

SCS briefs civil servants on Policy Address initiatives (with photo)

After the announcement of "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address", the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, wrote to civil service colleagues this afternoon (October 16) and met with representatives from the four civil service central consultative councils and the four major service-wide staff unions to brief them on policy initiatives relating to civil service matters in the Policy Address.

Mrs Yeung's letter to civil service colleagues, entitled "Enhance Governance Capabilities and Continue to Strengthen Management", outlined the policy initiatives including the strengthening of civil service management and promotion of digitalisation.

She said, "The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is making all-out, concerted efforts to build a vibrant economy, seek development opportunities and improve people's livelihood. Civil servants must continue to serve the public proactively and render full support to the Chief Executive in his administration of Hong Kong, and do so with loyalty, dedication and a spirit of embracing challenges, reforms and innovation. This will elevate Hong Kong to new heights and build a better home for people."

Mrs Yeung added, "To move forward, we need a high-quality and efficient government team. For this reason, I had a meeting with civil service unions after the delivery of the Policy Address, so that the unions and civil servants would have a clear understanding and appreciation of the Government's governing tenets and measures. This would enable them to render better support to the Chief Executive in his administration of Hong Kong and become a solid supporting force for Hong Kong's advancement."



Hong Kong Customs raids two suspected illicit cigarette storage centres and detects one case involving illicit cigarette distribution vehicle (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs today (October 16) conducted anti-illicit cigarette operations in Hung Hom, Kwun Tong and Wong Tai Sin, shutting down two suspected illicit cigarette storage centres and detecting a case involving an illicit cigarette distribution vehicle. A total of about 183 000 suspected illicit cigarettes, with a total estimated market value of about \$820,000 and a duty potential of about \$600,000, were seized. Three persons suspected to be connected with the cases were arrested.

In the first case, Customs officers raided a residential unit on Wu Kwong Street, Hung Hom, this afternoon and seized about 120 000 suspected illicit cigarettes therein. A 50-year-old woman who claimed to be unemployed was arrested.

In the second case, Customs seized about 54 000 suspected illicit cigarettes from a residential unit on Hong Ning Road, Kwun Tong, this afternoon. A 47-year-old woman who claimed to be a construction worker was arrested.

In the third case, Customs officers intercepted a private car on the roadside in Choi Wan Estate, Wong Tai Sin, this evening. Upon inspection, about 9 000 suspected illicit cigarettes were seized inside the vehicle and a man, aged 30 and claiming to be a worker, was arrested.

Investigations of the three cases are ongoing.

Customs will continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis for interception at source as well as through its multipronged enforcement strategy targeting storage, distribution and peddling to spare no effort in combating illicit cigarette activities.

Customs reminds members of the public that it is an offence to buy or sell illicit cigarettes. Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 1820 80 80 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).



TAC Chairman welcomes “The Chief Executive’s 2024 Policy Address”

The following is issued on behalf of the Transport Advisory Committee:

The Chairman of the Transport Advisory Committee (TAC), Professor Stephen Cheung, welcomed the initiatives related to the construction of transport infrastructure and the development of the low-altitude economy announced in "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address" delivered today (October 16).

Professor Cheung said, "The Policy Address pointed out that the Government is actively following through the Major Transport Infrastructure Development Blueprint for Hong Kong, under which the two railways projects, namely the Hung Shui Kiu Station and the Northern Link Main Line, are to commence construction this year and next year respectively, and at the same time pressing ahead with the two cross-boundary railway projects, namely the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Rail Link (Hung Shui Kiu-Qianhai) and the Northern

Link Spur Line; as well as actively taking forward the three smart and green mass transit systems in East Kowloon, Kai Tak and Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen and compressing the time required for construction. I welcome the Government's effort to implement the major transport infrastructure projects in an orderly manner to drive economic development and strengthen the connectivity between Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

"I note that the Policy Address announced that the Government will actively promote the development of the low-altitude economy in Hong Kong. I appreciate the Government's foresight and eagerly anticipate the application of related technologies in various fields, such as the delivery of goods and passenger transportation.

"I am also pleased to note that the Government has set indicators for different measures and set out the ongoing policy measures, including the provision of automated parking spaces in newly completed government car parks and short-term tenancy car parks, the progressive implementation of the pilot schemes related to smart mobility under the Traffic and Transport Strategy Study, and facilitation of autonomous vehicles technology, in order to enhance transparency and ensure their timely implementation.

