

Third award ceremony for Charter on External Lighting held

The Environment Bureau held the third award ceremony for the Charter on External Lighting today (June 27) to commend about 4 800 participants. They pledged to switch off lighting installations with decorative, promotional or advertising purposes that affect the outdoor environment during preset times to minimise nuisance and energy wastage, and to provide the public with a better environment conducive to sleep.

The Under Secretary for the Environment, Mr Tse Chin-wan, and the Chairperson of the Working Group on External Lighting, Ms Caroline Mak, officiated at the award ceremony. More than 3 300 participants fulfilling the pledge to switch off external lighting from 11pm to 7am were awarded the Platinum Award, while some 1 200 participants were awarded the Gold Award for switching off external lighting from midnight to 7am. In addition, over 270 participants newly signed up to the Charter this year were granted certificates.

The Charter participants come from different sectors including building management, property development, hotels and catering, retail, laundries, banking, money exchange shops, pharmacies, pet shops, massage parlours, salons, telecommunications and real estate agencies, as well as schools, public utilities and public/non-governmental organisations. The Charter has effectively connected various sectors in collaboratively minimising light nuisance, which is conducive to maintaining good neighbourhoods.

"I hope the community will continue to support the Charter by switching off the unnecessary external lighting at preset time, so as to save more and provide the community with a better environment conducive to sleep," Mr Tse said.

The ceremony also recognised two Partners of the Charter for taking the initiative to encourage through their networks a number of premises with external lighting installations to sign up to the Charter. Ms Mak thanked them for shouldering corporate social responsibility to further promote the Charter to various sectors of the community.

The Working Group was appointed by the Government in August 2018. Apart from promoting the Charter, the Working Group review the effectiveness of the Charter, and advise the Government on further measures to better manage external lighting. It comprises members from professional bodies, relevant trades, academia, green groups and District Councils.

"I hope that the community can actively participate in the coming public activities and express their views, so that the Working Group can consolidate views from different parties, and advise the Government on the way forward for managing external lighting in a more comprehensive and effective approach," Ms Mak said.

The Environment Bureau launched the Charter in April 2016 to invite owners of and responsible persons for external lighting installations to switch off lighting installations with decorative, promotional or advertising purposes that affect the outdoor environment during preset times (i.e. 11pm or midnight to 7am on the following day). The list of participants is available on the Charter's dedicated website (www.charteronexternallighting.gov.hk).

Communications Authority press release

The following is issued on behalf of the Communications Authority:

This press release summarises the decisions of the Communications Authority (CA) following its 87th meeting held in June 2019.

Application for renewal of the non-domestic television programme service (non-domestic TV) licence by Times International Media Group Limited (TIMG)

The CA decided not to renew the non-domestic TV licence of TIMG under section 11(6) of the Broadcasting Ordinance (BO) (Cap. 562) after its expiry on September 28, 2019.

TIMG was granted a non-domestic TV licence by the former Broadcasting Authority in 2007 with a validity of 12 years. TIMG operates one 24-hour channel (HKMG TV Chinese Channel) in Putonghua for its non-domestic TV service, providing cultural, arts, general entertainment and TV drama programmes targeting the Asia Pacific region.

In considering TIMG's application for licence renewal, the CA took into account, inter alia, the financial and managerial capability of TIMG, the overall performance of TIMG during the current licence period, including serious breaches of relevant licence condition due to prolonged delay in the launch of service and suspension of service on two occasions, and its ability to comply with the relevant regulatory requirements. After considering all the documents and information submitted by TIMG as well as the representations of TIMG in response to the CA's provisional decision, the CA concluded that TIMG had failed to demonstrate that it has the financial and managerial capability to continue to provide the proposed service. TIMG also failed to give sufficient assurances to the CA's satisfaction about its capability to fully comply with all the regulatory requirements if its licence is renewed. Following the CA's decision not to renew TIMG's licence, TIMG shall cease to be a non-domestic TV licensee from September 29, 2019.

