR Government attended the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) Medical Products Administration Conference held in Zhuhai and the GBA Health Cooperation Conference held in Nansha, Guangzhou respectively, and organised the 18th Joint Meeting of the Senior Health Officials of the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao in Hong Kong, as well as led a delegation to visit various ministries and commissions in the Mainland, including the National Health Commission and the NMPA.

On international exchanges, the Secretary for Health led a Hong Kong team as members of the Chinese delegation to attend the 77th World Health Assembly held by the WHO in Geneva, Switzerland at the end of May this year. During the visit, the Secretary for Health visited two multinational pharmaceutical and healthcare enterprises, as well as met with the Director for Regulation and Prequalification of the WHO and representatives from the Clinical Trials Centre

of the University Hospital Zurich, to promote Hong Kong's unique advantages and the latest development of health and medical innovation. The multinational pharmaceutical and healthcare enterprises welcomed the HKSAR Government's initiatives to develop into an international health and medical innovation hub.

At the same time, the DH has been actively promoting the "1+" mechanism through various channels and handling enquiries and expression of interest by the trade. In the past few months, the DH has issued letters to notify stakeholders (including relevant pharmaceutical associations and holders of registration of pharmaceutical products) and organised briefings (seven online sessions and one session in on-site and online mixed mode have been conducted so far, with more than 500 participants from relevant pharmaceutical associations and stakeholders) for introducing the requirements and details of the new "1+" mechanism. The DH will proactively follow up on each and every enquiry and facilitate the trade in submitting applicants under the new mechanism.

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 9

(Written Reply)

Asked by Hon LAI Tung-kwok

Date of meeting : 12 June 2024

Replied by: Secretary for Transport
and Logistics

Reply

President,

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is committed to reinforcing Hong Kong's position as an international maritime centre. The "Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035" and the "Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area" have shown express support to the position of the Hong Kong port and the development of high value-added maritime services in Hong Kong for better integration into the country's development course. The Transport and Logistics Bureau promulgated the Action Plan on Maritime and Port Development Strategy on 20 December 2023, which sets out 10 strategies and 32 action measures in four directions to support the sustainable development needs of the maritime and port industry in Hong Kong, enhance the long-term competitiveness of the industry, as well as consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's position as an international maritime centre.

Having consulted the relevant departments, our reply to the various parts of the question raised by Hon Lai is as follows:

(1) Hong Kong was ranked fourth globally in the 2023 Xinhua-Baltic International Shipping Centre Development Index Report, reflecting Hong Kong's comprehensive strengths as a leading international maritime centre, with a high-quality maritime services cluster, excellent business environment, and

ideal port conditions. The relevant global rankings of Hong Kong's shipping and port industry are as follows:

Year	Lloyd's List Top 100 container ports in the world ranking (1)	Alphaliner Top 30 container ports in the world ranking (2)	Ranking of flag of registration of merchant fleet (3)
2019	8	8	4
2020	9	9	4
2021	9	10	4
2022	9	10	4
2023	Not yet released ¹	11	4

Data sources: (1) Lloyd's List
(2) Alphaliner
(3) UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

(2) The number of port and maritime-related companies (by sector) is as follows:

Sector	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1. Port and shipping	860	850	840	870	930
2. Maritime business services	280	290	300	290	280
Overall (Note 2)	1 140	1 140	1 130	1 160	1 210

Note 1: The number of port and maritime-related companies above are estimated figures.

Note 2: Figures may not add up to the total due to rounding.

(3) (i) The Baltic International Maritime Council (BIMCO) designated Hong Kong as one of the four arbitration venues in September 2020, alongside London, New York, and Singapore. A distinctive feature of arbitration is its confidential nature. In order to better safeguard the confidentiality of arbitrations, the Arbitration Ordinance (Cap. 609) restricts parties from publishing, disclosing or communicating any information relating to the arbitral proceedings or the award, unless where the parties agreed otherwise, where a party needs to protect or pursue

¹ Based on the calculation method of Lloyd's List, an authoritative media in the international maritime industry, it is estimated that Hong Kong's container throughput ranked 10th in 2023 globally.

own legal right or interest, or where a party discloses information relating to the arbitration when enforcing or challenging the award. In addition, maritime arbitration generally adopts the form of ad hoc arbitration, the procedures of which are wholly “administered” by the arbitrator(s) and the parties; if no party makes application to the court for enforcement or setting aside of arbitral award, any third party to the parties to the proceedings will not have any knowledge of the ad hoc arbitral proceedings that have been conducted. Therefore, public information and statistics concerning arbitration activities in Hong Kong are relatively limited. According to information made public by the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC), the number of maritime arbitration-related cases submitted in Hong Kong is as follows:

Year	Number of arbitration cases submitted in Hong Kong	Share of maritime-related arbitration cases
2019	308	14.4%
2020	318	18.6%
2021	277	17.0%
2022	344	12.5%
2023	281	16.0%

Data source: HKIAC

The above statistics do not cover all maritime arbitration cases conducted in Hong Kong, which include maritime arbitration cases administered by other arbitral institutions, ad hoc maritime arbitration cases, maritime arbitration cases not seated in Hong Kong but heard in Hong Kong only, etc. Therefore, the above statistics can only partially reflect the position of maritime arbitration activities in Hong Kong. HKIAC does not provide in its public information any statistics on the total dispute amount of maritime arbitration in Hong Kong.

(ii) The HKSAR Government does not maintain an official record of the ranking of global arbitral institutions. However, according to the 2021 International Arbitration Survey published by Queen Mary University of London, HKIAC is the third most preferred arbitral institution worldwide.

(4) The number of local and non-local insurance companies engaged in the marine insurance business in Hong Kong and the total gross marine insurance premiums written are set out below:

Year	Number of local insurers (as at year end)	Number of non-local insurers (as at year end)	Gross Premiums (HK\$ million)
2019	54	35	2,411.6
2020	54	33	2,764.5
2021	52	32	2,900.8
2022	52	31	3,074.0
2023	51	30	3,444.8 ^P

Data source: Insurance Authority

^P Provisional figure

(5) Of the total amount of loans and advances provided by authorized institutions relating to transport and transport equipment for use in Hong Kong, the amount related to shipping is set out below:

End- December	Loans and advances (HK\$ million)
2019	119,713
2020	129,405
2021	122,175
2022	98,769
2023	90,146

Data source: Hong Kong Monetary Authority

(6) The gross tonnage of ships registered in Hong Kong and Hong Kong's global ranking in terms of gross tonnage are as follows:

Hong Kong Shipping Registry		
Year	Gross tonnage (‘000 tons) (1)	World ranking (in terms of gross tonnage) (2)
2019	127 448	4
2020	129 723	4
2021	131 147	4
2022	126 615	4
2023	128 120	4

Data sources: (1) Marine Department
(2) UNCTAD

(7) The average weekly international container vessel sailings and the number of destinations for Hong Kong are as follows:

Hong Kong international container vessels		
Year	Average weekly sailings	Number of destinations
2019	300	420
2020	280	610
2021	270	590
2022	240	460
2023	320	490

(8) and (9) The Hong Kong Port (HKP) is renowned for its high efficiency and is one of the busiest international container ports in the world, which provides frequent and comprehensive liner services with over 300 international container vessel sailings per week, connecting nearly 500 destinations worldwide. This, coupled with the first-class airport and land boundary crossings and transport facilities, makes Hong Kong a regional hub with an extensive service network. The HKSAR Government has been maintaining communication with container terminal operators and the shipping industry to keep abreast of the latest market

developments, including the operation and planning cycles of the routes of major shipping alliances around the world. In the short term, increasing local cargo volume is the key to attracting more international transshipment business to Hong Kong. We will utilise the advantages of Hong Kong's world-class multimodal transport network and take advantage of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge to strengthen logistics connections with western Guangdong, expand cargo sources, and open up new opportunities for the maritime and port industry. We will also actively work with the industry to enhance the international connectivity of HKP in handling cargos to and from more places. We will pragmatically explore with ports and cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) where we enjoy complementary advantage, so as to attain the goal of consolidating Hong Kong's position as an international maritime centre as well as bolstering the overall throughput of the GBA port cluster. Currently, Container Terminals 1 to 9 within the Kwai Tsing Container Terminals are being run commercially by five private operators respectively under various land leases. The HKSAR Government will handle the relevant land lease matters in due course.

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 10
(Written Reply)

Asked by Hon CHAN Hok-fung

Date of meeting : 12 June 2024

Replied by : Secretary for Health

Reply

President,

In consultation with the Department of Health (DH), our reply to the question raised by Hon CHAN Hok-fung is as follows –

(1)

In accordance with the power conferred by the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance and with regard to the guidelines of the International Health Regulations, the DH of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) enforces various preventive measures at boundary control points (BCPs) to prevent the introduction or spreading out of infectious diseases into or from Hong Kong. Since 2003, trained health screening staff have been conducting body temperature screening for all arrivals (including travellers and drivers) at all BCPs. According to the mechanism, the staff would perform further health assessment for travellers with confirmed fever or in need (such as travellers who self-reported of being unwell) to understand their symptoms, travel history, contact history, etc., so as to make appropriate referrals and follow-up, including compulsory referral of individuals with suspected infection of certain statutory notifiable infectious diseases to Hong Kong public hospitals.

The HKSAR Government has been maintaining close co-operation with Mainland authorities related to entry-exit health inspection and quarantine to safeguard the well-being and safety of residents and visitors of the two places. The Health Bureau and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) signed the "Co-operation Arrangement for Entry-exit Health Inspection and Quarantine between the GACC and the Health Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government" (Co-operation Arrangement) in 2023. Under the normalisation arrangements for epidemic prevention and control, the two sides agreed to focus on the health inspection and quarantine of their

respective inbound personnel traveling between the HKSAR and the Mainland BCPs.

The HKSAR Government will maintain close liaison with the relevant Mainland authorities and actively review the entry health inspection and quarantine arrangements (including temperature screening) from public health perspective, taking into account factors such as cost-effectiveness and appropriateness.

(2)

The number of inbound travellers with fever confirmed during temperature screening at land BCPs and mandatory referrals to public hospitals since 2019 is as follows –

	2019	2020*	2021*	2022*	2023*	2024^
Total number of inbound travellers with fever	5 961	243	28	15	3 799	1 713
Number of inbound travellers with fever on the private car lane[#]	12	0	0	0	0	1
Number of inbound travellers who met specific statutory notifiable infectious diseases and were compulsorily referred to Hong Kong hospitals	2	16	28	15	0	0

[#] In general, the number of inbound travellers entering via private car lanes is much lower than the number of travellers using the arrival hall.

^{*} During the COVID-19 epidemic (especially from 2020 to 2022), the number of inbound and outbound travellers dropped significantly, and only two land BCPs remained open for private car passenger clearance services most of the time.

[^] As of 31 May.

(3)

The DH deploys appropriate manpower to carry out health screening work based on the design of each BCP and its passenger and vehicle flow. There are currently ten land BCPs in Hong Kong. Regarding vehicle lanes, according to the operation mode of the BCPs, the DH will deploy a health screening staff at each inbound vehicle lane to perform temperature screening. From 2019 to 2023, the number of health screening posts of the DH at land BCPs is as follows –

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Average daily number of health screening posts in total	510	554	555	427	443
Average daily number of health screening posts at entry private car lanes	83	83	83	83	124

Depending on the vehicle flow, the average number of inbound private car lanes open at each BCP ranges from two to 32. Currently, the average number of health screening posts at inbound private car lanes per day is about 120, which is higher than that before the COVID-19 epidemic mainly due to the full commissioning of the Heung Yuen Wai BCP in 2022 and the increasing vehicle flow of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. Besides, during the COVID-19 epidemic, the DH deployed relevant personnel to assist in implementing various rigorous port health measures to prevent imported cases, such as inbound health declaration, compulsory quarantine, etc.

