

Speech by CS at Fire Asia 2024

(English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at Fire Asia 2024 today (July 10):

Secretary-General Wang Songmiao (Secretary-General of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)), Deputy Director-General Luo Yongqiang (Deputy Director General of National Fire and Rescue Administration of People's Republic of China), Deputy Commissioner Fang Jianming (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner's Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR), Deputy President Wu Lizhi (Deputy President, China People's Police University), Deputy Director Xie Zhixiang (Deputy Director of the Bureau of Liaison of the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

â€œGood morning. Welcome to Fire Asia 2024 and to Hong Kong! I am delighted to see so many experts in fire and emergency management gathered here from around the globe.

Indeed, some 600 professionals, including fire engineering experts, emergency responders, paramedics and other medical specialists, are joining this year's three-day conference.

They also include, let me add, delegations from a number of Belt and Road and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries. Your presence underlines our shared commitment to making the world a safer place for us all.

The past few years have presented us with overwhelming challenges, including the pandemic, climate change, and the increasing complexity of emergency response.

Yet, in the face of adversity, we have witnessed the remarkable resilience, and innovative spirit, of many economies worldwide. Through this year's three-day conference, we have a golden opportunity to build on this good momentum.

Emergency preparedness is essential to protecting an economy and its people from the impact of wide-ranging disasters, crises and other emergencies. An effective emergency management system helps mitigate disruptions to essential services, economic stability and social order.

In today's interconnected world, the threats of emergencies and disasters could be cross-border by nature. Regional and international teamwork plays an important role in reducing risks and enhancing resilience.

To that end, just last month, the Hong Kong SAR Government, together with the governments of Guangdong Province and Macao SAR, signed the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Emergency Management Co-operation and Greater Bay Area Emergency Response Operation Co-operation Framework Agreement.

Under this framework, we are setting up a government-led co-operation mechanism for emergency response, enhancing our ability to cope with accidents, natural disasters and other crises that affect Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

At the same time, we are establishing a task force later this year. It will review our co-operation experience to develop a long-term emergency-management plan for the Greater Bay Area as a whole.

No less important, the Belt and Road and ASEAN also present ample opportunities for regional and global collaboration.

The Belt and Road's extensive infrastructure networks – from roads and railways to ports and much more – can enable the rapid deployment of emergency response personnel and resources across borders during crises.

And the institutional mechanisms within ASEAN, such as the ASEAN Co-ordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance, allow member states to share information and co-ordinate responses.

Through all these and other regional initiatives, economies enhance their collective ability to respond effectively to emergencies that cross national boundaries.

Our speakers from Belt and Road and ASEAN countries will, for sure, broaden our perspectives on effective emergency management strategies across regions.

I have every confidence that, drawing on the collective expertise of all our high-profile speakers, we will move on from this conference safer, better prepared, and better protected, for whatever comes our way.

During your stay in Hong Kong, I urge you, as well, to find time for leisure. Our city, as the mega-events capital of Asia, is hosting more than 200 events this year – one every two days in the second half of the year.

Our city is also blessed with a wide variety of Michelin star restaurants, world-class coastal walks, beautiful country parks, and all sorts of arts, culture and entertainment you can easily find.

Hong Kong, after all, is rising as the world's East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. In short, enjoy yourself!

My thanks to the organisers of this year's Fire Asia, namely the Institution of Fire Engineers (Hong Kong Branch), the Hong Kong Institution

of Engineers (Building Services Division and Fire Division), the China Hong Kong Ambulance Service Institute, and the China Hong Kong Fire Protection Association.

I am grateful, as well, to The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for its generous support.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a rewarding conference and a memorable stay in Hong Kong. Thank you very much.

LCQ19: Parent education

Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (July 10):

Question:

There are views that, in comparison with school education, family education is equally or even more important for the learning and growth of school children, but not every parent knows how to properly and effectively teach their children. In addition, it is learnt that while at present the Government relies primarily on the Education Bureau (EDB) to promote parent education, and EDB has adopted the approach of regarding "schools as a primary platform and the community as a complementary" in implementing parent education, schools differ in terms of motivation, effectiveness and content focus in the promotion of parent education. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the policy measures introduced and amount of resources allocated by the Government in recent years for the promotion of parent education; among such policy measures, of the respective numbers of those implemented through schools, other non-school organisations, and directly by government departments;

