

LCQ10: Work on overseas Chinese affairs

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Starry Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

There are views that the Mainland has a mature development of the work on overseas Chinese affairs, which has achieved remarkable results in guiding and supporting the vast number of overseas Chinese to actively participate in building up our country. Overseas Chinese also play an important role in promoting Hong Kong's economic development, promoting the cultural exchange between China and the rest of the world, and enhancing international understanding of China and Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number and types of overseas Chinese organisations currently registered in Hong Kong; whether there is a dedicated department responsible for liaising with such organisations regularly and promoting the initiatives; of the results achieved by the relevant initiatives in the past three years;

(2) whether InvestHK and the various overseas Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) have mechanisms of liaising regularly with the local overseas Chinese organisations; how support is provided for those organisations to tell China's stories well and promote Hong Kong in their localities; whether key performance indicators are set in respect of the liaison work with those organisations and evaluation is conducted on the effectiveness of the relevant work;

(3) whether it will consider reviewing the overseas Chinese policy of Hong Kong comprehensively, including studying the current population, distribution and development needs of overseas Chinese and establishing a database on overseas Chinese, so as to make long-term development planning; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) whether it will consider studying the experience of the Mainland in the work on overseas Chinese affairs to strengthen support for overseas Chinese organisations; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) whether it will consider strengthening the coordination of resources of various departments, coordinating the various ETOs and strengthening the liaison with overseas Chinese, and formulating specific measures to support overseas Chinese organisations in promoting the economic development of Hong Kong and telling the stories of China and Hong Kong well; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Regarding Dr the Hon Starry Lee's question, after consultation with the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB), the Security Bureau, and the Labour and Welfare Bureau, a consolidated reply is as follows:

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government attaches great importance to liaison with overseas Chinese and the overseas Chinese community in foreign countries and those returned to the Mainland. At present, the 14 overseas Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) and five Mainland Offices (MOs) of the HKSAR Government have been taking forward their external liaison and promotion work via different channels through their respective networks. The ETOs have established extensive network with different contacts, covering overseas Hong Kong people and overseas Chinese organisations, in addition to stakeholders from various sectors, to ensure that all sectors fully dovetail with the relevant policy measures of the HKSAR Government; actively promote Hong Kong's unique advantages of enjoying strong support of the Motherland and being closely connected to the world under "one country, two systems", and actively promote the opportunities brought by national strategies such as the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

In addition, through the Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses and Talents of the ETOs and MOs, Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) also leverages Hong Kong's roles as a "super connector" and a "super value-adder", as well as collaborates with relevant organisations, chambers of commerce (including local Chinese chambers of commerce and overseas Chinese chambers of commerce in the Mainland) and professional bodies, etc, to organise different kinds of investment promotion activities, including meetings, conferences, roadshows, seminars and exhibitions, so as to proactively provide potential investors in overseas with the latest information on Hong Kong's business environment and attract overseas enterprises to set up or expand their businesses in Hong Kong. InvestHK will continue to maintain close communication with stakeholders, including local Chinese chambers of commerce and overseas Chinese chambers of commerce in the Mainland, to strengthen co-operation and exchanges. At the same time, the Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses and Talents will recruit talents from different places, including overseas Chinese and Hong Kong people who study or work in foreign countries or the Mainland, encouraging them to return to Hong Kong to unleash their potential. Also, the MOs have exchange and contact with the national and regional overseas Chinese organisations, and invite them to participate activities organised by the MOs to contribute to the development of the country and Hong Kong.

The Resolution of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization adopted at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the CPC clearly supports Hong Kong in building herself into an international hub for high-calibre talents. Since the end of 2022, the HKSAR Government has rolled

out an array of measures to "trawl for talents", including the Top Talent Pass Scheme, and has enhanced various existing talent admission schemes and updated the Talent List, with a view to attracting global talents, including overseas Chinese, to complement the local workforce and strengthen the local talent pool. In addition to a series of measures to "trawl for talents", the Government has been attracting global talents and nurturing local talents by means of promoting education and technology innovation. For Chinese nationals living overseas who have obtained foreign permanent residence or have lived overseas for not less than one year immediately before the application can apply to work in Hong Kong through different schemes according to different qualifications, such as the Top Talent Pass Scheme, General Employment Policy, Technology Talent Admission Scheme, Immigration Arrangement for Non-local Graduates and Quality Migrant Admission Scheme. In terms of study, if Chinese passport holders have obtained foreign permanent residence, they can apply to study in any private higher education institutions and accredited colleges and universities registered in Hong Kong. Chinese passport holders who have obtained foreign permanent residence and live overseas can apply to come to Hong Kong as dependents. Holders of Chinese passports who have lived overseas for not less than one year immediately before the application can also apply to come to Hong Kong to join their sponsors as dependents. The second generation of Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents who have emigrated overseas can also apply to return to work in Hong Kong through the Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents.

We also attach great importance to the communication and co-operation with overseas Chinese organisations in Hong Kong. Their members include returned overseas Chinese, relatives of overseas Chinese and descendants of overseas Chinese. They have a network of kinship, clansman relationship and friendship with overseas Chinese in the Mainland and foreign countries. They have connection with overseas Chinese at home and abroad to form a world-wide network. Many overseas Chinese organisations in Hong Kong have all along supported "one country, two systems". Many returned overseas Chinese have actively participated in the country's reform and opening up, hugely invested, and made a lot of contribution to the modernisation of the country and the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong. They form an important force of love of both the Motherland and Hong Kong. In fact, the HKSAR committee members of the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese are also electors of the Fifth Sector of the Election Committee, who can nominate and elect the Chief Executive and Legislative Council Members. It demonstrates that both our country and the HKSAR attach great importance to it. Regarding the number and types of overseas Chinese organisations registered in Hong Kong, the Police do not maintain statistics on the overseas Chinese organisations registered or exempted from registration under the Societies Ordinance (Cap. 151).

The HYAB together with the Home Affairs Department (HAD) maintain close liaison with all sectors of the community and various organisations. At the district level, the district offices of HAD collaborate with local organisations to take forward all sorts of community building initiatives from time to time. In addition, the HAD provides funding support through the Clansmen Culture Promotion Scheme for clansmen associations in Hong Kong to

organise activities that promote and preserve hometown culture, unite clansmen in Hong Kong and promote exchanges between Hong Kong and the Mainland, thereby facilitating patriotic education and promoting the spirit of loving the Country, Hong Kong and the hometown.

The HKSAR Government's work on overseas Chinese affairs mentioned above has been effective. We will review the progress of relevant work from time to time, and make adjustments and improvements when necessary. The HKSAR Government will continue to strengthen ties and co-operation with various sectors, and unite the of love of both the Motherland and Hong Kong from different sectors, so as to make contribution to the development of Hong Kong and tell good stories of China and Hong Kong.