

LCQ3: Measures to cope with discharge of nuclear wastewater by Japanese Government

Following is a question by the Hon JoePHY Chan and a reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (June 28):

Question:

It has been reported that the Embassy of Japan in China earlier held a briefing session in Beijing on the discharge of nuclear wastewater generated by the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, but it did not invite the Chinese media to attend the session, and even disseminated false information at the session in an attempt to mislead the international community. Also, it did not follow the principle of goodwill consultation to explore other options to dispose of the nuclear wastewater. There are views that the Government should formulate the most stringent precautionary measures in response to the discharge plan. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has assessed the immediate impact and level of risks posed by the discharge plan to food safety and public health in Hong Kong, and of the measures in place to enhance the public's understanding of the plan and its risks to their own health;

(2) apart from aquatic products, whether the Government will impose import control on processed food (regardless of their places of origin) made from fresh food from Fukushima and its neighbouring areas, expand the scope of radiological testing on imported Japanese food products, and require all processed food imported from Japan to be accompanied by radiation certificates and pass the relevant tests; and

(3) whether the authorities will, in addition to drawing reference from the reports published by the International Atomic Energy Agency on the discharge plan, draw reference from other representative international research and assessment reports to help them formulate more comprehensive corresponding measures; if so, of the titles of such reports, as well as the details of the corresponding measures (including the additional manpower and total expenditure involved); if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government of Japan plans to discharge the wastewater generated in the process of cooling the reactors at the Fukushima nuclear power station (FNPS) into the ocean after treatment in the summer of 2023. The Hong Kong

Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has repeatedly expressed grave concern about the impact of the discharge plan on food safety, and has indicated clearly to the Japanese authorities that they should not discharge the wastewater from the FNPS into the ocean unilaterally without the consensus of the international community so as to avoid bringing about irreversible impacts on the environment.

Food safety is of an issue of paramount importance affecting public health. The Government is responsible for ensuring that food sold in Hong Kong is safe and fit for consumption. Since issues such as pollution to the ocean are international issues in the realm of foreign affairs, the Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB) has, after the announcement of the discharge plan of Japan, relayed the opinions and concerns of various sectors to the Office of the Commissioner of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (OCMFA) in Hong Kong, and maintained liaison with the OCMFA. The EEB and relevant departments are fully prepared in response to the discharge plan, and our primary concern is to safeguard food safety and public health in Hong Kong.

A consolidated reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Joephy Chan is provided as follows:

(1) At present, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Task Force is still examining whether the discharge plan meets the safety standards of the IAEA, and whether it would have negative impact on human health and the ecosystem. The relevant concluding report has yet been published. According to the current information and assessment, food products that have higher risks of being affected by the discharge plan are mainly aquatic products from Fukushima and its nearby coastal prefectures. In response to the discharge plan of Japan, I have published an article in the newspaper and attended media interviews to explain the discharge plan and the relevant health risks to members of the public with the view to enhancing their understanding. Such efforts have already drawn the attention of the community. To provide more comprehensive information to the public, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) is releasing on its website relevant information and results of the radiological tests on imported Japanese food products, while the Department of Health is providing on its website information on the health effects of radiation and frequently asked questions with answers for public perusal. Once Japan commences the discharge, the CFS will step up the dissemination of information by releasing results of the radiological tests on its website on each working day and issue press release on a regular basis. We will also set up a one-stop webpage in the EEB website with the view to fostering better understanding of the public on the latest information on the safety of imported Japanese food.

(2) According to the current information and assessment, our preliminary plan is to put all fresh, chilled, frozen and dried aquatic products, seaweed and sea salt from the affected prefectures, under the scope of our tightened import control measures. As for other highly processed food containing aquatic products, generally speaking, the radionuclides on the surface of the ingredient will be removed during the preparation and the concentration of the concerned ingredient will also be diluted after addition of other

ingredients. According to the IAEA, general cooking and food processing procedures can lower the radioactivity of food effectively. Having said that, the HKSAR Government will enhance the testing arrangement, including test on relevant processed food of aquatic product, with the view to providing dual protection and ensuring food safety. As for Japanese food products which are still allowed to be imported, enhanced testing will still be applied even when such food products are accompanied by radiation certificates, so as to achieve dual insurance. Since mid-April, the CFS has gradually stepped up radiological tests on imported Japanese food products, especially those on aquatic products and specified radionuclides. Since mid-June, the CFS has also expanded the scope of testing to cover all Japanese aquatic products (irrespective of prefectures), and stepped up radiological tests on other processed food imported from Japan.