Police stringently follow up on illegal activities of damaging Police Headquarters

Police strongly condemn protestors for blocking Harcourt Road, Arsenal Street and Gloucester Road started at about 10.30pm yesterday (June 26) and further besieging and damaging the Police Headquarters (PHQ) in Wan Chai. Police will stringently follow up on these illegal activities.

The acts of the protestors seriously affected the work of Police, including the provision of emergency services to the public. The Report Room service in Wan Chai Police Station has been suspended since around 10.40pm yesterday. Eighteen calls of 999 hotline in Wan Chai Division could not be immediately handled. Extra resources were deployed to follow up. The incident also made staff members who were on night shift could not report duty.

While besieging PHQ, the protestors used mills barriers and sundries to block the entrance and exit gates, threw eggs at PHQ, drew graffiti on the outer walls, and destroyed the closed-circuit television on the outer wall of PHQ. They also targeted strong lights and laser beam at Police officers' eyes and maliciously obstructed officers from entering and leaving PHQ.

Police respect the public's freedom of expression, speech and assembly. However, the behaviour of the protestors obviously went beyond the legal boundary, which is not acceptable in our society. Police will deal with these illegal acts in a steadfast manner.

For the sake of public order and public safety, at about 3.30am, Police took actions to disperse protestors and to take down the obstacles in the vicinity of PHQ to resume traffic. Police's operations completed at around 6.45am this morning. During the operations, a man was arrested for assaulting police officer.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, June 27, 2019 is 104.8 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

UGC releases University Accountability Agreements

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The University Grants Committee (UGC) today (June 27) released the University Accountability Agreements (UAAs) for the 2019-22 triennium signed with the UGC-funded universities. The agreements were signed by the Chairman of the UGC, Mr Carlson Tong; the Secretary-General of the UGC, Professor James Tang; and the Council Chairmen and Heads of the UGC-funded universities.

Mr Tong said, "Our universities play a critical role in the development of our society and the UGC has therefore always attached great importance to their robust governance. I am very pleased with the signing of the first UAA, which illustrates the concerted efforts of both the UGC and the UGC-funded universities to enhance accountability and transparency of the universities in their performance in the education of our youths and their drive to continuous improvement."

Pursuant to a key recommendation of the "Governance in UGC-funded Higher Education Institutions in Hong Kong" report (the Governance Report), the UAA was established after many rounds of consultations with universities over a three-year period since 2016. In addition to setting out the duties and responsibilities associated with public funding, the individual UAA contains performance indicators which include both sector-wide performance measures and institution-specific key performance indicators. They cover five key domains: (1) quality of the student experience of teaching and learning; (2) quality of research performance and of the research postgraduate experience; (3) knowledge transfer and wider engagement; (4) enhanced internationalisation; and (5) financial health and institutional sustainability. The performance indicators provide a useful tool for the UGC to assess the performance of universities against their individual goals under the principle of institutional autonomy.

Mr Tong stressed that the UGC-funded sector enjoys an excellent international reputation. Effective governance and public accountability of institutional activities would further assure public confidence and help ensure the sustainability of the UGC-funded sector.

Mr Tong added, "I would like to thank the universities, their councils and their management teams for their earnest support and valuable input to the UGC in establishing the UAA. The process of arriving at the agreed UAA was made much easier as a result of the ongoing and constructive dialogue between the universities and the UGC. I believe we have together made an important step in ensuring the continued success of our sector, which in turn

contributes to the sustainable development of Hong Kong. Last but not the least, I would like to express my gratitude to Sir Howard Newby, author of the Governance Report, who also led the Task Force on Implementation of the Governance Report Recommendations in producing the UAA."

The UAA forms an integral part of the 2019-22 triennium funding planning process and the UGC will closely engage with the universities to reflect on the implementation of the UAA in light of future development and operational experience. As an enhanced governance framework, the UAA will be refined based on experience gained over time.

The individual UAAs have been uploaded to the website of the UGC (www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/activity/university_acc_agree.html).