

Transcript of SCED's remarks on green lifestyle local tours

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, at a media session on the launch of a new measure to promote green lifestyle local tours today (December 23):

Reporter: Given the current social atmosphere, even if there's a cash subsidy for some of the tour agencies, do you think these local tours will be able to attract some of the local residents? Because if no one is interested, the agencies won't be able to benefit anyways. The second question is regarding the capacity of the eco-tourism spots. Are they really able to handle this increase in tourist numbers, and there won't be overcrowding and destruction caused to these spots?

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: On your first question, I think the whole scheme is designed in response to some of the public suggestions and demands, both from people in the community as well as people in the trade. I think there have been a lot of suggestions. While we are having a trough period in terms of incoming tourists, we do open up opportunities for Hong Kong people spending their time in our precious and most welcoming green spots, including country parks which occupy over 40 per cent of Hong Kong's territory, or specific thematic natural wonders including our Geopark which has got Global Geopark status, or some of the very interesting environmental facilities which remind people that Hong Kong in fact could do much better in terms of waste management and lowering carbon footprint. So these attractions by themselves are something we have been advocating, both in the Environment Bureau's policy perspectives as well as under our tourism blueprint issued years ago. We hope this would also provide timely assistance to the hard-hit tourism trade, where this small token could encourage more travel agents or tourist guides to spend time in organising such activities for the enjoyment of our local community.

As regards the second question, I don't think there's any major capacity problem because taking country parks and Geopark as examples, they in fact have the capacity of handling more people. Currently, each year, I think our country parks received over 12 million people and they are spread into different corners of our territory. With guided tours, perhaps, filling in the information and knowledge gap, and with all the preparation by recognised tourist guides, travellers may have a better understanding of the geological wonders or specific historical and cultural attractions of these green spots. I hope they will provide a quality service to the travellers.

Reporter: Just to clarify the intended target of these, who should be going to these tours, locals or foreign tourists? And then you mentioned the time period from January to June. Do you intend, given the positive feedback, it can become recurrent after the end of the period? Also, do you have the figures on hand on the latest tourist visits at Christmas times? Is there a

downturn as compared to similar period year-on-year? Thank you.

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: The entire scheme is targeted at local travellers because we have a scheme earlier which covers inbound and outbound tourism already. This is specifically catered for travel agencies in Hong Kong, providing services for Hong Kong residents. One of the requirements for obtaining this \$100 support is that the clients will be Hong Kong residents. This is entirely for locals. Of course, we are rolling out this as a supplement to the earlier scheme, helping the industry while also seeking a collaboration with the Environment Bureau on green tourism. We have made available resources, but at the same time we need to consider the capacity issue of the travel agents because not all the 1 700 travel agencies are catering for locals, so we need to make sure that the tourist guides are well equipped and also fully prepared. That's why we intend to roll this out for six months, then we will see how the response would come. Whether this scheme would carry on, expand or be adjusted will depend on circumstances.

As for the tourism figures, I think in the last six months, I would say that November and December are so far the toughest months. I think the November figures have seen the biggest dip, over 50 per cent drop in tourism (visitor arrivals), and the early week of December followed that trend. Of course, whether there will be a rebound because of the Christmas holiday and the festive season is yet to see. We will see how things are going this week or the week after this, but I think we are at quite a tough time. We hope that, with the easing of the tension locally, situation will turn better around the year. Having said that, we need to do more to prepare for the worst. Thank you.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Appointments to Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service and Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service

The Government announced today (December 23) that the Chief Executive has made appointments and re-appointments to the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service (SCCS) and the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service (SCDS).

The Chief Executive has appointed Mrs Betty Yuen So Siu-mai and Mr Chan

Chun-ying as members, and re-appointed Mrs Edith Chan Ngan Man-ling and Mr Lee Luen-fai as members of the SCCS.

The Chief Executive has appointed Mr Tony Tse Wai-chuen as member and re-appointed Ms Dilys Chau Suet-fung and Professor Chong Tai-leung as members of the SCDS.

The above appointments will be for a term of two years from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2021.

The Government expresses its gratitude and appreciation to retiring SCCS members Mr Ignatius Chan Tze-ching and Mr Tony Tse Wai-chuen for their invaluable contribution to the work of the SCCS.

The SCCS tenders advice to the Chief Executive on matters concerning pay and conditions of service of non-directorate civilian civil servants and is currently chaired by Dr Pang Yiu-kai. Other serving members are Ms Christina Maisenne Lee, Mr Dick Lee Ming-kwai, Ms Angela Lee Wai-yin, Ms Elaine Lo Yuen-man, Dr Miranda Lou Lai-wah and Mr Joseph Luc Ngai.