(3) If the Japanese authorities proceed with the discharge of wastewater as planned, it will last for 30 years. We are highly concerned about how they will ensure that the treatment facility maintains effective operation throughout, and that the discharge plan poses no potential risks to food safety and the marine ecosystem. Safeguarding food safety and public health in Hong Kong is the primary concern of the HKSAR Government. Once the discharge has commenced, the HKSAR Government will immediately take stringent import control measures, including prohibiting the import of aquatic products from the highest-risk coastal prefectures in proximity to Fukushima, and imposing stringent import control on aquatic products from other prefectures which are at risk by denying entry of these products into Hong Kong unless they are accompanied by radiation certificates. As for the details of the proposed measures, including the prefectures to be covered, apart from the conclusion of the final report of the IAEA, the opinions of the Mainland experts, the practices and assessments of the Mainland and neighbouring regions, relevant information provided by Japan on the issue and other relevant information available in the international community will be taken into full consideration before a decision is made.

Apart from stepping up import control measures, the Government has also enhanced testing arrangement to provide dual protection. The additional expenditure incurred by the Government for procuring necessary testing equipment over these two years is around \$6 million per year, and the additional expenditure on manpower, equipment maintenance, testing consumables and related matters will be around \$3.8 million per year.

LCQ1: Implementation of environmental, social and governance education

Following is a question by the Hon Chu Kwok-keung and a reply by the Under Secretary for Education, Mr Sze Chun-fai, in the Legislative Council

today (June 28):

Question:

It is learnt that various sectors of society are actively exploring the integration of environmental, social and governance (ESG) concepts into the education curriculum. However, some members of the education sector have relayed that primary and secondary schools will face challenges in the process of implementing ESG education, including the allocation of education resources, curriculum design and teacher training, etc. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the specific policies and measures in place to promote ESG education; whether it will incorporate ESG concepts into the curricula of primary and secondary schools and kindergartens, and commence the relevant teacher training; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will collaborate with various sectors of society and make reference to overseas experience to promote the innovation and development of ESG education, so as to achieve the best use of resources; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will include the performance of schools in teaching ESG in the Performance Indicators for Hong Kong Schools and take the performance of schools in teaching ESG into consideration when evaluating their performance, as well as ensure that education institutions at various levels are provided with sufficient resources and support in the process of implementing ESG education; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In kindergarten, primary and secondary education, concepts and proper values related to environmental education, social responsibility and principles of governance, etc, have been embedded in different learning areas or subjects as well as moral, civic and national education in accordance with students' learning progression and developmental needs, enabling kindergarten, primary and secondary students to learn the concepts and values in basic education. Post-secondary institutions also offer a range of degree programmes related to these aspects, such as sustainable development and green finance, for students who wish to develop in these areas.

Our reply to the Hon Chu Kwok-keung's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) At the kindergarten stage, schools nurture in children the values and attitudes to respect, appreciate and cherish the environment and nature through learning activities with real-life themes. At the primary level, students are taught in General Studies environmental conservation and resources saving, effects of climate change on people and individuals' responsibilities in environmental conservation. At the junior secondary level, the subject of Citizenship, Economics and Society helps students understand social systems and their operational procedures, and realise the

significance of the rule of law and public order. As for the subject of Geography, topics such as sustainable development, energy, ecological conservation and climate change are covered. Both subjects cover the learning elements of nurturing among students the commitment to making contributions to our country and society in the aspect of environmental conservation. As for Science Education at the junior secondary level, the curriculum content encompasses fossil fuels, alternative energy sources, saving energy and balance of carbon dioxide and oxygen in nature. At the senior secondary level, topics taught in the subject of Biology include biodiversity, conservation of the ecosystem, and global environmental issues, e.g. acid rain. The curriculum of Business, Accounting and Financial Studies covers topics of business management functions, business ethics and social responsibilities, in which learning elements include how business ethics and social responsibilities affect business decisions. As for the subject of Citizenship and Social Development, the topic on the roles and responsibilities of the business sector in promoting environmental conservation is covered. In addition, some Applied Learning courses, such as Innovation and Entrepreneurship and AI in Business, include learning elements related to innovation and sustainable development, as well as ethics, sustainability and responsibility.