(2) regarding the implementation of parent education by primary and secondary schools, how the authorities monitor the relevant quantity, quality, and effectiveness;

(3) whether it has compiled statistics on the participation rates in parent education provided by primary and secondary schools across the territory, and the number of parents of school-age students who have never taken part in any parent education in the past five years; of its plans in place to increase the participation rates of such parents;

(4) apart from written circulars and the Parents' Day normally held once

every academic year, whether the Government will encourage schools to maintain communication and contact with parents through more frequent and diversified modes in respect of the learning and growth of students, including making good use of communication technologies such as video conferencing; and

(5) as it is learnt that some primary and secondary schools have provided national security education to parents through talks and other means in recent years, of the number of such activities and the participation rates of parents; whether the Government will further step up the relevant work, including enhancing the contents, frequencies and participation rates of such activities, as well as providing more assistance to schools and related organisations, so as to raise parents' sense of national identity and awareness of patriotism?

Reply:

President,

Parents are the pivotal figures in nurturing, safeguarding and educating children, playing crucial roles in supporting children's development and learning as well as fostering their proper values, positive attitude and behaviour. Therefore, the Government has long been promoting parent education through the Education Bureau (EDB) and other government bureaux.

Having consulted the Health Bureau, the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Tony Tse is as follows:

(1) The EDB has all along been adopting the approaches of "parent-based" and "schools as a primary platform and the community as a complementary" to promote parent education through diversified means. To enable parents to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for nurturing their children in a more systematic manner, the EDB commissioned a post-secondary institution to develop the curriculum frameworks on parent education for parents of students at different learning stages. The EDB introduced the Curriculum Frameworks on Parent Education for kindergarten (KG), primary school and secondary school in 2021, 2022 and May 2024 respectively (collaboratively named as the "Curriculum Frameworks"). All the Curriculum Frameworks have been uploaded onto the EDB's website for schools' and relevant organisations' reference.

At school level, the EDB provided KGs joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme with an additional one-off subsidy of \$90,000 to \$100,000 in the 2021/22 school year, and a one-off grant on parent education of \$200,000 for all publicly-funded primary and secondary schools in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years respectively to support schools to embark on structured school-based parent education programmes or activities having regard to the Curriculum Frameworks and the needs of parents and students. Besides, all public-sector schools have set up Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and the Committee on Home-School Co-operation has been assisting the Government in providing the "Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities" and the "Subsidy for Joint Home-School Co-operation Project" for PTAs, encouraging

PTAs to organise diversified school-based home-school co-operation and parent education activities or programmes with reference to the Curriculum Frameworks. To further enhance the support for schools, starting from the 2023/24 school year, the EDB has developed resource packages for primary and secondary schools based on the Curriculum Frameworks in phases to facilitate teachers, social workers and guidance personnel of schools in mastering the relevant knowledge and skills.

At territory level, starting from the 2018/19 school year, the EDB has commissioned post-secondary institutions and non-governmental organisations to organise territory-wide or district-based parent education courses and talks for parents and grandparents of KG and primary students with reference to the Curriculum Frameworks, and produce electronic learning resources to facilitate parents' self-learning. The EDB has also been implementing the territory-wide Positive Parent Campaign (the Campaign) since 2020 to promote parent education through extensive and diversified channels, with a view to fostering positive thinking, strategies and attitudes in nurturing children among parents. In recent years, we have organised various parent education activities and produced a theme song for the Campaign, Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio as well as animations and short videos on parent education to further enhance public awareness on positive parent education. We have also reached out to parents of different backgrounds in the communities to promote the messages of positive parenting through a moving showroom, parent-oriented websites, advertisements at MTR stations and on bus body, online platforms, etc.

Besides, the EDB has been making use of the one-stop parent education website "Smart Parent Net" (www.parent.edu.hk/en), "Smart Parent Net" Facebook, Instagram pages and YouTube channel to disseminate important information on supporting the physical and psychological development of students, which includes information on parent-child relationship, parenting skills and emotional management of parents.

From the 2020-21 to 2023-24 financial years, the EDB's expenditure on promoting home-school co-operation and parent education is about \$550 million.

