

LCQ5: Public dental services

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

Currently, among the dental clinics under the Department of Health, 11 of them provide the public with free emergency dental treatment (commonly known as "general public dental session" (GP dental session)). The service includes pain relief and teeth extraction only but not other dental treatment. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the consultation quota and attendance of the GP dental sessions provided by each of the 11 aforesaid dental clinics in the last financial year;

(2) whether it will consider afresh expanding the scope of the GP dental session to cover fillings and dentures; and

(3) given that Tung Chung Dental Clinic currently provides dental treatment to civil servants or their dependants only, and ordinary residents in Tung Chung need to travel a long distance to Tsuen Wan Dental Clinic in order to attend the GP dental sessions, whether the Government will consider making arrangements for Tung Chung Dental Clinic to set aside time slots for providing GP dental sessions for ordinary residents in Tung Chung?

Reply:

President,

The Government's current policy on dental services aims to raise public awareness of oral health and encourage the public to develop proper oral health habits through promotion and education. Curative dental care services are mainly provided by the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Over the years, the Oral Health Education Unit of the Department of Health (DH) has implemented oral health promotion programmes targeting different age groups and disseminated oral health information through various channels to enhance oral health of the community. Apart from making efforts to promote oral health and prevent oral problems, the Government also provides emergency dental services for the public and special oral care services for in-patients and persons with special oral healthcare needs.

Government dental clinics are mainly responsible for providing dental benefits for civil servants/pensioners and their eligible dependents as required of the Government as terms of employment for civil servants, and therefore civil servants/pensioners and their eligible dependents are the major service targets of these clinics. Nonetheless, the Government provides

free emergency dental treatments for the public through designated sessions (i.e. general public sessions) in 11 government dental clinics of the DH.

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Holden Chow is as follows:

(1) The consultation quota and attendance of general public sessions provided by each of the 11 government dental clinics in 2018-19 are set out in Annex.

(2) and (3) As providing comprehensive dental services for the public would require substantial amount of financial resources, it is necessary for the Government to focus resources on providing emergency dental services for the public. At present, free emergency dental services are provided for the public through general public sessions in the 11 government dental clinics of the DH. These services mainly cover emergency dental treatments, including treatment of acute dental diseases, prescription for pain relief, treatment of oral abscess and teeth extraction. Professional advice is also given by dentists to patients with regard to their individual needs. In addition, the DH provides specialist treatments in the Oral Maxillofacial Surgery and Dental Units of seven public hospitals for referred patients. The Hospital Authority also provides dental services in four public hospitals for referred in-patients, patients with special oral healthcare needs and patients with dental emergency needs. As for curative dental care services, they are mainly provided by the private sector and NGOs.

Currently, government dental clinics are operating at their full capacity, with a usage rate of almost 100 per cent for all appointment time slots. It is therefore not possible for the DH to allocate more time slots for general public sessions on top of the existing service provided at government dental clinics, including Tung Chung Dental Clinic.

Apart from general public sessions, there are also other measures to take care of persons with special needs, including the School Dental Care Service for primary school students, and dental care support for the low-income elderly with special needs, such as the Outreach Dental Care Programme for the Elderly and Community Care Fund Elderly Dental Assistance Programme. Besides, the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme allows Hong Kong elderly persons aged 65 or above to use the vouchers for private dental services. To better meet the dental service needs of persons with intellectual disability, the Government launched a three-year project on July 16, 2018 for persons with intellectual disability named Healthy Teeth Collaboration to provide free oral check-ups, dental treatments and oral health education for adults aged 18 or above with intellectual disability.

LCQ15: Application of blockchain

technology

Following is a question by the Hon Charles Mok and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

In the "Hong Kong Smart City Blueprint", the Government has proposed promoting Fintech initiatives and exploring the application of distributed ledger technology (DLT) in different areas, such as trade financing and cross-boundary remittances. Blockchain technology (BCT) is a type of DLT. In October last year, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) launched, in collaboration with 12 local banks, the eTradeConnect, which uses BCT as the backbone to facilitate trade settlement and financing. Furthermore, the application of BCT in supervisory and regulatory technology and other industries (e.g. Smart Contracts of the insurance industry and information authentication system) has gained increasing popularity. It has been reported that the governments of a number of places are currently examining and allocating resources to the application of BCT in public services, in areas including identity authentication, anti-counterfeiting, and enhancement of the security of information system and data, with a view to improving the transparency in the processing of information and the efficiency of public administration, as well as saving in public expenditure. On the other hand, the application of BCT is not yet subject to regulation under the existing legislation. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the operation of eTradeConnect since its launch, including (i) a breakdown of the registered local banks and enterprises (set out by enterprise scale), and (ii) the number of cases in which trade transactions have been completed successfully through eTradeConnect and the amount of money involved; the follow-up actions taken after the HKMA and the Monetary Authority of Singapore exchanged a Memorandum of Understanding, and the work progress achieved in connecting with the relevant platform in Singapore;