With regard to values education, the Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version) lists "actively practising green living as well as encouraging and supporting joint efforts from people around" and "possessing a global perspective as well as being concerned about global environmental issues and the challenges in attaining sustainable development" as learning expectations on primary and secondary students respectively, so as to nurture in them proper values and attitudes, such as treasuring what we have, commitment, common good and diligence.

The Education Bureau (EDB) has been collaborating with other government departments and different sectors of the community, including the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the Hong Kong Green Building Council and so on, to organise diversified professional development programmes for teachers. Topics such as sustainable development and mitigating climate change in Hong Kong, standards and requirements with respect to business sustainability, energy saving and green buildings, assist teachers in teaching the related concepts, as well as nurturing proper values and attitudes among students. From the 2020/21 to 2022/23 school years, over 80 relevant training activities have been organised with the participation of about 6 700 teachers. To support learning and teaching in schools, we continue to develop different learning and teaching resources including worksheets, life event examples and educational multimedia resources and upload them onto the EDB website for teachers' reference and deployment. In addition, we have organised a range of students activities, for instance, slogan and poster design competitions, online quiz competitions and online courses, to help students understand the rationale and importance of sustainable development as well as enrich their learning experiences.

All along, the EDB has adopted a "multi-pronged and co-ordinated" approach to facilitate student learning of the concepts and knowledge related

to care for the environment and society, as well as governance structure and principles, etc, within and beyond the classroom in a progressive manner and nurturing of proper values and attitudes among them, such as care for others, commitment, responsibility, diligence, being grateful and treasuring what we have, as well as practising green living. It is noted that similar approaches are also adopted in the Mainland and Singapore in teaching relevant knowledge and skills, and nurturing values and attitudes in students in basic education. While curriculum development is an on-going process, the EDB will constantly review the secondary, primary and kindergarten curricula and make reference to the global trends of curriculum development, so as to keep our curricula abreast of the times to cater for the learning needs of students.

(3) The EDB has developed the "Performance Indicators for Hong Kong Schools" (PIs), with the aim of promoting school self-evaluation, in response to the implementation of school-based management. School self-evaluation, complemented by external school reviews and focus inspections, enhances the transparency of school-based management and school accountability. The PIs comprise the four domains of "Management and Organisation", "Learning and Teaching", "School Ethos and Student Support" and "Student Performance", all of which can be used to assess school performance in delivering related curricula, discharging social responsibility and practising good governance, etc. The domains are intertwined, with mutual impact on each other. Among them, the indicators under the domain of "Management and Organisation" assess whether school management and professional leadership have facilitated learning and teaching and student development so as to promote students' whole-person development. The indicators under the domain of "Learning and Teaching" cover the school performance in implementing the curricula recommended by the Curriculum Development Council for various Key Learning Areas at the primary and secondary levels, including the concepts and positive values related to environmental education, social responsibility and principles of governance. The indicators under the domain of "School Ethos and Student Support" measure the school effectiveness in the arrangement of learning experiences and provision of support measures in accordance with students' developmental and learning needs, and the school performance in collaborating with parents and external organisations. As for the domain of "Student Performance", apart from putting emphasis on students' learning attitudes and moral character, the indicators of this domain also cover students' academic and non-academic performances. The EDB will update the PIs in a timely manner when necessary to facilitate schools' continuous improvement, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of school governance and student learning.

Thank you, President.

