

SED visits Kowloon City District

The Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, today (September 19) visited Kowloon City District to follow up on the progress of repair works for schools that were severely damaged by Super Typhoon Mangkhut. He also exchanged views with members of Kowloon City District Council (KCDC) on local developments and called at an integrated children and youth services centre in Kai Tak Development Area.

Accompanied by the District Officer (Kowloon City), Mr Franco Kwok, as well as the KCDC Chairman, Mr Pun Kwok-wah, and the Vice-Chairman, Mr Cho Wui-hung, Mr Yeung went to Alliance Primary School, Whampoa and GCEPSA Whampoa Primary School to meet with their school heads and staff members. He thanked them for having taken good care of students' learning needs through various means such as the Internet during class suspension and for their efforts in dealing with repair work.

Mr Yeung said that on the whole, secondary schools, primary schools and kindergartens in Hong Kong resumed classes quite smoothly today. As for these two schools, which sustained relatively severe damage, one will resume class tomorrow while the other is expected to resume class on Friday after urgent repair works arranged by the Education Bureau and the schools' management. The Bureau will continue to follow up on the needs of the schools and provide them with appropriate support.

Mr Yeung also called on the KCDC and exchanged views with members. He noted that there have been rapid developments in Kowloon City in recent years. In addition to the new Kai Tak Development Area, the redevelopment of old buildings in the district has also renewed the local environment. In view of the new demand for social services brought by the population growth, the Government will improve both the related facilities and services accordingly.

During the visit, Mr Yeung saw for himself the latest developments of a few old streets in Hung Hom. He recalled that he was serving as the District Officer (Kowloon City) in 2003 when Hong Kong was hit by SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and the environmental hygiene problem at the Eight "Wan" Streets was one of the urgent tasks for the district. These eight streets, surrounded by old buildings, were owned by private owners without proper management and repair works. The accumulation of rubbish, sewage and manure had posed a serious threat to public health.

Mr Yeung said, "In order to take swift action, the Government established a new modality. The District Office played a co-ordinating role in the liaison with residents and relevant departments. The 'act first, recover costs later' initiative was also adopted to expedite the improvement works, including the repair of lightwells, vertical pipes and underground drains as well as the repaving of the private streets.

"It is evident that no livelihood issue is too trivial. The problems

involved can be very complicated. However, they can be resolved through honest communication, mutual understanding and co-operation."

Mr Yeung made a final stop at Kai Tak Development Area, where he visited the HKSKH Kowloon City Children and Youth Integrated Service Centre in Ching Long Shopping Centre. While touring its various facilities designed for children and youths, he chatted with some young people and gave them encouragement.