

SCED to attend Asia-Pacific Telecommunity Ministerial Meeting in Tokyo

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, will depart for Tokyo, Japan, tomorrow (May 29) to attend the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Ministerial Meeting.

During the two-day (May 30 and 31) meeting, Mr Yau and participating ministers will attend discussion sessions on various topics related to information and communications technology development, including sustainable digital infrastructure and accessibility, inclusive digital innovation and growth, secure and trusted digital environment, and empowering the Asia-Pacific industry's role in digital transformation. The Ministerial Meeting will adopt a joint statement at the end of the meeting to further foster regional collaboration.

The APT is an intergovernmental organisation with the aim of promoting information and communication technology development in the Asia-Pacific region. The APT now has 38 members, four associate members and 140 affiliate members from private companies and academia.

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During his stay in Tokyo, Mr Yau will also meet with government officials of Japan and business leaders to promote Hong Kong's business advantages and opportunities.

Mr Yau will return to Hong Kong on the evening of May 31. The Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Dr Bernard Chan, will be the Acting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development during Mr Yau's absence.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, May 28, 2025 is 103.6 (up 0.2 against yesterday's index).

Appointment to Chief Executive's Policy Unit Expert Group announced

The Government announced today (May 28) the reappointment of 59 members of the Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) Expert Group, with the term to be effective for one year starting from May 30, 2025.

The Head of the CEPU, Dr Stephen Wong, expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Expert Group members for putting forth their views and suggestions proactively, as well as for their generous sharing of expertise, insights and research findings in their respective fields over the past year. These contributions have provided important references for the Policy Address.

Dr Wong said, "In addition to plenary meetings, the interaction between the CEPU and Expert Group members took various forms in the past year, including forums, seminars, sharing sessions, group discussions, individual meetings, visits and written exchanges, etc. The CEPU also invites universities and think tanks from the community that have received funding support under the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme and the Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme to organise opening and concluding seminars. Members of the Expert Group are invited to provide views from their industry perspectives to enhance the applicability of the research studies. They also serve as external examiners for the two funding schemes, assisting in vetting relevant research proposals and advising on funding applications."

Dr Wong continued, "I look forward to maintaining close liaison and co-operation with Expert Group members in the coming year, and to working together to assist the HKSAR Government on the 2024 Policy Address goal of 'Reform for Enhancing Development and Building Our Future Together'."

As an advisory body, the CEPU Expert Group was established in May 2023 and consists of members of different backgrounds including business, finance, professional, think-tanks and academia to provide expert views and new ideas to the CEPU on various topics. To facilitate the work of the Expert Group and its conduct of more focused discussions, members of the Expert Group are assigned into three broad streams, namely the Economic Advancement Expert Group, the Social Development Expert Group and the Research Strategy Expert Group. For details of the events of the Expert Group, please refer to the website of the CEPU:

www.cepu.gov.hk/en/whats_new/index.html).

The full membership of the Expert Group is as follows (listed in alphabetical order of surnames):

Economic Advancement Expert Group

Professor Ba Shusong

Mrs Bonnie Chan Woo
Dr Haywood Cheung
Mr Hong Xiaoyuan
Mr Peter Kung
Mr Adam Kwok
Mr Peter Lai
Mr David Lau
Dr Martin Lee
Ms Nisa Leung
Mr Laurence Li, SC
Mr Li Xiguang
Mr Dowson Tong
Mr Patrick Tsang
Dr Levin Wang
Mr Allen Yeung
Mr Samuel Yung
Mr Jonathan Zhu

Social Development Expert Group

Mr Alan Chan
Dr Eugene Chan
Mr Kevin Chan
Mr Nicholas Chan
Mr Chen Shaobo
Mr Albert Lee
Mr Edward Liu
Ms Anthea Lo
Ms Lo Po-man
Mr Lo Wing-hung
Dr Lewis Luk
Dr Ma Jun
Dr Chloe Suen
Mr Tai Hay-lap
Dr Stephen Tai
Mr Tang Fei
Mr Xu Lin

Research Strategy Expert Group

Professor Cai Hongbin
Professor Thomas Chan
Mr Chang Ka-mun
Professor Christopher Chao
Dr Francis Cheung
Dr Chow Man-kong
Dr Chow Pak-chin
Dr Guo Wanda
Professor Alfred Ho
Dr Henry Ho
Professor Huang Ping