The SCDS advises the Chief Executive on issues relating to the salaries and conditions of service of the disciplined services and is currently chaired by Dr Chui Hong-sheung. Other serving members are Mr Wilfred Wong Kam-pui, Mr Victor Lam Hoi-cheung, Ms Margaret Cheng Wai-ching, Mr Mac Chan Ho-ting, Ms Ivy Cheung Wing-han, Ms Quince Chong Wai-yan, Mr Alan Lui Siu-lun, Ms Melissa Kaye Pang and Mr Philip Tsai Wing-chung.

Statistics on innovation activities for 2018

According to the statistics on Hong Kong innovation activities released today (December 23) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the gross domestic expenditure on research and development (GERD) of Hong Kong in 2018 amounted to \$24,497 million, representing an increase of 10% when compared to the corresponding figure of 2017 (\$22,213 million). The GERD as a ratio to the Gross Domestic Product in 2018 was 0.86%. Analysed by performing sector, the expenditure on research and development (R&D) activities performed in the business, higher education and government sectors amounted to \$10,992 million, \$12,357 million and \$1,148 million respectively in 2018.

C&SD has enhanced the estimation of GERD for 2018. Following international guidelines, for R&D facilities offered to institutions free of charge or at a subsidised rate, the implicit user costs were estimated and included in the 2018 R&D expenditure. The GERD compiled according to the enhanced estimation method for 2017 was \$22,213 million, which was \$933 million larger than the GERD estimated earlier without implicit user cost.

R&D activities refer to creative and systematic work undertaken so as to increase the stock of knowledge for devising new and improved products/processes/applications and improve existing products/processes/applications.

More detailed statistics on Hong Kong innovation activities, together with the concepts and methodology, are given in the report "Hong Kong Innovation Activities Statistics 2018". Users can download this report free of charge at the website of C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp120.jsp?productCode=B1110010). The report presents the latest statistics on R&D activities in Hong Kong, with analyses of R&D activities performed in the business, higher education and government sectors. It also contains detailed statistics on technological innovation activities (including product and process innovation) and non-technological innovation activities (including organisational and marketing innovation) in the business sector.

Enquiries about the statistics on Hong Kong innovation activities can be directed to the Science and Technology Statistics Section of C&SD (Tel: 3903 7290 or email: stbl@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Hong Kong Customs moves up a gear to battle sea smuggling with new High Speed Pursuit Craft \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs has procured four new High Speed Pursuit Craft (HSPC) under a replacement scheme over the past year to facilitate long-term operational developments towards battling sea smuggling activities.

The Assistant Commissioner (Boundary and Ports) of Customs and Excise, Mr Chan Tsz-tat, today (December 23) said that the replacement scheme is divided into two phases. Under the first phase, two new high-speed boats joined the fleet in May this year. The boats have so far participated in 10 operations, resulting in the seizure of electronic products, high-value food, frozen meat and live fish worth about \$78 million in total. In one case, a seizure of about 540 tonnes of suspected smuggled frozen meat with an estimated market value of about \$50 million was made, which also stands as the largest recorded seizure of frozen meat in the last decade.

Another batch of two new HSPC joined on December 18 in the second phase.

With their advanced performance, the new HSPC are Hong Kong's fastest government boats of its type. Apart from their speed superiority, the new

boats also feature significant improvements in terms of manoeuvrability, endurance and night navigation. Capable of reaching any corner of Hong Kong waters within 45 minutes, the new HSPC help upgrade the fleet's mobility and responsiveness in combatting smuggling activities at sea.

Currently, a 22-strong fleet of five types of vessels operates under Hong Kong Customs. Five Sector Patrol Launches, four HSPC, two Shallow Water Craft, two Harbour Launches and nine Inflatable Craft carry out round-the-clock duties in the waters of Hong Kong.

With the four HSPC coming into force making more tactical operations possible, Mr Chan noted that the department's law enforcement power has attained a new level, allowing it to be more effective in fighting sea smuggling activities.

Hong Kong Customs pledges to continue its risk-management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, along with maintaining close co-operation in its intelligence exchanges with local and overseas law enforcement agencies, to land a solid blow against sea-smuggling activities.



[Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held on December 31](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

Tenders to be held on December 31:

Tender date : December 31, 2019
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q2001
Issue date : January 2, 2020
Maturity date : April 1, 2020
Tenor : 90 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$57,232 MN

Tender date : December 31, 2019
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2030
Issue date : January 2, 2020
Maturity date : July 2, 2020
Tenor : 182 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$17,400 MN