"The TAC will, as always, continue to earnestly offer views on various traffic and transport policies and measures for the Government to proceed with building and enhancing our transportation system, with a view to elevating and consolidating Hong Kong's status as a high-quality liveable city and regional logistics hub."

Hospital Authority welcomes "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address"

The Hospital Authority (HA) Chairman, Mr Henry Fan, welcomed the healthcare service-related measures included in "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address" delivered by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, today (October 16). It is believed that the measures will facilitate the HA in enhancing the quality of public healthcare services and sustainable development to improve support to patients.

The HA will dovetail with the Government's policies and development directions, and continue to enhance the capacity and quality of public healthcare services in order to cope with the demand. The HA will continue to enhance the triage system and referral arrangements of the Specialist Out-Patients Clinics (SOPC), so that patients with acute needs could receive services in a timely manner and patients with mild and stable conditions may also receive appropriate follow-up. The waiting time of the SOPC could be shortened by avoiding unnecessary referrals. The HA will also provide

additional capacity for cataract surgeries to actively arrange surgeries for patients.

Mr Fan said, "The HA welcomes the Government's initiatives to promote community pharmacies. By strengthening the procurement of drugs and medical devices, the introduction of new drugs to the Drug Formulary will be expedited. The rationalisation and centralisation of procurement will also accelerate the cost-effectiveness standards and guarantee the optimised use of healthcare resources. The HA will also integrate paediatric services in order to make the best use of the Hong Kong Children's Hospital to fulfil its function as the Centre of Excellence in Paediatrics, thereby enhancing the quality of paediatric care in Hong Kong and providing a platform conducive to research development and professional training. The paediatric services will also be expanded, including an increase in the scope of newborn screening and treatment for neurosurgical diseases, to increase the quality of the services.

Also, with the stringent support from the Government, the HA will continue to enhance healthcare services in public hospitals. In accordance with the national accreditation standard, the development of the second chest pain centre at Prince of Wales Hospital and the building of the first stroke centre will boost diagnostic efficiency, outcomes and patient survival rates, while the breastmilk bank to be set up at Hong Kong Children's Hospital will provide breastmilk for preterm and critically ill infants.

The HA is fully committed to driving forward a wide range of development projects under the First Hospital Development Plan. The HA is finalising the Second Hospital Development Plan to dovetail with the upcoming territorial development (including the Northern Metropolis and the latest developments in other New Development Areas), the Government population census, population distribution projection and the necessary land supply. The HA will continue to augment the service capacity of public hospitals as well as renewing its facilities in order to meet the service demand.

Mr Fan expressed heartfelt appreciation for the Government's support for the public healthcare services. The HA will strive to implement the initiatives for the benefit of patients.

Women's Commission welcomes "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address"

The following is issued on behalf of the Women's Commission:

The Women's Commission (WoC) welcomes the initiatives on promoting women's development in "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address" delivered

by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, today (October 16).

The Chief Executive announced in the Policy Address that the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) will establish a network run by leading women from all walks of life and launch a mentorship programme, "She Inspires". Under the programme, female university students will be paired with mentors from the senior management of different sectors, and will be provided with relevant training and activities.

â€‹The Chairman of the WoC, Dr Eliza Chan, said, "The WoC is committed to enable Hong Kong women to have more opportunities to showcase their talent and promote the advancement of their careers. Hong Kong women have excelled across various sectors and demonstrated exceptional professionalism and leadership, while young people play an important role in shaping the future of our country and Hong Kong. I am very delighted to learn the launch of the mentorship programme 'She Inspires' by the Government to equip Hong Kong female university students with the strength to 'hold up half the sky'. I hope that with the support of the Government, we could work together with outstanding women leaders across various sectors and unleash the power of women, thereby contributing to the development and advancement of women."

It is also mentioned in "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address Supplement" that the HYAB will continue to put forward several women-related projects, including continuing to organise the Family and Women Development Summit, keeping the one-stop family and women information portal under review and enriching its content, continuing to encourage women's groups and non-governmental organisations to make good use of the Women Empowerment Fund, and continuing to implement, through the Community Care Fund, the Maintenance Mediation Pilot Scheme.

The WoC was established in 2001 and is committed to enable women in Hong Kong to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life. It adopts a three-pronged strategy, namely the provision of an enabling environment, empowerment of women through capacity building and public education to promote the well-being and interests of women.