In recent years, the DH has engaged outsourced service contractors to provide health screening services at most land BCPs. The health screening work at the remaining BCPs is handled by DH's contract staff. The total relevant expenditure of the DH from 2019 to 2023 was approximately \$1.28 billion. As the service scope of the health screening contract signed between the DH and the contractors covers all related work at BCPs (including temperature screening, health assessment, providing medical assistance to travellers in need, and health education, etc.), the DH cannot provide a breakdown of the resources involved in conducting temperature screening at land BCPs.

-End-

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 11

(Written Reply)

Asked by : Dr Hon TIK Chi-yuen

Date of meeting : 12 June 2024

Replied by : Secretary for Security

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong citizens have the rights to peaceful assembly and procession conducted in accordance with the law. That said, these rights must be exercised in conformity with the relevant legislation to ensure the safeguarding of national security, public order, public safety and the protection of the rights and freedom of others. The impact of such public events on members of the public should also be minimised.

Under the Public Order Ordinance (the Ordinance), in the event that the attendance of public meetings or public processions (whether its nature is related to petition or not) exceeds the respective limits prescribed in the Ordinance, i.e. public meetings of more than 50 persons or public processions of more than 30 persons, a notice must be given to the Commissioner of Police (the Commissioner) in accordance with the Ordinance. The meetings or processions can only be conducted if the Commissioner gives no prohibition or objection, and the requirements in the Ordinance as well as the conditions imposed by the Commissioner (if any) are complied with.

The reply to the question raised by Dr Hon TIK Chi-yuen is as follows:

- (1) The relevant figures of public meetings and public processions that had an attendance exceeding the prescribed limits and were required to notify to the Commissioner in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Table 1 : Public Meetings

Year	No. of public meetings notified to the Police	No. of public meetings with letters of no objection issued	No. of public meetings for which letters of no objection were not issued
2019	436	410	26
2020	71	45	26
2021	4	0	4
2022	2	2	0
2023	71	71	0

Table 2 : Public Processions

Year	No. of public processions notified to the Police	No. of public processions with letters of no objection issued	No. of public processions for which letters of no objection were not issued
2019	495	474	21
2020	58	42	16
2021	5	1	4
2022	9	9	0
2023	270	270	0

Letters of no objection were not issued having regard to the interests of national security, public order, public safety and the protection of the rights and freedom of others. Every application was considered on a case-by-case basis.

- (2) The public meetings or public processions organised by various bodies mainly include festival parades, charity walks as well as events relating to promotion of activities or expression of opinions. The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) does not maintain statistical figures regarding the government policy areas concerned of these public meetings and public processions.
- (3) to (5) Sections 9(4) and 14(5) of the Ordinance provide that the Commissioner shall not exercise the power conferred to him to prohibit the holding of a public meeting or object to the holding of a public procession in any case where he reasonably considers that the interests of national security

or public safety, public order or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others could be met by the imposition of conditions.

The HKPF will maintain communication with the organisers and, upon careful examination on a case-by-case basis, assess the risks to ensure that the public meetings and public processions are conducted in a peaceful, safe and orderly manner in accordance with the law without jeopardising national security, endangering public safety, disrupting public order or infringing on others' rights and freedom. The HKPF may also impose certain conditions, such as requesting the organiser to arrange marshals to maintain order, etc., on a notified public meeting and public procession as reasonably necessary. Imposition of such conditions shall be justified on a proportionality analysis. Regarding the relevant arrangements, the HKPF has published the Guidelines on the approach to the Public Order Ordinance in relation to public meetings and public processions to help law enforcement officers and other parties to understand the mechanism.

Generally speaking, organisers of public meetings and public processions who were issued with letters of no objections could comply with the conditions imposed and conduct the events in an orderly manner. Under the individual circumstances that a person is aggrieved with the Commissioner's decision to prohibit the holding of a public meeting, to object to the holding of a public procession, or to impose conditions on a public meeting or public procession, he/she may lodge an appeal with the Appeal Board on Public Meetings and Processions.

The HKPF does not maintain a breakdown of statistical figures mentioned in the questions.

-Ends-

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 12

(Written Reply)

Asked by Hon Tony TSE

Date of meeting : 12 June 2024

Replied by :
Secretary for Constitutional and
Mainland Affairs

Reply

President,

Having consulted relevant bureaux and departments, the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Tony Tse is as follows:

The amended National Flag and National Emblem Ordinance and the Regional Flag and Regional Emblem Ordinance came into effect on 8 October 2021 and 24 November 2023 respectively, providing for the use and protection of the national flag, national emblem, regional flag, and regional emblem in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“HKSAR”), including the proper use, etiquette, education and promotion in relation to the national flag, national emblem, regional flag and regional emblem.

On promotion and education, the Education Bureau has included the national flag, national emblem, regional flag and regional emblem in primary and secondary education, and required schools to display the national flag and regional flag on each school day and conduct weekly flag raising ceremony. Besides, the HKSAR Government has produced announcements or materials in the public interest (“API”) to publicise the background, symbolic meaning as well as the related rules of usage and etiquette, etc. in relation to the national flag, national emblem and national anthem. Apart from broadcasting these APIs on local television and radio channels, we also made use of different online social media platforms to disseminate relevant information, with a view to enhancing public awareness of respecting and protecting the national flag, national emblem and national anthem, and promoting the understanding on their proper use. Currently, we are producing a new set of APIs to educate members of the public to respect and use properly the regional flag and regional emblem to express their love for our country and the HKSAR. The APIs will be broadcast on various television and radio channels, as well as social media platforms. To enable

members of the public to have a clearer and more accurate understanding on the two pieces of legislation, we will also consolidate relevant publicity information in an easy-to-understand manner, for instance, producing comics, etc., and make use of social media to promote it extensively.

On the selling of national flag and regional flag, as well as related souvenirs, the existing legislation has not prohibited on commercial sales of them, and the public can easily purchase them in physical or online shops. Besides, the Government Gift Shop set up at the Central Government Offices offers a variety of souvenir items including bowl and plate sets, tea pots, tea cups, folders, notebooks and bear toys, etc. that bear the design of the regional flag and regional emblem for purchase. Members of the public can also visit the online store to purchase such gifts. Currently there is no plan to set up additional Government Gift Shop at other government premises or buildings.

According to the existing legislation regarding the raising and lowering of the national flag and regional flag, the national flag and regional flag must be raised in the morning and lowered in the evening. As such, with the flag-raising ceremony taking place at the Golden Bauhinia Square everyday currently, there is no room for increasing the frequency of flag-raising ceremonies. The national flag and regional flag are important symbols and signs of our country and the HKSAR that must be respected and loved. Flag-raising ceremonies are solemn and of special significance. We are thus of the view that when considering the location and occasion for holding flag-raising ceremonies, attracting tourists is not the most important consideration.

The HKSAR Government has made clear directions regarding the display of the national flag and regional flag at major government organisations, for instance, the Central Government Offices, the boundary control points, major government complexes and public sports and cultural venues, etc. The Protocol Division has drawn up guidelines on the display of the national flag and regional flag at government department's offices and buildings for government departments' reference, and has reminded them to explain in detail to the responsible personnel the proper procedures for raising and lowering the flags and points to note. The Protocol Division also provides advice on the raising, lowering and display of the national flag and regional flag to government departments subject to the situation, and suitably reviews the assistance required by departments in this respect.

LEGO QUESTION NO. 13

(Written Reply)

Asked by: Hon Adrian HO

Date of meeting : 12 June 2024

Replied by : Secretary for Culture,
Sports and Tourism

Reply

President,

The Government is committed to promoting sports development in Hong Kong by promoting sports in the community, supporting elite sports, developing Hong Kong into a centre for major international sports events, enhancing professionalism and developing sports as an industry. This include promoting sports at community level, increasing and enhancing sports and recreation facilities, and encouraging collaboration among communities in fostering a strong sporting culture; strengthening the support to elite athletes as well as attracting major international sports events to Hong Kong. At the same time, we endeavour to promote sports development in Hong Kong through enhanced professionalism in the sports sector and the development of sports as an industry.

Being the largest sports infrastructure project in Hong Kong's history, the Kai Tak Sports Park (KTSP) is crucial to the Government's implementation of the relevant sports policies. The KTSP will provide modern and multi-purpose sports and recreation facilities upon completion, including a 50 000-seat Main Stadium, a 10 000-seat Indoor Sports Centre, a 5 000-seat Public Sports Ground and about 14-hectare landscaped open space and other ancillary facilities. According to the current construction progress, we expect that the major facilities of the KTSP will be completed by end of 2024 and KTSP will be open in the first half of 2025.

My consolidated reply to the questions raised by the Hon Adrian HO is as follows:

- (1) The 15th National Games (NG) will be unprecedentedly co-hosted in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao from 9 to 21 November 2025. Hong Kong will organise eight competition events, namely Basketball (men U22), Cycling Track, Fencing, Golf, Handball (men),

Rugby Sevens, Triathlon and Beach Volleyball. Hong Kong citizens, people living in the GBA and even sports lovers from all parts of the Mainland can visit the competition venues in Hong Kong to watch the high-level matches and cheer for the athletes.

When organising major multi-sport events, host cities or regions would generally make full use of suitable existing venues and facilities. As the 15th NG will be held over a period of 13 days only, having carefully considered factors such as the expected number of competition days of the eight events (a number of events such as Basketball (men U22), Fencing, Handball (men) and Beach Volleyball are expected to take more than a week), venues that are currently or soon-to-be available in Hong Kong, the time required for setting up as well as the transportation arrangements and crowd management, we are planning to organise a total of three competition events in KTSP, namely Fencing, Handball (men) and Rugby Sevens. Basketball (men U22), Cycling Track and Golf will take place at the Hong Kong Coliseum, the Hong Kong Velodrome and the golf course in Fanling respectively. Triathlon will be held at the Central Harbourfront while Beach Volleyball will be organised in the Victoria Park. The above arrangements not only make effective use of the venues and facilities in Hong Kong, but also showcase to the visiting spectators or audience on television the outlook and characteristics of various districts of Hong Kong.

- (2) The KTSP adopts a “Design, Build and Operate” model, with Kai Tak Sports Park Limited (KTSPL) being the Contracted Party responsible for the design, construction and future operation of the Sports Park.

In accordance with its operational requirements, KTSPL has to achieve key performance indicators (KPIs) on the hosting of sports events at the major facilities during the operation period. If it fails to achieve the KPIs, the Government can require the Contracted Party to make payment according to the contractual requirements. The KPIs on sports events are listed as follows –

	Sports events in operating year 1 to 5	Sports events in operating year 6 to 10	Performance failure payment
Main Stadium	40 days per annum	54 days per annum	\$500,000 per day below the minimum level
Main arena of Indoor Sports Centre	76 days per annum	88 days per annum	\$100,000 per day below the minimum level
Public Sports Ground and the rest of precinct	69 days per annum	75 days per annum	\$50,000 per day below the minimum level
Total attendance at sports events	600 000 attendees per annum	700 000 attendees per annum	\$25 per attendee below the minimum level

On the other hand, KTSPL also undertakes to implement a Sports Events Support Scheme (SESS) to support sports events. Its financial commitment under the SESS is \$1.583 billion in total, which is to be disbursed over a period of around 20 years. Commitment under the SESS will be met either by waiving venue hiring charges for sports events held in the Sports Park or by making direct financial contribution to any sports events. The above arrangements will encourage the Contracted Party to proactively promote KTSP as “the destination” for local and international large-scale sports events.