(2) whether it will, by drawing reference from the relevant studies and trial schemes of other advanced places, assess the potential of BCT in enhancing the efficiency of public services, as well as launch BCT trial schemes in areas such as handling of tax returns, land registration, voting and issuance of various types of identification documents;

(3) whether it will formulate strategies aiming at promoting a keen interest of applying BCT within the Government (e.g. requesting government departments to submit plans, objectives and timetables for trial uses of such technology, as well as formulating performance indicators); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) whether it will allocate more funding for scientific research projects relating to BCT, formulate measures to encourage the application of such

technology by commercial organisations, and draw up in the near future strategies for training BCT-related talents; if so, of the details and the timetable;

(5) whether it has examined regulating the application of BCT; if so, of the details; and

(6) of the respective details (including the numbers of participants) of the seminars, workshops, talks and training courses in relation to BCT organised last year by the Innovation and Technology Commission, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, the Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, the Hong Kong Productivity Council as well as other relevant government departments and organisations?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (FSTB), the reply to the six parts of the question is as follows.

(1) According to the information provided by FSTB, the eTradeConnect is fully funded by a consortium of 12 major banks in Hong Kong under the facilitation of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA). Since the implementation of the platform is still at initial stage, it is premature to announce the specific registration and transaction numbers. Based on the feedback collected from users, banks have started the platform enhancement work, including enhancing its functionalities, preparing to connect the platform to different trade participants and overseas platforms, etc. The next round of customer acquisition will commence after the completion of the related enhancement work.

Since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the HKMA and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), the two authorities have discussed for several times the operation model and technical details of the "Global Trade Connectivity Network" and reached a consensus to some degree. The HKMA and MAS are jointly working on the preparation work to identify a suitable solution provider. The HKMA will announce more information in due course when available.

(2) and (3) As the Government understands, the adoption of blockchain technology in public services is still at the exploratory and initial stage. The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) commenced in end 2018 a pilot application of blockchain technology project to explore the applicability and benefits of adopting blockchain technology in government services. The OGCI0 is discussing with four departments (the Intellectual Property Department, the Companies Registry, the Environment Protection Department and the Department of Health) on the implementation of pilot projects in areas including the transfer of intellectual property ownership, change in registered company information, etc. These pilot

projects will be completed in phases from end 2019 to 2020.

The results and experience of the pilot projects will help government bureaux and departments (B/Ds) consider adopting blockchain technology in their services, on matters such as the Internet connection speed requirements for handling a large quantity of transactions, the corresponding design and measures for maintaining information security, etc.

In addition, through the recently established Smart Government Innovation Lab, the OGCI0 will invite the industry to submit technology solutions and product suggestions, including the adoption of blockchain technology, that can address the service needs of and challenges being faced by B/Ds. The OGCI0 will also arrange proof-of-concept trials and technology testing for suitable solutions to help B/Ds better adopt information technology (IT) in their businesses and services.

(4) Through various funding schemes of the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF), the Innovation and Technology Commission has been supporting the research and development work of research institutions, universities and private companies in various technology areas. In the past three years, the ITF has supported 18 projects involving blockchain and Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) with a total funding amount of about \$67.2 million.

As regards talent, the Reindustrialisation and Technology Training Programme under the ITF subsidises the staff of local enterprises to receive technology training, including those relating to blockchain technology. As for government personnel, the OGCI0 will provide structured training for all government IT staff in 2019-20 and 2020-21 so as to enhance their knowledge of and ability to apply various innovative technologies, including big data, artificial intelligence, blockchain, cloud computing, etc. In the long run, the OGCI0 will continue to provide suitable training for relevant staff having regard to the demand and technological development.

(5) At present stage, relevant government departments will devise the plans to promote the adoption of blockchain technology in different public services with reference to the experience of the pilot projects and the new development of governments in other regions. Based on the demands of individual sectors in adopting related technologies in various areas (such as financial products, land registration, licence application, etc.), relevant government departments will also consider the need to introduce regulatory measures on such technological adoption in light of future development.