Apart from the EDB, the Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) administered by the Family Health Service of the Department of Health also provide a Parenting Programme for parents of children up to five years old, which aims to enhance parents' understanding of their children's growth and development. The Parenting Programme consists of two components – a universal Parenting Programme and an intensive Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P Programme). The universal Parenting Programme provides individual counselling as well as public health talks and workshops on parenting. During the above individual parenting counselling, healthcare professionals will encourage parents to participate in the Triple P Programme if they notice that the child has early signs of behavioural problems or if the parents encounter difficulties in parenting. The Triple P Programme is a structured parenting programme which aims to increase parents' confidence in parenting and improve their parenting skills. The programme is conducted by accredited facilitators

and offered in the MCHCs in various districts. The programme covers the principles of positive parenting and helps parents to use positive communication skills and effective parenting methods to handle children's behavioural problems in a way that does not harm the child's self-esteem.

(2) to (3) Currently, all public-sector schools have set up PTAs. The EDB also encourages schools to plan and organise systematic school-based parent education programmes with reference to the Curriculum Frameworks and constantly evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes. The EDB have all along been regularly reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of the work of schools (including home-school co-operation and parent education) through inspections, school visits, etc, and providing feedback to schools in a timely manner to facilitate continuous development of schools. Publicly-funded schools are also required to draw up an implementation plan and report on the use of the One-off Grant on Parent Education, setting out the details of the subsidised items or activities, relevant expenses and the evaluations for submission to the School Management Committee/ Management Committee/ Incorporated Management Committee for endorsement.

Besides, the EDB has been requesting the PTAs of schools and the Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations (FPTAs) to submit an assessment report for evaluation of each activity supported by the relevant subsidies on home-school co-operation activities. The EDB also collects opinions from schools and parents through different means to continuously review the effectiveness of the measures implemented. In the 2023/24 school year, about 1 650 schools applied for these subsidies and approval was granted for subsidising around 3 690 activities.

(4) The EDB has been encouraging schools to maintain communication and collaboration with parents through diversified modes and channels so as to facilitate students' learning and development. In general, schools would assist parents to support the whole-person development of children through the PTA activities, Parents' Day, Parents' Night, school publications, e-circulars, school website, groups of the mobile messaging applications, etc. Besides, some schools would make flexible arrangements for meeting and communicating with parents, such as online meetings, to cater for the needs of working parents. Schools may also provide online portals where parents can easily access information to keep track of their children's academic progress and school activities at their convenience. Schools would in general encourage parents' participation through activities related to students' development and learning at school level, grade/form level or class level.

(5) The EDB has been encouraging parents to learn more about the National Security Law, proactively partner with schools and strengthen their collaboration with teachers, with a view to enhancing students' awareness of safeguarding national security and abiding by the law. To strengthen national education, all publicly-funded schools are required to organise one or more activities relating to national education for parents every year from the 2022/23 school year onwards. The EDB continuously monitors and supports schools on the implementation of related measures through channels such as school visits and daily communications with schools, and makes suggestions

for enhancement and improvement in accordance with school-based circumstances. Primary and secondary schools continue to organise different kinds of parent-child activities related to Chinese culture and national security education regularly, such as Chinese Culture Day, visits to the Hong Kong Palace Museum, Jao Tsung-I Academy and the Patriotic Education Centre, publications for parents and related exhibition boards in the school campuses, to help parents understand the importance of safeguarding national security. In addition, schools would invite guest speakers, such as representatives of the Hong Kong deputies to the National People's Congress, to give talks in the parent seminars at schools with a view to deepening parents' understanding of national security education and their role in supporting schools' implementation of national security education.

Apart from the above, the EDB provides subsidies for PTAs of schools and FPTAs, encouraging them to organise activities on national education and national security education. From the 2021/22 to 2023/24 school years, the EDB has approved more than 2 390 applications from PTAs and 14 applications from FPTAs to support the provision of programmes or activities related to national education, national security education and values education, including school cultural exchange tours to the Mainland and local parent-child national education tours. About 64 000 parents have participated in such activities.

LD reminds employers and employees to take heat stroke preventive measures in times of Heat Stress at Work Warning

As the Heat Stress at Work Warning is now in effect, the Labour Department (LD) reminds employers and employees to take appropriate measures during the effective period of the warning to prevent heat stroke when working in hot weather or hot environments.

Employees who work outdoors or in non-air-conditioned indoor environments face high levels of heat stress and are at a relatively higher risk of heat stroke. Employers should assess the risk factors of heat stress for employees at work and, based on the identified risk factors, take necessary preventive and control measures, including rescheduling work periods, setting up shading covers, providing ventilation and heat dissipation equipment, and reminding employees to replenish water and rest in a timely manner.