- (3) As aforementioned, KTSPL has to comply with the contractual requirements to ensure that its operation can achieve the KPIs, such as ensuring the number of days of hosting sports events in each major facility, the time provided for sports use in each venue and the usage rate of the major facilities etc., with a view to meeting the objectives of the Government’s sports policy.

At the same time, we believe that the facilities of KTSP will be welcomed by organisers of large-scale events. In particular, the Main Stadium, being equipped with a retractable roof, offering different stage positioning and seating configurations as well as adopting a flexible pitch system design, provides more options for hosting different types of large-scale events such as sports competitions and pop concerts. The outdoor event space adjacent to the Main Stadium also allows the hosting of different kinds of outdoor sports and entertainment events. As for the Indoor Sports Centre, its retractable seating system and flexible configuration of the play field provide another option for hosting various kinds of sports, culture or entertainment events.

Indeed, KTSPL has so far made contact with over 200 local and international sports and non-sports events' promotion bodies, organisations and agencies, amongst which around 50 of them have expressed interest in utilising the facilities at the KTSP and are learning about the leasing arrangements. The Government will establish an inter-departmental working group led by the Chief Secretary for Administration to ensure the successful completion and commissioning of KTSP. Besides, we will closely monitor the usage of KTSP after its commissioning to balance the staging of large-scale sports and non-sports events with a view to showcasing Hong Kong as an events capital. We believe that KTSP will bring about significant synergy to the development of Hong Kong. While promoting sports in the community, supporting elite sports, maintaining Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events, enhancing professionalism and developing sports as an industry, KTSP will also drive the development of related industries such as entertainment, performances and tourism etc.

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 14

(Written Reply)

Asked by Hon Judy CHAN

Date of meeting : 12 June 2024

Replied by : Secretary for Financial
Services and the Treasury

Reply

President,

Having consulted relevant bureaux / departments, my consolidated reply to the Hon Chan's three questions is as follows –

Government properties are primarily used as offices for government departments and for the provision of public services. Departments responsible for managing the properties should ensure that the properties are put to optimal use, and release them for alternative uses (such as for use by other government departments, or commercial leasing) in accordance with the established mechanism if they become surplus to departments' operational needs. Generally speaking, the advertising spaces in government properties (including notice boards) are mainly provided for government departments to promote and publicise their policies, measures, services and events, and to disseminate public information. Departments responsible for managing the advertising spaces would review their uses from time to time, and lease out the relevant advertising spaces when they become surplus to the operational needs of the Government.

As far as rents from government properties are concerned, over the past five financial years (i.e. from 2019-20 to 2023-24), the Government's total rental income from advertising spaces amounted to some \$85 million (excluding trading funds), accounting for around 2.3% of the rental income from different categories of government properties. Details of the property names, addresses, numbers and display areas of advertising spaces currently available for letting by the Government for commercial advertising purposes are set out at **Annex**.

Annex

Advertising spaces in government properties currently available for letting for commercial advertising purposes (As at 7 June 2024)

Property name / address (note)	Number of advertising spaces	Display area (per advertising space)	Responsible department
Advertising areas at the Tsim Sha Tsui Interchange Subways and the Middle Road Subway	55	Around 5 m ² to 49 m ²	Government Property Agency
Portion of the rooftop of Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai	1	Around 467 m ²	
Portion of the rooftop of Rumsey Street Multi-storey Car Park Building, 2 Rumsey Street, Sheung Wan	1	Around 312 m ²	
Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal, 3/F Shun Tak Centre, 200 Connaught Road Central, Sheung Wan	39	Around 4 m ² to 21 m ²	Marine Department
Youth Square, 238 Chai Wan Road, Chai Wan	50	Around 0.5 m ²	Home and Youth Affairs Bureau

Note: Excluding advertising spaces under the purview of trading fund departments, such as the Post Office.

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 15

(Written Reply)

Asked by: Hon Jeffrey LAM

Date of meeting: 12 June 2024

Replied by: Secretary for Financial
Services and the Treasury

Reply

President,

In consultation with Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) and the Immigration Department (ImmD), the consolidated reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2)

The New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (New CIES) has been launched for application from 1 March 2024, with the aim to further enrich the talent pool and attract new capital to Hong Kong. InvestHK is responsible for assessing whether the applications fulfill the financial requirements, and ImmD is responsible for assessing the applications for visa/entry permit and extension of stay, etc.

Since the launch of the New CIES on 1 March up to end-May, InvestHK received over 3 000 enquiries (mainly from the potential applicants and service providers) and received over 250 applications. The Net Asset Assessment for over 100 applications was approved. ImmD granted “approval-in-principle” for over 40 applications, enabling the applicants to enter Hong Kong as visitors for not more than 180 days and make the committed investment during the period. Details of the age, nationality, and dependants of the applicants and the assessment of the applications are set out in Annex.

(3)

To facilitate the financial services industry’s better understanding of the details of the New CIES, InvestHK has organised a series of briefings for around 2 000 participants from various industry sectors, covering the banking, securities, funds and insurance sectors as well as the professional bodies of the accounting and

legal sectors. Industry stakeholders generally welcome the launch of the New CIES. In particular, service providers for high-net-worth individuals or family offices are positive towards their business prospects brought by the New CIES.

InvestHK will continue to maintain close communication with the industry and stakeholders to enhance their understanding of the scheme details. In 2024-25, InvestHK will launch extensive publicity to target client groups through the Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses as well as the Talents and Investment Promotion Divisions (which base in the Economic and Trade Offices around the globe), and plans to further promote the New CIES to industry practitioners such as private banks, lawyers and accounting firms through the Private Wealth Management Association in the third quarter of 2024, thereby enhancing their awareness of the New CIES. InvestHK is also planning to promote the New CIES as well as Hong Kong's competitiveness and unique advantages as a family office hub by means of physical events and online seminars in the Mainland and overseas places.

-End-

Assessment of applications under the New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (as of end-May 2024)

	Applications for Net Asset Assessment received by InvestHK (see Table 1 for age of applicants)	Applications for Net Asset Assessment approved by InvestHK	Entry applications received by ImmD	Applications with “Approval- in-principle” granted by ImmD	Applications fulfilling Investment Requirements as approved by InvestHK	Applications with “Formal Approval” granted by ImmD¹
Foreign nationals or persons with permanent residence overseas	245 (see Table 2)	100	88 (see Table 2)	42	1	0
Macao Special Administrative Region Residents and Chinese residents of Taiwan	6	3	2	1	0	0
Total	251	103	90 (Number of dependants: 190)	43	1	0

¹ Permission to stay will normally be granted to an applicant and his/her dependants for not more than 24 months, subject to the condition that the applicant continuously satisfies the requirements under the New CIES throughout this period.

Table 1: Age of applicants

Age of applicants	Number of applicants
18 to 34 years old	38
35 to 49 years old	137
50 to 64 years old	67
65 years old or above	9
Total	251

Table 2: Foreign nationals or persons with permanent residence overseas

	Applications for Net Asset Assessment received by InvestHK	Entry applications received by ImmD
Guinea-Bissau	100	39
Vanuatu	92	33
Canada	10	1
Australia	5	3
Singapore	5	1
South Korea	5	2
Turkey	4	2
Dominican Republic	2	1
Gambia	2	0
Hungary	2	1
Netherlands	2	1
Philippines	2	0
United States	2	2
Cambodia	1	1
Greece	1	0
Ireland	1	0
Italy	1	0
Malaysia	1	0
Malta	1	0
New Zealand	1	0
Republic of Cyprus	1	0
Spain	1	0
St. Kitts and Nevis	1	1
Venezuela	1	0
Not yet provided	1	0
Total	245	88

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 16

(Written Reply)

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu

Date of meeting: 12 June 2024

Replied by: Secretary for Health

Reply

In Hong Kong, public healthcare services are heavily subsidised by the Government, and drug treatment is an integral part of healthcare services. The Government and the Hospital Authority (HA) attach high importance to providing optimal care for all patients, including those with uncommon disorders, based on available medical evidence while ensuring optimal and rational use of public resources.

There is a wide range of uncommon disorders, the majority of which are currently incurable. Although new drugs for treating uncommon disorders appear on the pharmaceutical market from time to time with the advancement of medical technologies, these drugs generally are ultra-expensive and vary greatly in terms of evidence in both safety and efficacy as well as the clinical response of patients.

The HA has an established mechanism for regular appraisal of registered new drugs or their clinical indications and for review of its Drug Formulary (HADF) and the coverage of the safety net. The review process follows an evidence-based approach, having regard to the safety, efficacy and cost-effectiveness of drugs and other relevant considerations, which include international recommendations and practices as well as professional views, so as to ensure equitable and effective use of public resources in providing optimal treatment for patients.

The HA will also monitor the clinical conditions of individual patients and examine the long-term efficacy of the treatments and the risks involved through an independent expert panel. In appraising new drugs, especially ultra-expensive ones, the HA will also carefully examine the long-term financial sustainability of the treatment options concerned.

In consultation with the HA and the Department of Health (DH), the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Tang Ka-piu is as follows:

(1 & 2)

There is no common definition of uncommon disorders worldwide. The HA is progressively building up databases on individual uncommon

disorders with a view to providing more optimal treatment to the patients concerned and targeted measures to support them. Currently, the HA has developed databases for 35 uncommon disorders (including 25 metabolic diseases, 4 neurological diseases and 6 endocrine diseases) and is consolidating information on patients with relevant disorders. It is expected that the HA will progressively build up a registry with 207 uncommon disorders. Doctors will tag the patient in the HA's clinical management system (CMS) on the next encounter, and the HA will also arrange necessary information technology system enhancements to the CMS to facilitate doctors' clinical diagnosis and treatment of patients.

In view of the rising demand for ultra-expensive drug treatments for patients with uncommon disorders, the Government has allocated a designated funding to the HA to implement a special drug programme for the treatment of eligible patients with specific lysosomal storage disorders (LSDs), including Pompe, Gaucher, Fabry, Mucopolysaccharidosis (MPS) Type I, MPS Type II, MPS Type IV and MPS Type VI, through enzyme replacement therapy (ERT). The number of HA patients who received ERT and the HA's expenditure for the treatment of LSDs through ERT in the past 3 years (from 2021-22 to 2023-24) are set out in the table below:

Year	Number of HA patients who received ERT	HA's drug consumption expenditure for the treatment of LSDs (\$ million)
2021-22	40	82.5
2022-23	50	99.7
2023-24	59	115.9

In addition, the Government and the HA rolled out in August 2017 a Community Care Fund Medical Assistance Programme, namely "Subsidy for Eligible Patients to Purchase Ultra-expensive Drugs (Including Those for Treating Uncommon Disorders)" (CCF Ultra-expensive Drugs (UED) Programme). The HA's Expert Panels will assess the clinical benefits of drug treatments under these arrangements on a case-by-case basis according to the specific patients' clinical conditions and established treatment guidelines.