(6) In 2018-19, the OGCI0 arranged a total of 13 seminars and courses on blockchain technology for government IT staff, with 270 participants in total.

Cyberport organised or supported the organisation of 11 workshops and talks related to blockchain in 2018-19, with over 450 participants. The concepts of blockchain technology, cryptocurrency, etc. were introduced to start-ups, students and industry participants.

Since January 2018, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation has organised 13 seminars, workshops, talks and training courses related to blockchain and DLT, attracting over 700 participants. The Hong Kong Productivity Council has also organised blockchain technology-related activities during the same period, including the Blockchain for Industry Applications Summit in September 2018, as well as the Supply Chain Traceability and Authentication by Blockchain seminar in January 2019, which attracted nearly 300 participants in total.

In addition, Invest Hong Kong hosted the Hong Kong FinTech Week in October 2018, which featured panel discussions and new initiatives on blockchain applications, attracting around 2 000 participants.

LCQ3: Combating climate change and protecting biodiversity

Following is a question by the Hon Chu Hoi-dick and a reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

Last month, a socio-political movement called "Extinction Rebellion" staged a large-scale demonstration in London, putting forward the following three demands to the Government of the United Kingdom (UK): (1) the Government must tell the truth about the climate and wider ecological emergency, reverse inconsistent policies and work alongside with the media to communicate with citizens; (2) the Government must enact legally binding policy measures to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2025 and to reduce consumption levels; and (3) a national Citizens' Assembly should be set up to oversee the changes, as part of creating a democracy fit for the purpose. On the other hand, a global environmental assessment report published early this month by an organisation under the United Nations (UN) has pointed out that a million species are threatened with extinction due to the destruction inflicted by human beings on the natural environment, and thus only "transformative changes" across the globe on various aspects may reverse this situation. Some environmentalists have pointed out that if the Hong Kong Government does not make transformative changes to its current policies for addressing climate change and protecting biodiversity, it can hardly satisfy the three aforesaid demands nor meet the UN Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will pledge to the public that it will devote all its efforts to satisfying the three demands of the Extinction Rebellion movement; if so, of the transformative changes to be made in respect of its policies for

addressing climate change; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that the Parliament and dozens of local councils of cities and towns in UK have declared a climate emergency, whether the Hong Kong Government will make such declaration; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will study what transformative changes to the policies on protecting biodiversity are needed in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2) There is no time to waste in combating climate change. The Paris Agreement agreed that all Parties should take appropriate measures based on the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" in order to tackle this imminent challenge together. Hong Kong has responded positively when the Paris Agreement came into effect in 2016. We set up the Steering Committee on Climate Change under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary of Administration to steer and co-ordinate climate actions among various bureaux and departments in the whole Government; and released the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2030+ in 2017, setting out the target to reduce Hong Kong's carbon intensity by between 65 per cent and 70 per cent by 2030 compared with the 2005 level and detailing the key measures to be taken. These actions are in line with the Paris Agreement to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The Government will also review our climate actions every five years as required by the Paris Agreement.

As electricity generation contributes to about two thirds of Hong Kong's carbon emissions, improving the fuel mix is the prime consideration. For this, the two power companies will use more natural gas in the coming ten years to replace the coal-fired generating units which will gradually retire. At the same time, the Government will continue to take the lead in developing renewable energy (RE). For example, we have earmarked \$2 billion to implement relevant projects at government premises, and will install solar generation systems of a larger scale at suitable reservoir and landfill locations. Beyond the Government, we have introduced Feed-in Tariff (FiT) and implemented different facilitation measures, including suitably relaxing the restrictions on "village house" rooftop installations, launching Solar Harvest to assist eligible schools and welfare non-governmental organisations in installing solar photovoltaic panels, etc. There were only dozens of private RE systems connected to the power grids in the past, but in the past year alone, the two power companies have already received about 3 000 FiT applications.

In addition, the Government unveiled in 2015 "the Energy Saving Plan for Hong Kong's Built Environment 2015~2025+", setting a target of reducing

energy intensity by 40 per cent (compared with 2005) by 2025. To date, our overall energy intensity has decreased by more than 28 per cent, putting us in the lead among members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. We have implemented a number of measures to enhance our energy efficiency, including (a) taking the lead in saving energy and developing green buildings; (b) raising statutory standards; (c) providing tax incentives; (d) constructing district cooling systems; (e) promoting retro-commissioning; (f) expanding the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme; and (g) harnessing technology and innovation, etc. After implementing all these measures, we expect that our annual carbon emission will be reduced by 1.7 million tonnes. Using the carbon emission level of 2016 as reference, this would be equivalent to a carbon reduction of about 4 per cent.

