

LCQ20: Supporting young people to go to Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area for development

Following is a question by the Hon Rock Chen and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (January 19):

Question:

To encourage and support Hong Kong's young people to go to the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) to work and develop careers, the Government has successively launched the "Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area", the "Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes at Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area" and the "Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme". In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the details, including the number and percentage, of Hong Kong's young people who have started up businesses and taken up employment in the various Mainland cities of GBA, with a breakdown by (i) the age group to which they belong, (ii) whether they have started up businesses or taken up employment, (iii) the industry in which they are engaged and (iv) the post they are holding, etc.; if such figures are not available, whether it will compile the statistics on a regular basis;

(2) whether it has established a mechanism to provide support services in respect of housing, laws, employment, healthcare or emergencies to Hong Kong's young people who have started up businesses and taken up employment in the Mainland cities of GBA; if so, of the number of requests for assistance received last year, with a breakdown by (i) the matter involved and (ii) whether the assistance seekers had joined the aforesaid schemes; if it has not established such a mechanism, of the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will consider setting up additional Economic and Trade Offices or Liaison Units in other Mainland cities of GBA, or establishing a dedicated department to provide support services to Hong Kong's young people living on the Mainland; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The objectives of the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area) are to further deepen cooperation amongst Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, promote coordinated regional economic development, leverage their complementary advantages to develop an

international first-class bay area for living, working and travelling. The development of the Greater Bay Area will not only bring continuous impetus to the development of Hong Kong, but also provide young people of Hong Kong with greater room for development.

Since the promulgation of the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in February 2019, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has maintained close contact with relevant central ministries, the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region to proactively take forward the development of the Greater Bay Area on the basis of "one country, two systems". Many policy initiatives facilitating Hong Kong residents, especially young people, to work and start new businesses in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area have since been introduced by the Central Government, including measures supporting youth innovation and entrepreneurship, the opening up of positions in the civil service and public institutions for application by Hong Kong and Macao residents, etc. These measures will provide young people of Hong Kong with quality job opportunities and a promising career ladder. The HKSAR Government also introduces various schemes and measures to encourage and support young people of Hong Kong to set their sights on the Greater Bay Area and make the best of the significant opportunities the Greater Bay Area offers them in their personal and career development.

Upon consulting the Home Affairs Bureau and the Labour and Welfare Bureau, our consolidated reply to Hon Rock Chen's question is as follows:

(1) To support young people of Hong Kong to work in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, the Labour Department (LD) launched the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme in January 2021 to encourage enterprises with businesses in both Hong Kong and the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area to employ university graduates from Hong Kong and deploy them to station and work in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area. The enterprises concerned may make an application to the HKSAR Government under the Scheme and, upon approval, they will be granted a monthly allowance of HK\$10,000 for each graduate employed for up to 18 months. To date, LD has received a total of 1 090 preliminary applications for allowance. Breakdowns of the applications by work location, age and occupation of the Scheme participants as well as industry of the enterprises are at Annex.

To support young entrepreneurs in Hong Kong to start their businesses in Hong Kong and the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) has launched two funding schemes under the Youth Development Fund (YDF), namely the Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship) and the Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes at Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes), providing entrepreneurial support and incubation services to young people of Hong Kong who plan to start their own businesses. The list of funded organisations was announced in February 2021. The Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship supports 16 NGOs to organise youth entrepreneurship projects, providing

capital subsidy to about 230 youth start-ups (involving more than 800 Hong Kong young entrepreneurs) and rendering entrepreneurial support and incubation services to about 4 000 young entrepreneurs. Funded NGOs have started rolling out their youth entrepreneurship projects and received positive response thus far. Subject to the latest epidemic situation, the funded NGOs will gradually assist young entrepreneurs in settling in innovative and entrepreneurial bases in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area. Meanwhile, the Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes supports 15 NGOs to organise short-term experiential projects at innovative and entrepreneurial bases in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, with a view to deepening Hong Kong young people's understanding about the entrepreneurial bases in the Mainland, as well as the relevant policies and support measures on innovation and entrepreneurship. This may facilitate young people to consider establishing their businesses in the relevant entrepreneurial bases in future. About 700 young people will benefit from these programmes.

Besides, HAB also subsidises NGOs through the Funding Scheme for Youth Internship in the Mainland (FSYIM) to organise Mainland internship activities for the young people of Hong Kong, with a view to enabling them to personally experience the actual workplace environment in the Mainland, so as to acquire a deeper understanding of the Mainland employment market, work culture and development opportunities. In particular, being one of the major cooperation initiatives between Hong Kong and Guangdong, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Hong Kong Youth Internship Scheme launched under the FSYIM has covered all the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area since 2019, providing about 1 000 diverse internship placements. Subject to the latest epidemic situation, HAB will continue to enhance and expand the relevant schemes, with a view to enabling young people of Hong Kong to learn about the opportunities in the Greater Bay Area through different ways.

(2) and (3) LD has set up a dedicated website to provide practical information about working and living in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area for Hong Kong graduates participating the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme. LD has also organised talks to help the participants make good preparation for their employment and living in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area. After the participants' assumption of duties, LD will proactively follow up and keeps in close contact with relevant authorities of the Guangdong Provincial Government to render the participants appropriate support and assistance. It is understood that many enterprises have offered the participants assistance outside the workplace, including arranging residence for the participants and coaching by experienced staff, to help the participants adapt to the local life. The HKSAR Government is particularly grateful to the Guangdong Provincial Government for providing each participant a monthly living allowance of up to RMB1,000.

To support young people of Hong Kong who have set up businesses in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, the Government will establish an Alliance of Hong Kong Youth Innovative and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Greater Bay Area (the Alliance). Sizeable organisations from Guangdong and Hong Kong with proven track record, such as innovative and entrepreneurial

bases, universities, NGOs, scientific research institutes, professional bodies, venture funds, etc. will be invited to join and set up a one-stop information, publicity and exchange platform jointly to support young entrepreneurs of Hong Kong in the Greater Bay Area. In addition, members of the Alliance and representatives of Hong Kong young entrepreneurs will meet with the governments of Guangdong and Hong Kong regularly to review the latest position of innovative and entrepreneurial development, listen to the concerns of the stakeholders, deal with problems faced by entrepreneurs, and refine the mechanism in light of the experience gained, with a view to making the Alliance an effective platform for addressing the entrepreneurial-related issues.

Apart from the abovementioned supportive measures to young people of Hong Kong on their employment and start-ups in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, the HKSAR Government has been providing different kinds of practical assistance to Hong Kong people and enterprises in the Mainland through the various Mainland Offices including the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Guangdong (GDET0). GDET0 is located in Guangzhou in the Guangdong Province providing services in five provinces, i.e. Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangxi, Guangxi and Hainan. GDET0 has also established designated Liaison Units (LUs) in Shenzhen, Fuzhou in the Fujian Province and Nanning in the Guangxi Province. GDET0 attaches great importance to the development of young people of Hong Kong in the Mainland and provides them with a wide variety of support, such as free legal advisory service and assistance in seeking internship opportunities. Meanwhile, GDET0 disseminates practical information through different channels, including talks, the weekly Newsletter on Trade and Business, the WeChat official account of GDET0, the website of GDET0 and the thematic website of the Greater Bay Area.

At present, the majority of the young people of Hong Kong who are working, starting their businesses or studying in the Mainland are staying in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area. The HKSAR Government will continue to provide support and services to these young people through GDET0 (including Shenzhen Liaison Unit).