The following table sets out the number of applications approved and the amount of subsidies granted for drugs under the CCF UED Programme since its implementation in August 2017 and up to 31 March 2024 (including a

drug repositioned from the CCF UED Programme to the Samaritan Fund (SF) during the said period¹):

Ultra-expensive Drug and Clinical Indication	Number of Applications Approved	Amount of Subsidies Granted (\$ million)
1. Eculizumab for Paroxysmal Nocturnal Haemoglobinuria ¹	73	274.83
2. Eculizumab for Atypical Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome ²	6	22.48
3. Nusinersen for Spinal Muscular Atrophy ³	80	183.54
4. Tafamidis Meglumine for Familial Amyloid Polyneuropathy ⁴	3	2.09
5. Dinutuximab beta for Neuroblastoma ⁵	16	24.97
6. Tisagenlecleucel for B-cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia ⁶	10	19.65
7. Tisagenlecleucel for Diffuse Large B-cell Lymphoma ⁶	69	156.64
8. Tafamidis for Hereditary Transthyretin Amyloidosis in Adult Patients with Cardiomyopathy ⁷	10	8.71
9. Risdiplam for Spinal Muscular Atrophy ⁸	47	74.19
10. Burosumab for X-linked Hypophosphataemia ⁹	1	2.85
11. Ravulizumab for Paroxysmal Nocturnal Haemoglobinuria ¹⁰	11	35.74
12. Ravulizumab for Atypical Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome ¹⁰	1	3.42
13. Onasemnogene Apeparvovec for Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) ¹¹	0	0
Total	327	809.11

Notes:

1. From 1 August 2017 to 31 March 2024, including the number of applications approved and the amount of subsidies granted under the CCF UED Programme from 1 August 2017 to 10 July 2020 and under the SF since 11 July 2020 after repositioning
2. From 25 November 2017 to 31 March 2024
3. From 25 September 2018 to 31 March 2024
4. From 13 July 2019 to 31 March 2024
5. From 29 December 2020 to 31 March 2024
6. From 10 April 2021 to 31 March 2024
7. From 4 December 2021 to 31 March 2024
8. From 17 December 2022 to 31 March 2024
9. From 26 May 2023 to 31 March 2024
10. From 11 November 2023 to 31 March 2024
11. From 30 December 2023 to 31 March 2024

At present, cases related to undiagnosed disorders, hereditary cancers and genomics and precision healthcare are also covered by the Hong Kong Genome Project. Eligible patients and their family members are recruited at HA hospitals on a voluntary basis with informed consent, and the

sequencing analysis results will allow patients to benefit from more precise diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

(3)

The HA reviews clinical treatment guidelines in accordance with the principles of evidence-based medical practice and with reference to the clinical and scientific evidence of the drugs, and overseas guidelines. The HA Expert Panel on SMA (the Expert Panel) has noted and reviewed the findings of an international preliminary observational study published after adult patients with the disease had been treated with the drug Risdiplam (Evrysdi). The Expert Panel considers that, at present, the relevant scientific data and clinical evidence of the drug in question are still limited, and there is no empirical evidence to show that such drug can bring significant clinical benefits to adult patients with SMA. Having made reference to overseas guidelines, international arrangements on disease management and on subsidies for the drug concerned, the Expert Panel considers that it is not appropriate to subsidise adult SMA patients aged 25 or above to receive drug treatments through the CCF UED Programmes at this stage.

The current medication arrangements for SMA patients in Hong Kong are similar to those in other regions. The Expert Panel will continue to collect clinical evidence to assess patients' clinical conditions and treatment efficacy to review the relevant parameters. The HA will also continue to subsidise SMA patients whose drug treatments have shown significant clinical efficacy and benefits through the CCF UED Programme. Meanwhile, the healthcare team specialising in the care of SMA patients will continue to optimise multi-disciplinary professional healthcare collaboration, with a view to providing patients with comprehensive services, including drug and surgical treatment, palliative care and rehabilitation services, etc.

(5)

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (the HKSAR Government) has been following the principles of “complementarity and mutual benefits” to enhance healthcare-related cooperation with various Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area (GBA), on the premise that the development of the healthcare systems of Hong Kong and the Mainland will be benefitted, so as to facilitate Hong Kong residents who choose to develop and reside in the Mainland. In particular, the Government supports the healthcare needs of these Hong Kong residents through collaboration with suitable healthcare organisations in the Mainland cities of the GBA. Examples include the Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme, the Pilot Scheme for Supporting Patients of the Hospital Authority in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (“Pilot Scheme”),

as well as the proposed new function in the Electronic Health Record Sharing System (“eHealth”) under the five-year plan of eHealth+ to allow members of the public to keep and use their personal medical records from within and outside Hong Kong. The Government is also exploring with suitable GBA healthcare institutions the feasibility of purchasing healthcare services for Hong Kong citizens.

It must be emphasised that as the HKSAR is a member of the GBA. The Health Bureau, in formulating cross-boundary healthcare measures, would not only focus on meeting the needs of Hong Kong citizens, but would also consider the potential impact of the policies on the social resources and livelihood of people in the Mainland. Indeed, the healthcare needs, relevant laws and regulations, and regulatory regimes for healthcare professions are different in Hong Kong and the Mainland. The HKSAR Government, as the “first duty bearer” for the health of the citizens of Hong Kong, will continue to provide quality healthcare services to the citizens of Hong Kong with no intention to switch such responsibility to the Mainland healthcare system. In this process, the Government would also explore cross-boundary healthcare measures under the premise that these measures are feasible and mutually beneficial, with a view to providing additional and convenient access to and choice of healthcare services for Hong Kong citizens who choose to develop and reside in the Mainland.

(4&7)

Under the principle of “One Country, Two Systems” and with the strong support of our country, Hong Kong has established a drug regulatory regime that is highly compatible with international standards, as well as an internationally recognised professional medical training system and an extensive and standardised medical data system.

To leverage the medical strengths of the HKSAR, the Chief Executive’s 2023 Policy Address (Policy Address) announced that the Government will progress towards the long-term objective of establishing an authority that registers drugs and medical devices (medical products) under the “primary evaluation” approach, i.e. to directly approve applications for registration of drugs in Hong Kong based on clinical trial data without relying on registration approval from other drug regulatory authorities, and start approving applications for registration of medical devices. This will help accelerate the clinical use of medical products, foster the development of industries relating to the research and development and clinical trials of medical products, developing Hong Kong into an international health and medical innovation hub.

The HKSAR Government needs to give careful consideration to matters relating to the development of medical products (including the HA’s drug procurement strategy) in order to maintain an independent regulatory regime

for medical products while not compromising Hong Kong's institutional strengths, the long-term objective of establishing an authority that registers medical products under the "primary evaluation" approach, the future development of Hong Kong's healthcare system and services, and the recognition of healthcare technologies and clinical research by both the Mainland and the international community.

In purchasing drugs for the provision of optimal treatment to patients, the HA attaches great importance to patient safety and the quality and safety of drugs have all along been its prime consideration. The HA has put in place a robust drug procurement mechanism to purchase pharmaceutical products that meet the quality and safety requirements through various channels, so as to ensure the safety, quality and efficacy of drugs and safeguard patients' health. Meanwhile, the HA has been introducing market competition through centralised tendering or quotation procedures to achieve economies of scale. As the HA's centralised bulk procurement covers all hospitals and clinics under its management, the quantity of drugs purchased is relatively large, conferring upon the HA a certain degree of bargaining power in negotiating drug prices with pharmaceutical companies.

In general, the HA currently achieves cost-effectiveness at a reasonable level through the centralised bulk procurement model. With regard to drugs that are specially used or consumed in small quantities (such as drugs used to treat uncommon genetic disorders), the HA will continue to explore different cost-effective strategies to provide patients with drugs that meet the safety and quality requirements.

The HA has been closely monitoring market developments and maintaining communication with different stakeholders to promote diversification of drug supply, with a view to achieving efficient and cost-effective use of resources. From time to time, HA also conducts mutual visits and exchanges with relevant Mainland experts on issues of common concern, so as to facilitate mutual learning and the promotion of cooperation between and development of the two places. The different drug registration systems, pricing mechanisms for pharmaceutical manufacturers, and import and export mechanisms of drugs between Hong Kong and the Mainland means that drug procurement procedures of the two places are not entirely compatible. Consequently, direct comparisons between the relevant arrangements in question cannot be made. As previously stated, it is important to ensure that the inherent strengths of Hong Kong's drug regulatory regime are not compromised when considering HA's drug procurement strategy.

It is worth noting that to achieve the long-term objective of establishing an authority that registers medical products under the "primary evaluation" approach, the "1+" mechanism announced in the Policy Address has come into effect on 1 November 2023. Under the newly established "1+" mechanism, applications for registration of new drugs in Hong Kong that are

beneficial for treatment of life-threatening or severely debilitating diseases, and are supported with local clinical data and scope of application recognised by local relevant experts, are only required to submit approval from one reference drug regulatory authority (instead of the two). The requirements for local clinical data and recognition by relevant experts for application for registration (i.e. the “+” under the “1+” mechanism) will continue to ensure all drugs approved for registration fulfil the stringent requirements of safety, efficacy and quality. It will also strengthen the local capacity of drug evaluation and enhance the development of relevant software, hardware and expertise.

Since the commencement of the “1+” mechanism (i.e. 1 November 2023) till 31 May 2024, two drugs for treating cancer have been approved. They are oral targeted drugs in different dosages for treating metastatic colorectal cancer, for treatment of patients for whom conventional chemotherapy has been ineffective or inapplicable. Besides, the DH has received over 210 enquiries involving around 70 pharmaceutical companies. Several of these companies have expressed interest in applying for registration under the “1+” mechanism. Applications would be submitted once the necessary information is ready.

Since the implementation of the “1+” mechanism, the HA has been reviewing and exploring in a proactive manner ways to enhance the effectiveness of updating the HADF, and to shorten the time required for new drugs to be listed on the HADF, that for drugs to be included in the safety net or repositioned as Special drugs. The HA also encourages drug manufacturers or suppliers to apply for registration in Hong Kong for unregistered drugs that are in demand. Through the “1+” mechanism, the number of drugs successfully registered in Hong Kong will increase to provide patients and clinicians with more choices of drugs.

(6)

As mentioned above, the HKSAR Government is the “first duty bearer” for the health of the citizens of Hong Kong, will continue to provide quality healthcare services to the citizens of Hong Kong. The implementation of cross-boundary healthcare measures is mainly intended to provide Hong Kong residents who are developing and living in the Mainland with an additional convenient access to and choice of healthcare services. Among them, the Government launched the Pilot Scheme on 10 May 2023, making reference to the experience gained from the Special Support Scheme during the COVID-19 epidemic, so that patients with scheduled follow-up appointments at designated Specialist Out-patient Clinics (SOPCs) or General Out-patient Clinic (GOPCs) of the HA (eligible patients) can receive subsidised consultations at the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital (HKU-SZH). Earlier, the Government has announced the extension of the Pilot Scheme for one year till 31 March next year. There is no common

definition of uncommon disorders, and their treatment may involve a range of specialist services. The scope of subsidised consultation services under the Pilot Scheme covers major SOPC and GOPC services provided by the HA, namely anaesthesiology (pain clinic only); cardiothoracic surgery; clinical oncology; ear, nose and throat; eye; gynaecology; internal medicine; neurosurgery; obstetrics; orthopaedics and traumatology (orthopaedics); paediatrics; and surgery. Participating patients of the Pilot Scheme may consult the above specialties as needed.