LCQ16: Pilot Scheme for Short-term Visitors

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (June 28):

Question:

In June 2022, the Government launched the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (Pilot Scheme for STV), with an aim to provide immigration facilitation for non-local talents to participate in specified short-term activities, so as to facilitate business and foster the development of relevant sectors. Since February this year, the coverage of the Pilot Scheme for STV has been further expanded. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of visitors who have come to Hong Kong under the Pilot Scheme for STV so far, as well as the average number of days that each visitor has stayed in Hong Kong and the average number of specified short-term activities that each visitor has participated in, with a breakdown by designated sector;

(2) given that it is stipulated under the Pilot Scheme for STV that the duration of eligible visitors' participation in the specified short-term activities is up to 14 consecutive calendar days for each period of permitted stay as visitor, whether the Government will consider raising the cap on the number of such days; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it will consider further expanding the coverage of the Pilot Scheme for STV and increasing the number of authorised host organisations; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it will consider regularising the Pilot Scheme for STV; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government launched the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (Pilot Scheme) in June 2022. Under the Pilot Scheme, host organisations authorised by the relevant government bureaux/departments can issue invitation letters to relevant non-local talents in their sectors. Invited persons may come to Hong Kong to participate in specified short-term activities as visitors, without the need to apply for employment visas/entry permits from the

Immigration Department (ImmD). The non-local talents invited are talents in shortage or whose participation in specified short-term activities in Hong Kong is conducive to economic development or achieving relevant policy objectives. They may participate in the specified short-term activities for up to 14 days during each trip to Hong Kong, and receive remuneration for the specified activities concerned.

Following a review, the Government expanded the Pilot Scheme in February 2023. In addition to the then existing 10 designated sectors, there are two new sectors, namely "Finance" and "Development and Construction", with the addition of about 50 authorised host organisations.

Having consulted the ImmD, the reply to the question raised by the Hon Ng is as follows:

(1) As of the first quarter of 2023, the Pilot Scheme had benefited about 2 300 non-local talents, facilitating their coming to Hong Kong as visitors to participate in various short-term events and activities, such as the Hong Kong Sevens, the Hong Kong International Baseball Open 2023 cum "Phoenix Cup 2023" Hong Kong International Women's Baseball Tournament and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra performance. The statistics of the number of beneficiaries by sector are tabulated below:

Sector	Number of non-local talents benefiting from the Pilot Scheme (Participants in specified short-term activities) (As of Q1 2023)
Medical and Healthcare	36
Higher Education	215
Arts and Culture	193
Sports	1 790
Heritage	22
Creative Industries	0
Innovation and Technology	27
Hong Kong Laureate Forum (Note 1)	0
Aviation	0
International/Mega Events	9
Finance (Note 2)	0
Development and Construction (Note 2)	0
Total	2 292

Note 1: The inaugural Hong Kong Laureate Forum will be held from November 13 to 18, 2023.

Note 2: New sectors added upon the expansion of the Pilot Scheme on February 1, 2023.

According to the quarterly statistics provided by the relevant bureaux/departments, as of the first quarter of 2023, non-local talents who benefited from the Pilot Scheme had on average participated in activities in Hong Kong for five days. The majority of them participated in one specified short-term activity, with only a handful having participated in more than one specified short-term activity during their stay in Hong Kong.

(2) to (4) Currently, for each period of permitted stay as visitor, the duration of participation in specified short-term activities is up to 14 consecutive calendar days, counting from the day when the eligible visitors start to participate in such activities. There is no cap on the number of specified short-term activities the eligible visitors may participate in during that 14-day period.

The Pilot Scheme was expanded in February 2023, covering 12 sectors with a total of nearly 400 authorised host organisations at present.

The Government will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the Pilot Scheme, as well as the views of the relevant departments and the sectors concerned. The Government will timely review the coverage of the Pilot Scheme (including the number of authorised host organisations) and the duration of participation in the specified short-term activities, so as to ensure that the Pilot Scheme can continue to effectively achieve the relevant policy objectives. Before the end of the two-year period of the Pilot Scheme, the Government will also conduct a comprehensive review on its implementation, and consider whether to regularise the Pilot Scheme.