Energy saving is also a key element of the post-2018 Scheme of Control Agreements (SCAs) we signed with the power companies. The two power companies have implemented different programmes under the SCAs to assist the community in participating in energy saving. In the future, smart meters will be used to provide electricity consumption information to all customers in Hong Kong to help save energy and implement demand response schemes.

We are also developing Organic Resources Recovery Centres (ORRCs) in phases to turn food waste into biogas. Phase 1 of ORRC was commissioned in 2018, while Phases 2 and 3 are under planning. Moreover, the first Food Waste/Sewage Sludge Anaerobic Co-digestion Trial Scheme that is carried out jointly by the Environmental Protection Department and Drainage Services Department is just being conducted at Tai Po Sewage Treatment Works. This allows proper recycling of food waste and turning waste into energy, while reducing carbon emissions at the same time.

The transport sector accounts for around 20 per cent of Hong Kong's carbon emissions. Upon the completion of the Shatin to Central Link, the railway service will cover more than 70 per cent of the local population. The Government will continue to promote "Walk in HK" to encourage people to walk more, and to foster a "bicycle-friendly environment".

With the successive implementation of various measures, we are moving steadily towards the 2030 target of reducing per capita carbon emissions from 5.7 tonnes in 2016 to less than 4.5 tonnes in 2020 and within 3.3 to 3.8 tonnes by 2030. Pursuant to the Paris Agreement, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) shall formulate, by 2020, our long-term decarbonisation strategy up to 2050. To this end, the Council for Sustainable Development has accepted the Government's invitation to launch a public engagement next month. In the process, the Council will, as usual, adopt a bottom-up approach, providing a platform to gauge the views of the community and help build consensus. We encourage all sectors of the community to take this opportunity to express their views.

(3) In the face of various global challenges for biodiversity, the HKSAR Government launched the first city level Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) for Hong Kong in 2016. The four major areas under BSAP include enhancing the existing conservation measures; mainstreaming biodiversity; improving knowledge and enhancing public participation in biodiversity. There

are 67 specific actions under BSAP, many of which are related to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

At present, various work under the four major areas of BSAP has been progressing, and actions are being implemented by relevant bureaux and departments in accordance with the timetable.

Thank you, President.

CFS announces results of seasonal food surveillance on rice dumplings (second phase)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (May 29) announced that the test results of about 50 rice dumpling samples collected under a recently completed seasonal food surveillance project on rice dumplings (second phase) were all satisfactory.

"The CFS announced the results of the seasonal food surveillance project on rice dumplings (first phase) early this month. With the Tuen Ng Festival around the corner, the CFS has completed the second phase of the surveillance project. Samples of rice dumplings from different food premises such as restaurants, food factories and other retail outlets (including online retailers) were collected for chemical, microbiological and nutrition content analyses. The chemical analyses included tests for colouring matters (such as Sudan dyes and red 2G), preservatives (such as boric acid, salicylic acid and benzoic acid), metallic contamination (such as lead, arsenic, cadmium, mercury and copper) and pesticides. The microbiological analyses covered pathogenic bacteria including Salmonella, coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms, Clostridium perfringens and Bacillus cereus. For nutrition content analyses, contents such as protein, total fat, sodium and sugars of the samples were tested to see if the test results comply with their declared values on the nutrition labels," a spokesman for the CFS said.

The spokesman reminded members of the public to observe the following food safety tips in purchasing, preparing, storing and consuming rice dumplings:

Buying rice dumplings

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- * Buy rice dumplings from reliable retail outlets;
 - * When purchasing non-prepackaged rice dumplings, choose those that are securely wrapped in wrapping leaves; and
 - * When purchasing prepackaged rice dumplings, check the expiry date and

whether the packaging is intact.

Home-made rice dumplings

- * Buy wrapping leaves from reliable suppliers and avoid leaves that are unnaturally bright green or with chemical smells; and
- * Choose healthier ingredients as fillings (e.g. dry beans, lean meat and mushrooms) by following the "3 Low 1 High" dietary principle of low fat, low sugar, low salt and high fibre.