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 17

(Written Reply)

Asked by Hon SHIU Ka-fai

Date of meeting: 12 June 2024

Replied by: Secretary for the
Environment and Ecology

Reply:

President,

Pursuant to the “Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations” (Cap. 132AK), each consignment of imported game, meat, poultry and eggs (regulated food), whether for personal use or not, must be accompanied by a health certificate issued by the issuing entity of the place of origin or written permission from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). In addition, under the “Import and Export Ordinance” (Cap. 60), each consignment of imported meat and poultry is required to apply for an import licence from the FEHD.

The reply to the various parts of the question is set out below:

- (1) Regarding the bringing of regulated food into Hong Kong by inbound passengers from the Mainland or overseas, the number of cases referred by the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) to the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the FEHD, and the number of prosecutions instituted by the CFS under Cap. 132AK in the past two years are set out below:

Month	2022		2023		2024 (Up to 30 April)	
	No. of Non- complia nce	No. of Prosec utions	No. of Non- complia nce	No. of Prosecut ions	No. of Non- complia nce	No. of Prosecutio ns

	Cases		Cases		Cases	
Jan	20	22	19	23	111	124
Feb	1	1	74	85	79	93
Mar	3	3	85	106	119	141
Apr	9	10	100	118	122	145
May	13	16	98	116		
Jun	19	22	81	89		
Jul	17	22	72	84		
Aug	18	21	81	97		
Sep	11	15	89	104		
Oct	22	29	95	115		
Nov	15	17	91	108		
Dec	13	17	62	72		
Total	161	195	947	1117	431	503

- (2) From 2022 till now, the fines imposed for violation against the regulations under Cap. 132 AK are as follows:

Year	2022	2023	2024 (Up to 30 April)
Maximum fine amount	\$4,500	\$4,000	\$3,000
Minimum fine amount	\$300	\$150	\$200
Average fine amount	\$911	\$1,046	\$933

- (3) The C&ED has all along been applying risk management and intelligence exchange and analysis to combat various types of smuggling activities. Such measures include monitoring and inspecting passengers, cargoes and conveyances at various immigration control points. To enhance detection capability and clearance efficiency, the C&ED has been actively introducing and applying various types of advanced inspection equipment, including automatic X-ray detector and computerised scanning system, etc. The C&ED will closely monitor the situation of smuggling activities

and continue to strengthen intelligence exchange and joint operations with the Mainland and other law enforcement agencies, so as to adjust its enforcement strategy in the light of the ever-changing smuggling situation.

- (4) The existing 7 Quarantine Detector Dogs (QDDs) of the CFS are mainly deployed at land boundary control points (BCPs) to assist in enforcing the regulations under Cap. 132AK. In 2022-23, the CFS detected a total of 398 suspected violation cases with the assistance of QDDs. The CFS would timely adjust the QDDs' duty hours to cope with the operational needs.

(5), (6) & (8)

The CFS is committed to combating the entry of illegal food into Hong Kong. It has been maintaining close liaison and exchanging intelligence with other law enforcement departments, including the C&ED, and conducting joint blitz operations at various BCPs, as well as arranging QDDs to assist the law enforcement officers at land BCPs in their duties to combat illegal importation of food. The CFS will continue to collect intelligence and evidence through various channels and also deploy law enforcement actions based on the actual situation to crack down on the sales of regulated food through cross-boundary purchase. Regulated foods such as meat, poultry and eggs will not be exempted from the regulations under Cap. 60 and Cap. 132AK even if they are vacuum-packed.

In addition, the CFS will also continue strengthening the publicity and education at various control points and remind the public through various channels (e.g. websites, posters, leaflets, social media, etc.) that unless a health certificate issued by the relevant authorities and import permission are provided, it is illegal to bring regulated foods such as meat, poultry and eggs into Hong Kong from the Mainland or overseas.

- (7) All food for sale in Hong Kong must comply with relevant food safety standards, such as those regarding veterinary drug residues and metallic contamination, etc.. Besides, according to the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X), any person who sells restricted

food (including fresh, chilled or frozen shellfish, as well as sashimi, oysters consumed at raw state, etc.) as specified in Schedule 2 to the Regulation requires the written permission of the FEHD. We will continue to review various relevant food safety legislations, including considering the need to strengthen regulations on the import of higher-risk aquatic products.

- End -

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 18

(Written Reply)

Asked by Hon CHAN Chun-ying

Date of meeting : 12 June 2024

Replied by : Secretary for Financial
Services and the Treasury

Reply

President,

Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect (“WMC”) in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (“GBA”) provides GBA residents with a formal, direct and convenient channel for cross-boundary investment in diverse wealth management products and marks a milestone in the financial development of the GBA.

WMC has seen continuous and steady development since its launch in September 2021. “WMC 2.0” commenced on 26 February 2024. Enhancement measures include increasing the individual investor quota from RMB 1 million to RMB 3 million, lowering the threshold for participating in the Southbound Scheme to support more GBA residents to participate in the scheme, expanding the scope of participating institutions to include eligible securities firms, expanding the scope of eligible investment products, and further enhancing the promotion and sales arrangements. According to the statistics published by the People’s Bank of China (“PBOC”), up to end-April 2024, over 110 000 individual investors in the GBA participated in WMC and cross-boundary fund remittances (including Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao) amounting to over RMB 50.7 billion had been recorded.

My reply to the question raised by Hon CHAN is as follows:

(1)

Under “WMC 2.0”, the scope of eligible products under the Southbound Scheme has been expanded to include all “non-complex” funds domiciled in Hong Kong and authorised by the Securities and Futures Commission in Hong Kong (“SFC”) that primarily invest in Greater China equity, as well as low- to medium-high-risk (which was low- to medium-risk under “WMC 1.0”) “non-complex” funds domiciled in Hong Kong and authorised by the SFC (excluding high-yield bond

funds and single emerging market equity funds). The number of funds distributed by Hong Kong banks under the Southbound Scheme has nearly doubled, from around 160 before the expansion to around 300. At current stage, the eligible products covered by the Southbound Scheme of WMC are relatively comprehensive and could cater for the risk appetites of WMC individual investors, providing Mainland individual investors with a wide range of investment options that meet diverse investment needs.

We have been maintaining close communication with the industry and the Mainland regulatory authorities in facilitating Hong Kong financial institutions' better understanding of the operational details of the enhancement measures, thereby ensuring the effective implementation of "WMC 2.0". We are also working with the industry to step up investor education in the GBA, so as to enhance investors' knowledge of WMC and products concerned, and enable them to better capture the cross-boundary wealth management and investment opportunities.

According to the statistics published by the PBOC, up to end-March 2024, investment products of Hong Kong and Macao held by Mainland individual investors under the Southbound Scheme of WMC stood at around RMB 16.24 billion, representing an increase of 1.8 times compared to the end-February figure. Allocation in funds and bonds increased, with details tabulated as follows –

Investment products of Hong Kong and Macao held by Mainland individual investors	Market value (RMB million)		Percentage increase
	End-February 2024	End-March 2024	
• Funds	52	224	330.8%
• Bonds	8	25	212.5%
• Deposits	5,581	15,991	186.5%
Total	5,641	16,240	187.8%

We are communicating with the industry and the Mainland regulatory authorities closely, and continuously reviewing the implementation of "WMC 2.0" with a view to exploring further expansion of the product scope under the Southbound Scheme.

(2)

Under "WMC 2.0", RMB-denominated deposit products offered by Mainland banks have been newly added to the scope of eligible products under the Northbound Scheme, and the scope of eligible public securities investment funds

has been expanded from those with risk rating of “R1” to “R3” to those with risk rating of “R1” to “R4” (excluding commodity futures funds). This has appropriately increased the investment options and diversity for Hong Kong investors under the Northbound Scheme. Regarding promotion and sales arrangements, “WMC 2.0” has provided clarity in the sales arrangements for the Northbound Scheme that Mainland sales institutions could, upon the request of Hong Kong clients and after assessing clients’ risk tolerance, introduce to them Northbound products commensurate with their risk tolerance level.

We and the Mainland regulatory authorities will examine and enhance WMC continuously (including the product types and sales arrangements) with the aim of attracting more Hong Kong investors to participate in the scheme.

(3)

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (“HKMA”) and the SFC have been in close communication with the Mainland regulatory authorities on the implementation of WMC, covering the monthly WMC data, the latest progress of regulatory review in both places, feedback from investors in both places, and the suggestions from the industry on the implementation process, etc. The HKMA and the SFC, in coordination with the Mainland regulatory authorities, have also strengthened collaboration in business presentation and investor education so as to strengthen public awareness and understanding of WMC and products concerned in both the Mainland and Hong Kong.

As an innovative financial cooperation measure in the GBA involving three different regulatory systems, WMC has been implemented under a pilot approach in a gradual and incremental manner. The Government and the financial regulators will closely monitor market developments and the operation of WMC, collaborate with the Mainland authorities to jointly foster the smooth implementation of WMC and continuously explore further enhancement measures to increase investors’ choices.

- End -

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 19

(Written Reply)

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Man-kwong

Date of meeting: 12 June 2024

Replied by: Secretary for Housing

Reply

President,

The Government has all along been striving to enrich the housing ladder in response to the home ownership aspirations of households with different income. To ensure subsidised sale flats (SSFs) are affordable for applicants and to facilitate them to move upwards along the housing ladder, there are specific calculation mechanisms for setting the price as well as for the income and asset limits for applicants of different types of SSFs. In response to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Leung Man-kwong, our reply is as follows:

(1) to (2)

Pricing Mechanism

To make Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats more affordable to target households, the government revised the pricing mechanism of SSFs in 2018 so that HOS flat prices are delinked from the price of private property market, and revised to be based on affordability of applicants. Under the revised pricing mechanism, at least 75% of the flats for sale can allow non-owner occupier households earning the median monthly household income to spend no more than 40% of their monthly income on mortgage payment. For SSF projects of the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS), HKHS will formulate the proposed sale price by drawing reference from factors including the discount rate of the preceding HOS sale exercise, market situations as well as affordability of the applicants.

The pricing of other schemes of SSFs is benchmarked against the sale price of HOS. For Private Subsidised Sale Flat – Pilot Scheme (“private SSFs”), drawing reference from the average discount rates adopted in different HOS sale exercises since the resumption of HOS sale in 2014, the discount rate for the sale price of private SSFs is fixed at 35% of the market price (i.e. the units are sold at 65% of the market price). The discount of the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme is 10% more than that determined for the preceding HOS sale

exercise. As for Starter Homes for Hong Kong Residents (SH) projects, given that their purpose is to help persons who are not eligible for HOS and yet cannot afford private housing meet their home ownership aspirations, and that the relevant units will be sold at a price lower than the market price, the discount rate concerned will be 10% to 20% lower than that of the preceding HOS sale exercise of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA), in order to maintain the relativity among different rungs along the housing ladder.

Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) allows tenants of public rental housing to buy the flats they currently rent at affordable prices. The list price of TPS flats is set by reference to the adjusted replacement cost. As at June 2024, the discounts of the unsold TPS flats range from 79% to 84% of assessed market values, i.e. for sale at 16% to 21% of assessed market values.

Income and Asset Limits

To ensure that our limited public housing resources are made available only to those in genuine need, White Form (WF) applicants must meet the income and asset limits to be eligible to purchase various SSFs. In setting the income and asset limits, HA has thoroughly considered the applicants' affordability and reviews the limits before each "Sale of HOS Flats" sale exercise. In setting the income limit, it adopts a household expenditure approach, which comprises both housing expenditure (including the mortgage payment, and rates, Government rent and management fee needed to purchase the reference flat) and non-housing expenditure, plus a 5% contingency. The asset limit is derived from the amount of expenditure required to finance the downpayment for acquiring the reference flat, the related transaction costs (including stamp duty and estate agent's commission), and decoration expenses.