[LCQ20: Admission requirements for medical students](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hok-fung and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (June 28):

Question:

There are views pointing out that the Hippocratic Oath is the code of ethics observed by quite a number of medical students. However, incidents of strikes staged by Hong Kong healthcare practitioners took place during the riots in which political stances prevailed over professional conduct. Regarding the admission requirements for medical students, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the respective percentages of students admitted to the faculties of medicine of the two local universities through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) and non-JUPAS in the past three years and, among all the medical students admitted, of the number of students who sat for examinations of subjects similar to Liberal Studies or Citizenship and Social Development in public examinations (including those in Hong Kong and overseas);

(2) given that one of the objectives of the subject of Citizenship and Social Development is to cultivate among students a sense of national identity and the subject will become one of the compulsory subjects under the basic entrance requirements for JUPAS applications starting from the 2024/25 school year, whether it knows if the faculties of medicine of the two local universities have compiled statistics on whether students admitted through non-JUPAS have sat for examinations of subjects related to the development of a sense of national identity, and whether such courses will be included as a basic requirement for non-JUPAS applicants who are Hong Kong students enrolling for programmes in medicine; if they have not compiled the statistics and will not include such courses as a basic requirement for Hong Kong students enrolling for programmes in medicine, of the reasons for that; and

(3) as it is learnt that the universities in some countries require students to complete undergraduate degree programmes before they can enrol for programmes in medicine, whether it knows if the faculties of medicine of the two local universities will consider adopting such a requirement; if they will not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities are independent statutory bodies established pursuant to their respective ordinances and enjoy institutional autonomy in areas such as setting admission requirements. The admission standards of a number of programmes also befit the requirements of a discipline to ensure that students on these programmes are equipped with the relevant background knowledge and abilities.

At present, local students sitting for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) are mainly admitted to UGC-funded undergraduate programmes through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS); students with other qualifications (including international public examinations, sub-degrees and bachelor degrees) are required to submit their applications directly to individual UGC-funded universities (i.e. the non-JUPAS route). Each university formulates its own merit-based admission policy to assess applications from both JUPAS and non-JUPAS routes.

Our consolidated reply to the various parts of the questions is as follows:

(1) & (2) In the past three academic years (AY), the actual numbers and percentages of students admitted through JUPAS and non-JUPAS routes by the two UGC-funded universities offering medicine programmes at undergraduate level (i.e. the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and the University of Hong Kong (HKU)) are as follows:

University	AY	Actual intake (percentage)		
		JUPAS	Non-JUPAS	Total
CUHK	2020/21	183 (69%)	83 (31%)	266 (100%)
	2021/22	185 (67%)	90 (33%)	275 (100%)
	2022/23	198 (66%)	102 (34%)	300 (100%)
HKU	2020/21	148 (51%)	144 (49%)	292 (100%)
	2021/22	130 (47%)	147 (53%)	277 (100%)
	2022/23	121 (41%)	176 (59%)	297 (100%)

At present, Liberal Studies (LS) at senior secondary level is one of the core subjects in HKDSE. Starting from the 2021/22 school year, the Government is progressively introducing the subject of Citizenship and Social Development (CS) to replace LS at Secondary Four and maintains its requirement for compulsory public assessment. The first HKDSE for CS will be held in 2024. All local students enrolled in UGC-funded undergraduate programmes through JUPAS will be required to take either LS or CS and attain the required result to meet the general admission requirements. For non-JUPAS students, the universities do not keep statistics on the number of students who have sat for public examinations in Hong Kong or overseas for subjects similar to LS or CS, or those related to national identity.

As mentioned above, universities enjoy institutional autonomy in areas such as setting admission requirements, etc., with the admission standards of a number of programmes befitting the requirements of a discipline. We have no plan to interfere with the universities' specific admission requirements for individual disciplines.

Nevertheless, universities have the responsibility to offer national education and national security education, and organise relevant activities for their enrolled students with a view to raising their awareness of national security, law-abidingness and national identity, and to nurture new generations with social responsibility, a sense of national identity, an affection for Hong Kong as well as international perspectives. In this regard, both CUHK and HKU have incorporated national education and national security education into the scope of learning of their students as a

graduation requirement. This also applies to undergraduate students of the two medical schools.