Storing and preparing rice dumplings

- * Consume rice dumplings as soon as possible and avoid prolonged storage;
- * Store rice dumplings at 4 degrees Celsius or below, or store them properly according to the instructions on the package if they are not consumed or cooked immediately;
- * Keep cooked rice dumplings that are not consumed immediately in a covered container and put them in the upper compartment of the refrigerator. Keep raw food in the lower compartment to prevent cross-contamination;
- * Reheat rice dumplings thoroughly until the core temperature reaches 75 degrees C or above before consumption;
- * Do not reheat rice dumplings more than once; and
- * Consume reheated rice dumplings as soon as possible.

Consuming rice dumplings

- * Before eating, wash hands with running water and liquid soap and dry them with a dry towel or a paper towel; and
- * Reduce seasonings such as soy sauce or granulated sugar during consumption.

The spokesman said, "Rice dumplings in general are relatively high in energy, fat and salt. During the festival, people should maintain a balanced diet, and consume rice dumplings moderately, with due consideration of their health condition. People are recommended to share rice dumplings with their family members and friends, as this not only enhances the festive atmosphere, but also allows them to taste rice dumplings of different flavours and avoid over-consumption. People are also advised to make use of nutrition labels on prepackaged food to compare their nutritional contents for healthier food choices."

He also reminded food manufacturers to purchase food ingredients from reliable suppliers, adhere to Good Manufacturing Practice for preparation of food products and comply with legal requirements when using food additives.

LCQ4: Curriculum Development Council

Following is a question by the Hon Au Nok-hin and a reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) is mainly responsible for advising the Government on matters relating to the curriculum development of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Its tasks include reviewing the existing curriculum policies, compiling curriculum guides and syllabuses, and putting forward recommendations on reform of curriculum development. Some initiatives of CDC in recent years, such as the setting of a long-term vision that "Putonghua be used as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language Subject" and the compilation of the Moral and National Education Curriculum Guide, have given rise to controversies. CDC operates under a two-tier structure: the first tier being CDC and its Standing Committees, and the second tier being the Key Learning Area/Subject Committees and Functional Committees. All members of CDC and its committees are appointed by the Government, and their meetings are all held in camera. Some members of the education sector have pointed out that CDC lacks democratic elements in its composition and transparency in its operation, resulting in its decisions being prone to be questioned. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the criteria adopted by the Chief Executive for appointing members to the first-tier structure of CDC; why none of the 22 incumbent members of CDC are frontline teachers but several of them are members of the business sector; whether it will, by making reference to the method of formation of the Council on Professional Conduct in Education, let practitioners of the education sector nominate candidates from teachers and elect among them CDC members;

(2) among the current members of the various committees in the second-tier structure of CDC, of the respective numbers and percentages of those who are teachers nominated by principals; and

(3) whether it will request CDC to allow the public to observe the proceedings of CDC's meetings, publish detailed minutes of meetings as soon as possible after the meetings, and increase the channels for gauging public opinion; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) is an advisory body set up by the Government to give advice on matters relating to the curriculum development of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Currently, there

are three Standing Committees under the CDC (the first tier of the CDC), which are responsible for reviewing and advising on matters relating to the curriculum of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, as well as exploring and reviewing curriculum initiatives, curriculum resources and support services. Committees on Key Learning Areas/Liberal Studies and Functional Committees (the second tier of the CDC) have also been set up under the Standing Committees. The memberships of the CDC and its Standing Committees seek to represent "a wide spectrum of stakeholders" as the members not only need to be well versed in the work of curriculum development or other related areas (such as technological development), but also examine and formulate the directions, emphases and priorities of curriculum development in a holistic manner. The membership of the second tier of the CDC, on the other hand, is drawn from "specialised disciplines" as the members are required to provide concrete views on matters relating to the curriculum development of individual Key Learning Areas/subjects (such as languages and science). While performing their respective functions, the two tiers interact under a regular reporting and feedback mechanism with a view to facilitating the ongoing development of school curriculum effectively.