On the other hand, as SH projects are positioned as a rung above HOS but below private housing, and their discount rate is lower than that for HOS (meaning their sale price is higher), the applicants should have income falling between the income limits for WF applicants for HOS and 30% above such limits, and assets not exceeding 30% above the HOS asset limits for WF applicants.

(3)

Among various types of subsidised housing, as private SSFs and HOS/HKHS's SSFs are on the same rung of the housing ladder, the two of them have similar discount rates. The eligibility criteria (including income and asset limits) and alienation restrictions for private SSFs will also largely follow those under the prevailing HOS and housing policy. However, the main difference between the two is that HOS/SSFs are developed by HA/HKHS, whereas private

SSFs are developed and sold by private developers. This is to enhance the overall construction capacity, save time required for development, and unleash development potential of private land. We consider that HOS and private SSFs will complement each other in enriching the design and variety of SSFs and providing more choices for buyers. There is therefore no need for consolidation.

As mentioned above, there are different discount rates and eligibility criteria for different levels of SSFs, which can address the home ownership aspirations of households with different income. We consider that the current housing ladder has pragmatically responded to the home ownership needs of different people. We will continue to review whether there is room for enhancement of the housing ladder having regard to various factors such as the development of the property market and the home ownership aspirations of various members of the public.

- END -

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 20

(Written Reply)

Asked by: Hon Robert LEE

Date of meeting: 12 June 2024

Replied by: Secretary for Financial
Services and the Treasury

Reply

President,

The National 14th Five-Year Plan supports Hong Kong in enhancing its status as an international financial centre, and puts forward specific targets including strengthening Hong Kong's functions as a global offshore Renminbi ("RMB") business hub, an international asset management centre and a risk management centre. The Government, in collaboration with the regulators and the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited ("HKEX"), strives to leverage on the unique advantages of Hong Kong under "one country, two systems" to continuously deepen the mutual access between the Mainland and Hong Kong financial markets, enrich investments choices under the mechanism, and address the diverse asset allocation and risk management needs of domestic and overseas investors.

In consultation with HKEX and the Securities and Futures Commission ("SFC"), my reply to the five parts of the question is as follows:

- (1) The derivatives market is an important part of Hong Kong's securities market. The derivatives market under HKEX registered increased trading volume in 2023, with the average daily trading volume of futures and options reaching 1.35 million contracts, representing a rise of 4% from 2022. The average daily trading volume of key derivative products such as Hang Seng Index futures and options as well as Hang Seng Tech Index futures all hit new highs during 2023. Since the beginning of 2024 (as of end-May), the average daily trading volume of futures and options had further risen to over 1.56 million contracts.

To provide the market with greater flexibility and facilitate investors to manage risks during the overseas market hours, HKEX launched the After-hours Trading Session ("T+1 Session") in the derivatives market in 2013, and further extended the trading hours in phases subsequently. With effect from June 2019, the trading hours of T+1 Session have been extended to 3 a.m. of the next day.

In line with the continuous expansion of the ecosystem of Hong Kong's derivatives market and the rapid growth of the number cum types of non-Hong Kong Dollar denominated products as well as the asset class covered, HKEX launched the derivatives holiday trading service in May 2022 with MSCI futures and options contracts as the first suite of products. In March 2024, the service was extended to currency futures and options contracts, facilitating investors to manage foreign exchange risks during public holidays in Hong Kong. In addition, HKEX is developing a new derivatives platform to further enhance trading and clearing efficiency, with a view to addressing evolving client needs.

On the other hand, the Government in coordination with the SFC made legislative amendments in 2023 to optimise the derivatives position limit regime. The 2024-25 Budget also announced that the fixed-rate stamp duty payable on the jobbing business of options market makers will be waived, so as to lower transaction costs, enhance market liquidity and improve investors' efficiency in risk management. Our target is to introduce an amendment bill into the Legislative Council within 2024.

On the implementation of the initiative to maintain trading under severe weather, we believe that it will serve an important function of further strengthening Hong Kong's position as a two-way gateway between the international and Mainland markets, consolidating its competitiveness as an international financial centre. HKEX conducted the public consultation from November 2023 to January 2024 on the proposed model and relevant arrangements for operating the Hong Kong securities and derivatives markets under severe weather. The Government, HKEX and regulators have maintained close communication with relevant stakeholders on the implementation. The details and timetable will be announced within this month.

HKEX and the SFC will continue to explore other initiatives that would benefit the development of the derivatives market. Specific improvement measures will be announced as appropriate for market consultation.

- (2) and (4) The Government, regulators and HKEX are committed to deepening and widening the mutual access between the Mainland and Hong Kong capital markets. With the strong support from the Central People's Government, a number of enhancement measures and new products were introduced under the mutual market access programme in 2023, fostering the connectivity and concerted

development of the two markets. We will continue to liaise closely with relevant Mainland authorities and actively implement the expansion measures as supported by the regulators of the two places. Notably, the SFC announced in November 2023 that offshore Mainland government bond futures will be launched in Hong Kong, which will introduce an effective offshore risk management tool for investing in Mainland government bonds in Hong Kong. Relevant preparatory work has reached the final stage. HKEX will announce the launch date and details upon obtaining regulatory approval.

On the expansion of product scope, various initiatives in broadening mutual access such as Bond Connect, Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect, inclusion of Exchange-traded Funds (“ETFs”) under mutual access, Swap Connect, etc. were successively implemented in recent years. Apart from the launch of Mainland government bond futures mentioned above, we are actively collaborating with the Mainland authorities to take forward the five measures announced by the China Securities Regulatory Commission in April (including expanding the eligible product scope of equity ETFs under Stock Connect, including real estate investment trusts under Stock Connect, supporting the inclusion of RMB stock trading counter under Southbound trading of Stock Connect, enhancing the arrangements for mutual recognition of funds, and encouraging leading enterprises of industries in the Mainland to list in Hong Kong) as well as the other measures announced earlier such as the introduction of block trading under Stock Connect. We will continue to discuss with the Mainland various expansion and enhancement arrangements, and study recommendations for facilitating two-way capital flows between the two places. Individual enhancement measures will be announced as appropriate once they are ready.

- (3) On virtual asset (“VA”), the Government issued a policy statement in October 2022 to set out the policy stance and approach towards developing a vibrant VA sector and ecosystem in Hong Kong. The objective is to provide suitable regulation for the market to unleash the potential of Web3 and other related technologies while addressing the actual and potential risks, thereby ensuring responsible and healthy market development. Since the issuance of the policy statement, the development of VA-related products in Hong Kong has achieved notable progress. Following the introduction of the first batch of VA futures ETFs in 2022, the Asia’s first batch of VA spot ETFs were listed in Hong Kong in April 2024, providing investors with a richer array of VA

investment options. As of end-May, the total asset under management of VA futures and spot ETFs listed in Hong Kong reached HK\$3.2 billion. The Government and regulators will continue to facilitate the development of VA-related products.

- (5) The Government attaches importance to enhancing commodities trading in our financial services sector. With the Mainland being one of the global leading commodities consumers, the influence of RMB in the commodities market has gradually increased alongside the progression of RMB internationalisation. The unique advantage of having the Mainland's support provides Hong Kong with the potential to further optimise relevant product development and infrastructure, and strive to become a major cross-boundary commodities market. HKEX has launched a series of commodities futures products settled in RMB, covering various metal types such as gold, silver, aluminium, zinc, copper, nickel, tin and lead.

HKEX will continue to explore relevant development, including the issuance of high-liquidity products and suitable trading methods. It will work closely with the Mainland institutions to explore the feasibility of cooperation of HKEX and its company Qianhai Mercantile Exchange with other Mainland commodities and futures exchanges. Fully leveraging the functions of Qianhai Mercantile Exchange as a cross-boundary trading platform for specific commodities (such as soybean) will strengthen the two-way connectivity between domestic and overseas commodities market participants as well as contribute to enhancing our country's pricing power in the international commodities market. The Government and financial regulators will support the work of HKEX, and actively discuss relevant measures with the Mainland. We are pleased to note that the industry has liaised with the London Metal Exchange on specific measures, including the proposal to establish an accredited commodities settlement warehouse in Hong Kong. The London Metal Exchange is positive towards the proposal and will further study the practical commercial demand and feasibility with the industry. The Government and financial regulators will provide assistance as appropriate.

-End-

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 21

(Written Reply)

Asked by: Hon Michael TIEN

Date of meeting: 12 June 2024

Replied by: Secretary for Health

Reply

President,

In consultation with the Department of Health (DH) and Hospital Authority (HA), the consolidated reply to the question raised by Hon Michael TIEN is as follows:

The Government has been attaching great importance to the prevention and treatment of liver cancer. On the prevention of liver cancer, the Government set up the Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of Viral Hepatitis (SCVH) in 2018 to advise on overall policy, targeted strategies and resource allocation for the prevention and control of viral hepatitis. Having examined the local situation and international experience, the SCVH recommended focused risk-based testing for six priority populations at higher risk of HBV infection to start scaling up hepatitis B virus (HBV) screening in Hong Kong. The six priority populations include people who inject drugs, people with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers, people in custody, and family members and sexual partners of people with HBV infection. According to the SCVH's recommendation, concomitant hepatitis C virus (HCV) testing should be offered where appropriate.

Baseline and targeted regular HBV and HCV testing and management for people with HIV attending the designated HIV clinics of the DH and the HA have been in place for years. Babies attending Maternal and Child Health Centres of the DH who are born to mothers infected with HBV have been offered post-vaccination serologic testing since January 2022. With effect from April 2022, all MSM and sex workers attending Social Hygiene Clinics of the DH are offered HBV and HCV screening as part of the comprehensive screening for sexually

transmitted infections. With effect from July 2023, the DH has launched risk-based viral hepatitis screenings at its Elderly Health Service, Woman Health Service, Families Clinics and methadone clinics. Members of the public may also consult their family doctors for testing.

To enhance the overall management capacity of HBV in Hong Kong, the HA and the DH formulated the “Management of Adult Patients with Chronic Hepatitis B in Primary Care” in September 2023, and a collaborative approach between primary care physicians and specialists for the management of HBV was piloted in the HA. The Primary Healthcare Office of the Health Bureau (being progressively transformed into the Primary Healthcare Commission) will also make reference to the strategy put forward by the SCVH, and continuously review the relevant services provided by the District Health Centres, so as to provide evidence-based, effective and efficient primary care services to the community under the principle of district-based medical-social collaboration in the community.

The SCVH will keep in view local and international developments and advise the Government on feasible, sustainable and effective strategies related to the prevention and control of chronic hepatitis.

As for the treatment of liver cancer, the HA currently provides laboratory testing services to support clinical specialties on clinical diagnosis and monitoring of various diseases including liver cancer. The HA also provides oesophago-gastro-duodenoscopy (OGD) (commonly referred to as gastroscopy) services and treatment to liver cancer patients with clinical needs as necessary and appropriate. For liver cancer patients who need to receive drug treatment with Atezolizumab and Bevacizumab, the HA will generally arrange them to undergo OGD to reduce the risk of complications when receiving the relevant drug treatment. At present, the HA will arrange relevant investigation as soon as possible according to the patient’s treatment need and schedule, and will, subject to the patient’s condition, start treatment early during the waiting period for the investigation to avoid delay. Patients may also choose to undergo relevant investigation in the private sector.