Professor Lau Pui-king
Professor Lau Siu-kai
Professor Dennis Lo
Professor Francis Lui
Professor Terry Lum
Professor Mao Zhenhua
Professor Charles Ng
Professor Naubahar Sharif
Dr Wang Fuqiang
Professor Richard Wong
Professor Wong Yuk-shan
Professor Xiao Geng
Professor Zheng Yongnian

LCQ12: Measures to support non-Chinese speaking students

Following is a question by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (May 28):

Question:

It is learnt that the lack of Chinese language proficiency of non-Chinese speakers has always been the biggest obstacle for them in pursuing further studies, seeking employment and integrating into the community. Although the Government has been providing non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students with all-encompassing learning support through diverse strategies to help them master the Chinese language and integrate into the community, some members of the education sector have reflected that some primary schools still have reservations about admitting NCS students. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of (a) primary schools admitting NCS students and (b) NCS primary school students, together with a breakdown by school type (i.e. (i) public sector primary school, (ii) Direct Subsidy Scheme primary school, and (iii) private primary school), in each of the past five years;
- (2) of the measures currently put in place by the Government to support the pre-primary education of NCS students, so as to assist them in learning Chinese and enhancing their language proficiency, thereby enabling them to articulate more smoothly to the primary school curriculum;
- (3) of the measures currently put in place by the Government to encourage primary schools to admit NCS students (e.g. reserving some school places for

NCS students), so as to enable their early integration into the community;
and

(4) whether the Government has reviewed the effectiveness of the existing measures to support NCS students; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that, and whether it will conduct such a review in the future?

Reply:

President,

The Government is committed to encouraging and supporting the integration of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students into the community, including facilitating their early adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese language. The Education Bureau (EDB) has been providing NCS students with all-encompassing learning support from pre-primary to secondary levels through diverse strategies to help them master the Chinese language and integrate into the community.

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip is as follows:

(1) and (3) All eligible children (including NCS students) enjoy equal opportunities in admission to public sector schools. To encourage parents of NCS students to arrange for their children to study in schools which provide an immersive Chinese language environment, the EDB abolished the so-called "designated schools" support system back in the 2013/14 school year. With the implementation of various enhanced support measures, the number of schools admitting NCS students has gradually increased and the school choices for parents of NCS students have also been widened. At present, most of the publicly-funded schools in Hong Kong have admitted NCS students, which account for about 70 per cent of the kindergartens (KGs) joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme (Scheme-KGs) and over 70 per cent of the primary and secondary schools. The number of public sector, Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) and private sector primary schools admitting NCS students and the respective number of NCS students from the 2019/20 to 2023/24 school years are tabulated below:

School year	Public sector primary schools		DSS primary schools		Private sector primary schools	
	Number of schools	Number of NCS students	Number of schools	Number of NCS students	Number of schools	Number of NCS students
2019/20	317	9 044	14	1 007	46	2 271
2020/21	328	9 271	15	991	44	2 127
2021/22	341	9 230	14	970	45	1 981
2022/23	352	9 334	15	914	44	1 997
2023/24	356	9 554	16	932	49	2 019

Notes:

(1) Figures for the 2020/21 school year refer to the position as at mid-October, and others refer to the position as at mid-September of the respective school years.

(2) Figures include students whose ethnicity is Chinese but are categorised as NCS students based on the spoken language at home.

(3) Figures exclude international schools, private independent schools and special schools.

(2) The EDB encourages parents of NCS students to arrange for their children to study in local KGs for early adaptation to the local education system as well as early exposure to and learning of Chinese. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the EDB has further enhanced the relevant measures for NCS students by providing a five-tier grant for Scheme-KGs according to the number of NCS students admitted. A KG admitting one NCS student can also receive the grant, and the grant rate for the highest tier is a double of the previous level. All the KGs receiving the additional grant have each assigned a teacher to co-ordinate the support measures for NCS students. The KGs concerned mainly deploy the resources for appointing additional teaching staff, procuring professional services, e.g. translation or interpretation services, organising cultural integration activities, etc. to enhance the support for NCS students in diversified modes.