(3) At present, the publicly-funded medicine programmes offered by CUHK and HKU are at undergraduate level with a normative study period of six AYs, which is longer than a typical four-year undergraduate programme and provides sufficient study time for students to acquire expert knowledge of the subject, receive clinical training and broaden their horizons. This arrangement has all along been effective in nurturing professionally competent medical practitioners in Hong Kong. Indeed, the positioning of medicine programmes as taught postgraduate programmes is mainly confined to North America; they remain predominantly as undergraduate programmes on the Mainland and in various other places around the world. The Government has no plan to change the relevant programme structure.

LCQ9: Adopting payment means commonly used on the Mainland

Following is a question by Prof the Hon William Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (June 28):

Question:

It is learnt that the number of Mainland tourists is increasing gradually, but they generally face payment problems in spending and travelling. For instance, during the Labour Day Golden Week just passed, as a large number of Mainland tourists wished to take ferry rides, they needed to wait in long queues to buy Octopus cards for making payment. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics on the current number of businesses in Hong Kong that accept electronic payment means other than Octopus and, among them, the number of businesses that accept the payment means more commonly used by Mainland residents (e.g. Alipay and WeChat Pay); if not, whether it will compile such statistics, so as to gain an understanding of the actual situation of businesses' acceptance of payment means;

(2) as it is learnt that Mainland residents are accustomed to using payment means such as Alipay and WeChat Pay, but the majority of businesses and ferries in Hong Kong still only accept payment by cash or Octopus, of the measures put in place by the authorities to encourage more large and small businesses to provide the QR code payment means commonly used by Mainland residents; before such payment means become popular, of the authorities' plans to publicise the payment means commonly used in Hong Kong to tourists

wishing to visit Hong Kong, so that they can make preparations in advance;
and

(3) as it is learnt that Mainland residents can use the mobile application "Super App" to pay the fares of public transport modes in a number of provinces and municipalities, of the current number of types of public transport modes in Hong Kong that accept payment via that application; whether the Government will consider requiring the payment systems of all public transport modes to be connected with that application, so as to facilitate payment of fares by Mainland tourists?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau as well as the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the reply to the question raised by Prof the Hon Wong is as follows:

(1) and (2) Hong Kong has a mature electronic payment (e-payment) ecosystem with various non-cash payment options available for consumers, e.g. mobile payment tools such as e-wallet applications on mobile phones have been increasingly popular. Merchants will offer suitable payment options for consumers taking into account circumstances of business operation, customer habits, operating cost, etc. The Government currently does not hold statistics about the number of merchants in Hong Kong accepting e-payment options other than Octopus. The Government will keep in view market development and continue to promote the wider use of e-payment through appropriate financial technology infrastructure and regulations. For visitors, the Hong Kong Tourism Board has been providing them with a series of practical information through the DiscoverHongKong website, including introducing the commonly used payment options in Hong Kong. The website publicises the functions of Octopus and advises visitors to purchase an Octopus card or download the Mobile Octopus (tourist version). Furthermore, there are travel websites providing Octopus card advance purchase services, allowing visitors to purchase an Octopus card online prior to their arrival in Hong Kong and then pick it up at a designated counter at Hong Kong International Airport.

(3) The Government has been promoting the introduction of different e-payment systems by various public transport operators to enhance the travel experience of the public and visitors on the one hand, and to facilitate the efficient integrated development of Hong Kong and the Mainland on the other hand.

At present, most public transport operators accept different means of e-payment (including QR code payment in super apps like WeChat and Alipay). The MTR and franchised buses, which are most commonly used by the public and visitors and together account for some 75 per cent of daily public transport patronage in Hong Kong, accept QR code payments, in addition to Octopus. With regard to taxis, some taxi drivers currently accept e-payment (including

Octopus and Alipay) for settling taxi fares. Besides, a number of online taxi hailing mobile applications accept various means of e-payment (e.g. credit card) for settling fares of pre-arranged journeys. Tramways and Star Ferry are stepping up their efforts to introduce e-payment systems other than Octopus. Tramways is expected to introduce QR code and contactless credit card payments from the third quarter of this year, while Star Ferry is expected to introduce QR code payment in the third quarter of this year the earliest.