When introducing new laboratory testing services, the HA will take into account relevant factors such as clinical benefits, the safety and

efficacy of the new technology, the availability of manpower and expertise, the capacity and technical adaptability of the laboratory, etc. The HA will explore new diagnostic and treatment options, including the feasibility and suitable timing of introducing technology for detecting the biomarkers of abnormal coagulation (PIVKA-II) in order to provide patients with optimal treatment. When new diagnostic or treatment option is launched, the healthcare team will liaise with suitable patients in a timely manner for relevant follow-up.

When exploring new Public-Private Partnership (PPP) programmes, the HA will, based on its service demand and in line with the Government's direction of healthcare development, explore the need and feasibility of introducing other PPP programmes according to the principle of strategic purchasing of healthcare services, so as to meet the public's demand for healthcare services. In the process, the HA will continue to communicate with the public and patient groups, work closely with the stakeholders, and consider various factors such as evolving service demand, potential complexity of PPP programmes, capacity and readiness of the private sector, and the impact on public healthcare manpower and private healthcare charges, etc.

-End-

Banking Ordinance

Resolution

(Under section 135(2) of the Banking Ordinance (Cap. 155))

Resolved that the Banking Ordinance (Cap. 155) be amended as set out in the Schedule.

Schedule

Amendments to Banking Ordinance

1. **Second Schedule amended (fees)**
 - (1) Second Schedule, item 1, column 3—
Repeal
“474,340”
Substitute
“610,000”.
 - (2) Second Schedule, item 1A, column 3—
Repeal
“474,340”
Substitute
“610,000”.
 - (3) Second Schedule, item 2, column 3—
Repeal
“113,020”
Substitute
“145,000”.
 - (4) Second Schedule, item 3, column 3—
Repeal
“113,020”
Substitute
“145,000”.
 - (5) Second Schedule, item 4, column 3—

- Repeal**
“384,270”
Substitute
“490,000”.
(6) Second Schedule, item 5, column 3—
Repeal
“384,270”
Substitute
“490,000”.
(7) Second Schedule, item 6, column 3—
Repeal
“10”
Substitute
“12”.
(8) Second Schedule, item 7, column 3—
Repeal
“5”
Substitute
“6”.
(9) Second Schedule, item 8, column 3—
Repeal
“22,400”
Substitute
“29,000”.
(10) Second Schedule, item 9, column 3—
Repeal

- “22,400”
Substitute
“29,000”.
(11) Second Schedule, item 10, column 3—
Repeal
“19,110”
Substitute
“20,000”.
(12) Second Schedule, item 11, column 3—
Repeal
“19,110”
Substitute
“20,000”.
(13) Second Schedule, item 12, column 3—
Repeal
“22,400”
Substitute
“29,000”.
(14) Second Schedule, item 13, column 3—
Repeal
“22,400”
Substitute
“29,000”.
(15) Second Schedule, item 14, column 3—
Repeal
“44,800”

- Substitute**
“58,000”.
- (16) Second Schedule, item 15, column 3—
Repeal
“44,800”
Substitute
“58,000”.
- (17) Second Schedule, item 16, column 3—
Repeal
“38,400”
Substitute
“40,000”.
- (18) Second Schedule, item 17, column 3—
Repeal
“38,400”
Substitute
“40,000”.
- (19) Second Schedule, item 18, column 3—
Repeal
“11,200”
Substitute
“14,500”.
- (20) Second Schedule, item 19, column 3—
Repeal
“11,200”
Substitute

- “14,500”.
- (21) Second Schedule, item 20, column 3—
Repeal
“19,110”
Substitute
“20,000”.
- (22) Second Schedule, item 21, column 3—
Repeal
“19,110”
Substitute
“20,000”.
- (23) Second Schedule, item 22, column 3—
Repeal
“44,800”
Substitute
“58,000”.
- (24) Second Schedule, item 23, column 3—
Repeal
“44,800”
Substitute
“58,000”.

Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance

Resolution

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

Resolved that in relation to the Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulation 2024, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 78 of 2024, and laid on the table of the Legislative Council on 22 May 2024, the period for amending subsidiary legislation referred to in section 34(2) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1) be extended under section 34(4) of that Ordinance to the meeting of 10 July 2024.

The marked-up version of the amendment moved by Mr YANG Wing-kit (Translation)

That *the post-pandemic changes in the global tourism ecosystem have brought new challenges and opportunities to Hong Kong's tourism industry*; the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr XIA Baolong, pointed out earlier that Hong Kong has to establish the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong' and better polish Hong Kong's gilded signboard as 'the best tourism destination'; to this end, Hong Kong must implement well the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong', and drive the diversified development of industries with mega event economy, so as to go all out to develop the economy and improve people's livelihood; places around the world have successively implemented various strategies to compete for mega events, and in order to develop Hong Kong's mega event economy and turn popularity into prosperity, the SAR Government should not only adopt new ideas to enhance the joint participation of the Government, the business sector and the community, but also actively draw on the successful experience of other places *and make use of the celebrity effect and seize the opportunities brought about by the fan economy* to proactively reach out to compete for mega events, *celebrities* and tourists with new solutions, make good use of the policies introduced by the Central Authorities that are beneficial to Hong Kong and give full play to its own characteristics, proactively explore Hong Kong's rich tourism resources, and formulate a long-term strategy for the development of the mega event industry, with a view to enhancing the quality and quantity of the mega event economy and developing Hong Kong into an 'international events capital'.

Note: Mr YANG Wing-kit's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type*.

The marked-up version of the further amendment moved by Mr Kenneth LAU (Translation)

That the post-pandemic changes in the global tourism ecosystem have brought new challenges and opportunities to Hong Kong's tourism industry; the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr XIA Baolong, pointed out earlier that Hong Kong has to establish the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong' and better polish Hong Kong's gilded signboard as 'the best tourism destination'; to this end, Hong Kong must implement well the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong', and drive the diversified development of industries with mega event economy, so as to go all out to develop the economy and improve people's livelihood; places around the world have successively implemented various strategies to compete for mega events, and in order to develop Hong Kong's mega event economy and turn popularity into prosperity, the SAR Government should not only adopt new ideas to enhance the joint participation of the Government, the business sector and the community, but also actively draw on the successful experience of other places and make use of the celebrity effect and seize the opportunities brought about by the fan economy to proactively reach out to compete for mega events, celebrities and tourists with new solutions, make good use of the policies introduced by the Central Authorities that are beneficial to Hong Kong and give full play to its own characteristics, proactively explore Hong Kong's rich tourism resources, and formulate a long-term strategy for the development of the mega event industry, with a view to enhancing the quality and quantity of the mega event economy and developing Hong Kong into an 'international events capital'; *this Council also urges the SAR Government to adopt the following measures:*

- (1) *stepping up the promotion of traditional culture and heritage sites in villages in the New Territories and making good use of the tourism resources to actively develop rural in-depth tourism;*
- (2) *fully opening up Sha Tau Kok Town and Chung Ying Street Closed Area, and making good use of the rich and diversified natural ecological, humanistic and historical resources in the area, so as to promote the construction of the Blue and Green Recreation, Tourism and Conservation Circle and empower the development of eco-tourism in Hong Kong;*
- (3) *strengthening the road connections between various piers in the New Territories, and at the same time actively discussing with the Shenzhen Municipal Government the implementation of the co-location arrangement at the Nan'ao checkpoint pier in the Dapeng New District of Shenzhen, so as to develop cross-boundary maritime tours;*

- (4) *constructing large-scale indoor and outdoor performance venues in the Northern Metropolis, so as to ensure that there are sufficient venues and supporting facilities to support the hosting of a number of mega events in Hong Kong; and*
- (5) *studying the feasibility of including the construction of a temporary racetrack for Formula 1 Races in the planning of the Northern Metropolis and of including the construction of a permanent racetrack and relevant supporting facilities for Formula 1 Races in the planning of the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands, and actively striving for the organization of Formula 1 Races in Hong Kong, so as to boost Hong Kong's mega event economy.*

Note: Mr Kenneth LAU's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type*.

The marked-up version of the further amendment moved by Mr YIU Pak-leung (Translation)

That the post-pandemic changes in the global tourism ecosystem have brought new challenges and opportunities to Hong Kong's tourism industry; the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr XIA Baolong, pointed out earlier that Hong Kong has to establish the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong' and better polish Hong Kong's gilded signboard as 'the best tourism destination'; to this end, Hong Kong must implement well the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong', and drive the diversified development of industries with mega event economy, so as to go all out to develop the economy and improve people's livelihood; places around the world have successively implemented various strategies to compete for mega events, and in order to develop Hong Kong's mega event economy and turn popularity into prosperity, the SAR Government should not only adopt new ideas to enhance the joint participation of the Government, the business sector and the community, but also actively draw on the successful experience of other places and make use of the celebrity effect and seize the opportunities brought about by the fan economy to proactively reach out to compete for mega events, celebrities and tourists with new solutions, make good use of the policies introduced by the Central Authorities that are beneficial to Hong Kong and give full play to its own characteristics, proactively explore Hong Kong's rich tourism resources, and formulate a long-term strategy for the development of the mega event industry, with a view to enhancing the quality and quantity of the mega event economy and developing Hong Kong into an 'international events capital'; this Council also urges the SAR Government to adopt the following measures:

- (1) stepping up the promotion of traditional culture and heritage sites in villages in the New Territories and making good use of the tourism resources to actively develop rural in-depth tourism;
- (2) fully opening up Sha Tau Kok Town and Chung Ying Street Closed Area, and making good use of the rich and diversified natural ecological, humanistic and historical resources in the area, so as to promote the construction of the Blue and Green Recreation, Tourism and Conservation Circle and empower the development of eco-tourism in Hong Kong;
- (3) strengthening the road connections between various piers in the New Territories, and at the same time actively discussing with the Shenzhen Municipal Government the implementation of the co-location arrangement at the Nan'ao checkpoint pier in the Dapeng New District of Shenzhen, so as to develop cross-boundary maritime tours;

- (4) constructing large-scale indoor and outdoor performance venues in the Northern Metropolis, so as to ensure that there are sufficient venues and supporting facilities to support the hosting of a number of mega events in Hong Kong; and
- (5) studying the feasibility of including the construction of a temporary racetrack for Formula 1 Races in the planning of the Northern Metropolis and of including the construction of a permanent racetrack and relevant supporting facilities for Formula 1 Races in the planning of the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands, and actively striving for the organization of Formula 1 Races in Hong Kong, so as to boost Hong Kong's mega event economy; *and*
- (6) *linking up different trades to develop mega event tourism products, and continuing to invest resources in developing Hong Kong's characteristic tourism.*

Note: Mr YIU Pak-leung's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type*.