(4) The Government encourages and supports the learning of Chinese of NCS students (including ethnic minorities students) and the creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools through diverse strategies, including providing additional funding to schools, optimising the curriculum, enriching the teaching resources, enhancing teacher training and professional support and facilitating home-school co-operation.

Regarding the provision of the additional funding, all public sector and DSS schools offering the local curriculum and admitting NCS students can be provided with an additional subsidy according to the number of NCS students admitted. The amount of the additional funding currently ranges from about \$0.16 million to about \$1.6 million per year for each school. Schools usually use the additional funding to employ additional teaching staff members to teach in diversified and intensive modes, including pull-out learning, split-class/small-group learning, after-school support, increasing the number of Chinese Language lessons, learning Chinese across the curriculum, deploying additional teachers for co-teaching and arranging teaching assistants to provide in-class support.

In respect to curriculum and teaching, the EDB has continually been providing teachers with guidance and support in curriculum planning, learning and teaching and assessment. The Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework, which was complemented by learning and teaching materials, has been implemented in primary and secondary schools since the 2014/15 school year to help NCS students learn Chinese. The EDB has been developing learning and teaching resources for NCS students. These resources have been uploaded to the EDB webpage and dispatched to schools. The Online Chinese Language Self-learning Resources launched in the 2023/24 school year

provides diversified learning resources which help NCS students extend their learning; after-school Chinese language courses for lower primary NCS students are offered on a trial basis using adapted learning materials for the Youth Chinese Test; and the Summer Bridging Programme has been extended to cover NCS students to be promoted to Primary Five and Primary Six. In addition, apart from studying Chinese Language for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination, NCS students meeting specified circumstances (Note 1) may, taking into account their needs and aspirations, obtain other recognised alternative Chinese Language qualifications through additional channels, including taking Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) pegged at the Qualifications Framework Level 1 to Level 3 and other internationally recognised alternative Chinese language examinations supported with Government subsidies (Note 2), for multiple articulation pathways for further studies and future careers.

Regarding teacher training, all Chinese Language teachers teaching NCS students are provided with training opportunities. The EDB continues to organise teacher professional development programmes, provide diversified school-based support services and establish professional learning communities to help teachers enhance their teaching effectiveness.

For parent education, starting from the 2020/21 school year, the EDB has commissioned non-governmental organisations and a post-secondary institution to provide diversified parent education programmes for parents of NCS students, with a view to helping them support their children's learning, encourage their children to master the Chinese language and have a more comprehensive understanding of the multiple pathways available for their children. The number of schools receiving Life Planning Education support services for NCS students has also increased in recent years.

Generally speaking, the aforementioned arrangements can help NCS students learn Chinese effectively and integrate into the community. The EDB has been monitoring schools through different means to ensure the prudent and proper use of the additional funding, including requiring schools to submit plans and reports on the use of the additional funding and providing schools with professional advice and support through supervisory visits and day-to-day communication to ensure public funds are put to good use.

In recent years, the number of schools admitting NCS students has increased from about 590 in the 2013/14 school year to about 710 in the 2024/25 school year, accounting for over 70 per cent of the primary and secondary schools in the territory. All schools admitting NCS students are provided with the additional funding and have used the funding effectively to implement various school-based measures for providing appropriate support for NCS students. In addition, more than 30 per cent of the NCS school candidates entering for the HKDSE Examination met the general entrance requirements of University Grants Committee-funded undergraduate programmes, which is comparable to the territory-wide rate of about 40 per cent for day school candidates. This demonstrates that the Government's policy intent of encouraging and supporting the integration of NCS students into the community, including facilitating their early adaptation to the local

education system, is being attained progressively. The EDB will continue to collect and take into account of stakeholders' views in reviewing the implementation of various support measures and enhance the measures as necessary with educational professionalism and having regard to the needs of students.

Note 1: Specifically, these NCS students are those who have learnt Chinese Language for either –
(a) less than six years while receiving primary and secondary education; or
(b) six years or more in schools, but have been taught an adapted and simpler Chinese Language curriculum not normally applicable to the majority of students in local schools.

Note 2: These examinations include the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Subsidiary (AS)-Level and Advanced (A)-Level.

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is conducting comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor the situation and continue to implement the enhanced testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on May 27 to noon today (May 28), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 259 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No

sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

(www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24, 2023, to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 139 169 samples of food imported from Japan (including 91 621 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 31 988 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.