Like the appointment of non-official members of other government advisory and statutory bodies, members of the CDC and its Committees are appointed on the principle of meritocracy. All members of the CDC are appointed by the Secretary for Education under delegated authority of the Chief Executive for a term of two years. Members of the CDC and its Standing Committees, which represent a wide spectrum of stakeholders, can pool their wisdom together and give their views on the policy of curriculum development and the way forward in a holistic and impartial manner during discussions at meetings. The current CDC, chaired by a professional with enthusiasm in education, comprises a total of 20 non-official members and two official members. The other non-official members include five academics from post-secondary institutions, nine school personnel, one parent, three members from the business and technology sectors and one representative of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. Among the nine school personnel, apart from a representative of a school-sponsoring body, the rest are principals and teachers of kindergartens, primary, secondary and special schools. Besides, the curriculum must keep abreast with social, economic and technological changes, etc. At present, the CDC includes three members from the business and technology sectors. Building on their extensive experience and insights into areas such as human resources, vocational and professional education and training (VPET), innovation and technology, they can offer professional advice on how to equip students to meet the future development needs of Hong Kong and the world.

I must clearly point out to Members that the work of the CDC is very professional. Members of the CDC are required to have a high degree of professionalism, excellent performance in learning and teaching and/or extensive experience in public examinations, as well as capabilities for curriculum leadership. They can be school principals or teachers of other ranks. Therefore, assessing the representation of the CDC simply with reference to the number of teachers appointed will not provide a comprehensive perspective. Apart from nine school personnel, there are five

academics from post-secondary institutions who are educators with considerable experience and vision in areas such as teacher education, subject expertise (such as Chinese History and STEM education), educational research and VPET. Thus, together with the current Dean of Business and Management of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, who is serving as the chairperson of the CDC, 15 out of the 22 members come from the education sector. Members of the education sector form the majority of the membership of the CDC, accounting for nearly 70 per cent of the total number of CDC members; while the proportion of members from the business and technology sectors, parents and official members is relatively lower. Therefore, we do not agree with the view, as presented in the question, that there are no frontline teachers involved in the first tier of the CDC. In fact, we should uphold the principle of meritocracy and appoint the most suitable persons as CDC members.

The term of office of the eight Committees on Key Learning Areas and Liberal Studies and the five Functional Committees under the CDC is also two years. To identify the most suitable persons for participation in the work of curriculum development, the Education Bureau (EDB) issues a circular memorandum every two years inviting schools to nominate their teachers as members of the second tier CDC's Committees. The selection exercise is administered by the CDC in accordance with the established mechanism. Except for the Committee on Applied Learning, which must consist of a certain proportion of members from the professional and vocational sectors owing to its unique curriculum design, members of the second tier of the CDC are mostly experienced educators with subject expertise and extensive experience, as well as profound knowledge of the Key Learning Areas/subjects and curriculum areas concerned. Most of them are educators from primary and secondary schools and kindergartens, while some are experienced teaching staff members from post-secondary institutions. They account for over 70 per cent of the total number of members of the Committees. Though individual Committees have different functions and needs and therefore the total number of members and the number of members from various sectors may vary, teachers nominated by schools have been appointed to serve on the eight Committees on Key Learning Areas and Liberal Studies, accounting for about 30 per cent to 35 per cent of the total number of members.

To increase the transparency of its operation, currently the membership lists, agendas and gist of meetings of the CDC and its committees are uploaded to its website for public access. However, in view of the fact that sensitive and confidential issues such as new curriculum development, textbook publishing, resource deployment and information on public examinations may be involved in the discussions, and to ensure that members can freely and candidly express their views in an environment which is free from any external interference and pressure, the meetings of both tiers of the CDC are not open to the public and the minutes of the meetings are not uploaded to the CDC website. This arrangement is made having regard to the need to strike a balance between enhancing the transparency of the CDC's operation and ensuring its effective operation. In fact, the EDB and the CDC have been directly collecting the views of the school sector on the ongoing renewal of curriculum through different channels including briefings, school

surveys, focus group discussions, etc. For instance, when we updated the eight Key Learning Area Curriculum Guides and the General Studies Curriculum Guide for Primary Schools in 2017, questionnaires were distributed to all primary and secondary schools across the territory and the drafts of the relevant guides were uploaded to the EDB website for public information. Furthermore, 22 large-scale consultation sessions were organised for the school sector and there was a total attendance of over 5 300. As regards the Revised Curriculum Frameworks of Junior Secondary Chinese History and History, a two-stage consultation exercise was conducted in 2016 and 2017 respectively to forge a broad consensus in the school sector. All these are proof that the work of curriculum development in Hong Kong is indeed highly transparent and that it is implemented after thorough consultation with the school sector. Members of the public who have any views or suggestions on matters relating to curriculum development may forward them to the EDB through the existing channels or the CDC Secretariat for our follow-up.

Thank you, President.