The Heat Stress at Work Warning is formulated by the LD based on the

Hong Kong Heat Index. There are three levels of the warning: Amber, Red and Black, which help employers and employees better understand the level of heat stress while working outdoors or indoors without air-conditioning systems.

A spokesman for the LD said that when the department issues the Heat Stress at Work Warning, employers must refer to the criteria and recommendations provided in the "[Guidance Notes on Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work](#)" to conduct risk assessments, according to the workloads and other relevant heat stress risk factors, for employees who work outdoors or in non-air-conditioned indoor workplaces. Appropriate rest breaks should be arranged every hour, as far as reasonably practicable, based on various levels of the Heat Stress at Work Warning, to reduce employees' risk of heat stroke.

Employees must also follow instructions to rest on time. Whenever there are any symptoms of heat-related illnesses, such as headache, dizziness, thirst, and nausea, they should rest in a cool and shady place, drink water, and inform employers/supervisors to take appropriate action immediately.

The LD issued the "Guidance Notes on Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work", detailing the various risk factors that should be considered when conducting heat stress risk assessments and recommending corresponding control measures for identified risk factors for employers' and employees' reference. For the Heat Stress at Work Warning and related guidelines, please refer to the department's thematic webpage:

www.labour.gov.hk/eng/news/prevention_of_heat_stroke_at_work.htm.

LCQ18: Arrangements for filling vacancies in Legislative Council

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Tik Chi-yuen and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (July 10):

Question:

There are views pointing out that a seat of the current-term Legislative Council (LegCo) has been left vacant for over 18 months, which has inevitably affected this Council's work in monitoring the Government's policy implementation and expressing social aspirations. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of seats left vacant in the course of the term of LegCo since the first LegCo and the period for which each of the seats was left vacant;

(2) of the number of LegCo by-elections held by the Government since the first LegCo, and the number of seats involved and the expenditures incurred in each by-election; the considerations or criteria based on which the Government decided to hold such by-elections; and

(3) given that in the reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-2025, the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs has indicated that the Government will maintain close communication with the Electoral Affairs Commission and will consider matters related to the by-election of the current-term LegCo based on the actual situation, of the latest progress of the relevant work and the considerations or criteria for deciding whether or not to hold the by-election?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to Dr the Hon Tik's question is as follows:

(1) Since the establishment of the first term of the Legislative Council (LegCo) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the first term of LegCo), a total of 51 seats have been left vacant during the term of office. In view that by-elections must be arranged in accordance with the law and the actual situation, by-elections for filling previous vacancies were not necessarily conducted within a short period of time. Statistics show that 58 per cent (30 seats) of the aforesaid 51 vacancies were left vacant for over 1 year.

(2) and (3) The Government has held a total of 10 LegCo by-elections involving 20 seats since the first term of LegCo. The expenditure of by-election is affected by multiple factors, including the number of seats involved, the constituency concerned, the number of electors, the number of polling stations, the booking situation of venues, and the required manpower, etc. Therefore, the total expenditure of different by-elections varies. We will continue the principle of enhancing the efficiency and managing our finances prudently, so as to enable future public elections to be conducted successfully while achieving cost effectiveness.

Regarding the current vacancy of the LegCo, the Government will continue to maintain close communication with the Electoral Affairs Commission, and will consider the relevant arrangements as appropriate and as practicable based on the actual situation.

[SEE to attend Forum on Global Action](#)

for Shared Development in Beijing

â€‹The Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, will depart for Beijing this afternoon (July 10) to attend the second High-level Conference of the Forum on Global Action for Shared Development.

During his stay in Beijing, Mr Tse will call on the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and the National Energy Administration to continue strengthening co-operation and exchanges. He will also visit the Earth System Science Numerical Simulator Facility of the Chinese Academy of Sciences to learn about the latest developments of the country in areas such as combating climate change and atmospheric environment management.

â€‹The Permanent Secretary for Environment and Ecology (Environment), Miss Janice Tse, the Commissioner for Climate Change, Mr Wong Chuen-fai, and officers from the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the Environmental Protection Department and the Hong Kong Observatory will also join the visit.

Mr Tse will return to Hong Kong in the evening on July 13. During his absence, the Under Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Miss Diane Wong, will be the Acting Secretary for Environment and Ecology.