The marked-up version of the further amendment moved by Mr Vincent CHENG (Translation)

That the post-pandemic changes in the global tourism ecosystem have brought new challenges and opportunities to Hong Kong's tourism industry; the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr XIA Baolong, pointed out earlier that Hong Kong has to establish the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong' and better polish Hong Kong's gilded signboard as 'the best tourism destination'; to this end, Hong Kong must implement well the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong', and drive the diversified development of industries with mega event economy, so as to go all out to develop the economy and improve people's livelihood; places around the world have successively implemented various strategies to compete for mega events, and in order to develop Hong Kong's mega event economy and turn popularity into prosperity, the SAR Government should not only adopt new ideas to enhance the joint participation of the Government, the business sector and the community, but also actively draw on the successful experience of other places and make use of the celebrity effect and seize the opportunities brought about by the fan economy to proactively reach out to compete for mega events, celebrities and tourists with new solutions, make good use of the policies introduced by the Central Authorities that are beneficial to Hong Kong and give full play to its own characteristics, proactively explore Hong Kong's rich tourism resources, and formulate a long-term strategy for the development of the mega event industry, with a view to enhancing the quality and quantity of the mega event economy and developing Hong Kong into an 'international events capital'; this Council also urges the SAR Government to adopt the following measures:

- (1) stepping up the promotion of traditional culture and heritage sites in villages in the New Territories and making good use of the tourism resources to actively develop rural in-depth tourism;
- (2) fully opening up Sha Tau Kok Town and Chung Ying Street Closed Area, and making good use of the rich and diversified natural ecological, humanistic and historical resources in the area, so as to promote the construction of the Blue and Green Recreation, Tourism and Conservation Circle and empower the development of eco-tourism in Hong Kong;
- (3) strengthening the road connections between various piers in the New Territories, and at the same time actively discussing with the Shenzhen Municipal Government the implementation of the co-location arrangement at the Nan'ao checkpoint pier in the Dapeng New District of Shenzhen, so as to develop cross-boundary maritime tours;

- (4) constructing large-scale indoor and outdoor performance venues in the Northern Metropolis, so as to ensure that there are sufficient venues and supporting facilities to support the hosting of a number of mega events in Hong Kong; and
- (5) studying the feasibility of including the construction of a temporary racetrack for Formula 1 Races in the planning of the Northern Metropolis and of including the construction of a permanent racetrack and relevant supporting facilities for Formula 1 Races in the planning of the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands, and actively striving for the organization of Formula 1 Races in Hong Kong, so as to boost Hong Kong's mega event economy; and
- (6) linking up different trades to develop mega event tourism products, and continuing to invest resources in developing Hong Kong's characteristic tourism; *and*
- (7) *comprehensively promoting tourism diversification in Hong Kong and developing in-depth tourism with different themes, such as cultural tourism, Citywalk, sports tourism, Chinese medicine tourism, low-altitude sightseeing tourism, family-friendly tourism and pet-friendly tourism; and improving and upgrading various tourism supporting facilities, including actively enhancing the software and hardware ancillary facilities targeting the high-end consumer group and establishing a Muslim-friendly tourism environment, so as to complement the development of mega event economy and pursue the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong'.*

Note: Mr Vincent CHENG's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type*.

The marked-up version of the further amendment moved by Mr SHIU Ka-fai (Translation)

That the post-pandemic changes in the global tourism ecosystem have brought new challenges and opportunities to Hong Kong's tourism industry; the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr XIA Baolong, pointed out earlier that Hong Kong has to establish the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong' and better polish Hong Kong's gilded signboard as 'the best tourism destination'; to this end, Hong Kong must implement well the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong', and drive the diversified development of industries with mega event economy, so as to go all out to develop the economy and improve people's livelihood; places around the world have successively implemented various strategies to compete for mega events, and in order to develop Hong Kong's mega event economy and turn popularity into prosperity, the SAR Government should not only adopt new ideas to enhance the joint participation of the Government, the business sector and the community, but also actively draw on the successful experience of other places and make use of the celebrity effect and seize the opportunities brought about by the fan economy to proactively reach out to compete for mega events, celebrities and tourists with new solutions, make good use of the policies introduced by the Central Authorities that are beneficial to Hong Kong and give full play to its own characteristics, proactively explore Hong Kong's rich tourism resources, and formulate a long-term strategy for the development of the mega event industry, with a view to enhancing the quality and quantity of the mega event economy and developing Hong Kong into an 'international events capital'; this Council also urges the SAR Government to adopt the following measures:

- (1) stepping up the promotion of traditional culture and heritage sites in villages in the New Territories and making good use of the tourism resources to actively develop rural in-depth tourism;
- (2) fully opening up Sha Tau Kok Town and Chung Ying Street Closed Area, and making good use of the rich and diversified natural ecological, humanistic and historical resources in the area, so as to promote the construction of the Blue and Green Recreation, Tourism and Conservation Circle and empower the development of eco-tourism in Hong Kong;
- (3) strengthening the road connections between various piers in the New Territories, and at the same time actively discussing with the Shenzhen Municipal Government the implementation of the co-location arrangement at the Nan'ao checkpoint pier in the Dapeng New District of Shenzhen, so as to develop cross-boundary maritime tours;

- (4) constructing large-scale indoor and outdoor performance venues in the Northern Metropolis, so as to ensure that there are sufficient venues and supporting facilities to support the hosting of a number of mega events in Hong Kong; and
- (5) studying the feasibility of including the construction of a temporary racetrack for Formula 1 Races in the planning of the Northern Metropolis and of including the construction of a permanent racetrack and relevant supporting facilities for Formula 1 Races in the planning of the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands, and actively striving for the organization of Formula 1 Races in Hong Kong, so as to boost Hong Kong's mega event economy; and
- (6) linking up different trades to develop mega event tourism products, and continuing to invest resources in developing Hong Kong's characteristic tourism; and
- (7) comprehensively promoting tourism diversification in Hong Kong and developing in-depth tourism with different themes, such as cultural tourism, Citywalk, sports tourism, Chinese medicine tourism, low-altitude sightseeing tourism, family-friendly tourism and pet-friendly tourism; and improving and upgrading various tourism supporting facilities, including actively enhancing the software and hardware ancillary facilities targeting the high-end consumer group and establishing a Muslim-friendly tourism environment, so as to complement the development of mega event economy and pursue the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong';

this Council also urges the SAR Government to conduct studies on the following:

- (8) *setting up pedestrian precincts in various districts across the territory and implementing a system for the orderly management of street performances, with the authorities being responsible for assessing and issuing permits to eligible performers, and ensuring that a certain distance is maintained between performers, so as to avoid causing noise due to performers being too close to each other while also attracting tourists;*
- (9) *making good use of Hong Kong's natural conditions of being surrounded by waters on three sides and having many scenic islands in its vicinity, and granting the right to operate and develop tourism projects on some of the islands with potential for tourism development by way of tenancy agreements to eligible non-governmental organizations and private enterprises, so as to fully develop blue tourism resources;*

- (10) *strengthening tourist-friendly and facilitative initiatives, including providing free high-speed public Wi-Fi services in more public places and tourist attractions; introducing local culture and traditions through free guided tour services at more attractions; by drawing reference from Japan's experience in building a network of 'hands-free travel' service, setting up tourism counters at places such as the airport, MTR stations, shops and hotels to provide delivery or storage services for tourists, so as to relieve them of the burden of carrying heavy luggage when travelling between locations; and*
- (11) *continuously promoting the development of the night economy, supporting the expansion of economic and cultural activities into the evening, and suitably adjusting public transport services to meet the demand of tourists.*

Note: Mr SHIU Ka-fai's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type*.

The marked-up version of the further amendment moved by Mr LUK Chung-hung (Translation)

That the post-pandemic changes in the global tourism ecosystem have brought new challenges and opportunities to Hong Kong's tourism industry; the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr XIA Baolong, pointed out earlier that Hong Kong has to establish the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong' and better polish Hong Kong's gilded signboard as 'the best tourism destination'; to this end, Hong Kong must implement well the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong', and drive the diversified development of industries with mega event economy, so as to go all out to develop the economy and improve people's livelihood; places around the world have successively implemented various strategies to compete for mega events, and in order to develop Hong Kong's mega event economy and turn popularity into prosperity, the SAR Government should not only adopt new ideas to enhance the joint participation of the Government, the business sector and the community, but also actively draw on the successful experience of other places and make use of the celebrity effect and seize the opportunities brought about by the fan economy to proactively reach out to compete for mega events, celebrities and tourists with new solutions, make good use of the policies introduced by the Central Authorities that are beneficial to Hong Kong and give full play to its own characteristics, proactively explore Hong Kong's rich tourism resources, and formulate a long-term strategy for the development of the mega event industry, with a view to enhancing the quality and quantity of the mega event economy and developing Hong Kong into an 'international events capital'; this Council also urges the SAR Government to adopt the following measures:

- (1) stepping up the promotion of traditional culture and heritage sites in villages in the New Territories and making good use of the tourism resources to actively develop rural in-depth tourism;
- (2) fully opening up Sha Tau Kok Town and Chung Ying Street Closed Area, and making good use of the rich and diversified natural ecological, humanistic and historical resources in the area, so as to promote the construction of the Blue and Green Recreation, Tourism and Conservation Circle and empower the development of eco-tourism in Hong Kong;
- (3) strengthening the road connections between various piers in the New Territories, and at the same time actively discussing with the Shenzhen Municipal Government the implementation of the co-location arrangement at the Nan'ao checkpoint pier in the Dapeng New District of Shenzhen, so as to develop cross-boundary maritime tours;

- (4) constructing large-scale indoor and outdoor performance venues in the Northern Metropolis, so as to ensure that there are sufficient venues and supporting facilities to support the hosting of a number of mega events in Hong Kong; and
- (5) studying the feasibility of including the construction of a temporary racetrack for Formula 1 Races in the planning of the Northern Metropolis and of including the construction of a permanent racetrack and relevant supporting facilities for Formula 1 Races in the planning of the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands, and actively striving for the organization of Formula 1 Races in Hong Kong, so as to boost Hong Kong's mega event economy; and
- (6) linking up different trades to develop mega event tourism products, and continuing to invest resources in developing Hong Kong's characteristic tourism; and
- (7) comprehensively promoting tourism diversification in Hong Kong and developing in-depth tourism with different themes, such as cultural tourism, Citywalk, sports tourism, Chinese medicine tourism, low-altitude sightseeing tourism, family-friendly tourism and pet-friendly tourism; and improving and upgrading various tourism supporting facilities, including actively enhancing the software and hardware ancillary facilities targeting the high-end consumer group and establishing a Muslim-friendly tourism environment, so as to complement the development of mega event economy and pursue the concept of 'Tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong';

this Council also urges the SAR Government to conduct studies on the following:

- (8) setting up pedestrian precincts in various districts across the territory and implementing a system for the orderly management of street performances, with the authorities being responsible for assessing and issuing permits to eligible performers, and ensuring that a certain distance is maintained between performers, so as to avoid causing noise due to performers being too close to each other while also attracting tourists;
- (9) making good use of Hong Kong's natural conditions of being surrounded by waters on three sides and having many scenic islands in its vicinity, and granting the right to operate and develop tourism projects on some of the islands with potential for tourism development by way of tenancy agreements to eligible non-governmental organizations and private enterprises, so as to fully develop blue tourism resources;
- (10) strengthening tourist-friendly and facilitative initiatives, including providing free high-speed public Wi-Fi services in more public places and

tourist attractions; introducing local culture and traditions through free guided tour services at more attractions; by drawing reference from Japan's experience in building a network of 'hands-free travel' service, setting up tourism counters at places such as the airport, MTR stations, shops and hotels to provide delivery or storage services for tourists, so as to relieve them of the burden of carrying heavy luggage when travelling between locations; and

- (11) continuously promoting the development of the night economy, supporting the expansion of economic and cultural activities into the evening, and suitably adjusting public transport services to meet the demand of tourists;

the SAR Government should also give full play to the existing advantages of the tourism industry, and train more personnel who can adapt to the new developments for the local tourism and related services industries.

Note: Mr LUK Chung-hung's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type*.