

## LCQ11: Promoting urban sports

Following is a question by the Hon Vincent Cheng and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 24):

Question:

The Chief Executive indicated in the 2022 Policy Address that the Government would work with the sports sector, schools and the business sector to promote "urban sports". On promoting urban sports in the community, supporting elite urban sports and making Hong Kong a centre for major international urban sports events, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) on the aspect of promoting urban sports in the community, given that in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on March 15 this year, the Government indicated that it planned to work with schools and aimed to provide 8 000 students with the opportunity to take part in urban sports every year starting from the 2023-24 academic year, of the details of the relevant plan (including the ways students take part in such sports (in physical education lessons or extra-curricular activities), the number of participating schools each year, the number of places for each school, and the time when schools may start applying);

(2) in respect of promoting urban sports, of a breakdown of the estimated expenses involved in each year;

(3) given that the Government is exploring collaboration with national sports associations (NSAs) and other organisations to organise promotional activities and training courses on urban sports outside schools, of the relevant details;

(4) given that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has been organising community recreation and sports activities or courses in the 18 districts across the territory for participation by members of the public, whether the Department will provide more training classes or courses on urban sports;

(5) on the aspect of supporting elite urban sports, given that the Government will discuss with relevant NSAs the enhancement of supporting work such as feeder systems and coach training, of the relevant preliminary plan;

(6) on the aspect of making Hong Kong a centre for major international urban sports events, whether the authorities will consider organising international competitions related to urban sports within this year; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(7) given that in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council in respect of the Estimates of Expenditure 2023-24 earlier on, the Government

indicated that the LCSD would implement a number of works projects to provide urban sports facilities, but there are views pointing out that there are relatively less dedicated venues for sport climbing and skateboarding under such projects (e.g. there is no works project providing facilities for such two urban sports in Kowloon West), of the relevant reasons for that; in regard to providing short-term sites for urban sports, whether the authorities will consider providing idle government sites, vacant school premises, spaces underneath flyovers, etc. for application by urban sports organisations; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the questions raised by the Hon Vincent Cheng is as follows:

(1) – (3) The Government will work with the sports sector, schools and other sectors to promote urban sports and provide subsidy to those schools and organisations which are interested in participating in the promotion programme and organising training courses as well as activities on urban sports. In the first phase, we plan to work with schools in organising training courses and activities after class at school campus. Starting from the 2023/24 academic year, we aim to provide 8 000 students with the opportunity to take part in urban sports and the estimated expenditure is \$16 million per annum. Later on, we will collaborate with national sports associations (NSAs) and other organisations to organise promotional activities and training courses outside schools. Details of the promotion programme and subsidy will be announced in due course.

(4) The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is dedicated to promoting "Sport for All" and organising diversified sports and recreation programmes for people of different age groups and physical abilities with the aims of enhancing their quality of life and improving their health. To encourage the participation in sports by members of the public and promote urban sports, the LCSD plans to organise some 370 urban sports programmes in 2023-24, including 3-on-3 basketball, sport climbing, breaking, skateboarding and futsal, which are expected to be participated by about 15 300 people. For the Corporate Games 2023, futsal will be included as one of the events and a substitute for 7-a-side soccer. Besides, the LCSD will retain futsal events and include some new urban sports (such as sport climbing, breaking and skateboarding) as demonstration competition events in the upcoming 9th Hong Kong Games, and substitute 5-on-5 basketball competition by 3-on-3 basketball which is more popular among the youth. To further promote urban sports, the LCSD has set up a dedicated website ([www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/USP/index.html](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/USP/index.html)) to facilitate members of the public's access to information on urban sports programmes and related facilities.

(5) Under the Sports Subvention Scheme administered by the LCSD, the Government will provide over \$7 million in total to respective NSAs of urban sports in 2023-24 for organising activities of 3-on-3 basketball, futsal, sport climbing, breaking, skateboarding etc, including the participation in overseas competitions, hosting of local international events, organisation of

squad training at different levels, training for coaches and referees. On the other hand, the Hong Kong Sports Institute will subsidise elite training for over 100 junior athletes of sport climbing, skateboarding and breaking under the Elite Athlete Support Scheme and the Individual Athletes Support Scheme in 2023-24.

(6) For international events on urban sports, we expect that an international 3-on-3 basketball event will be staged in Hong Kong in November 2023 with a budgeted funding support of around \$10 million. We will continue to work closely with the organiser and announce the details once the event has been confirmed.

(7) The LCSD has been committed to the planning and construction of various sports and recreation facilities to meet public needs, including venues for sport climbing and skateboarding. In planning new sports facilities and improving existing ones, the Government will take into account various factors such as the current provision of sports facilities at territory-wide and district levels, policy objectives for sports development, utilisation rate of existing facilities, demographic change, views of District Councils, land availability and technical feasibility.

At present, there are several sport climbing and skateboarding facilities in the Kowloon West region, including the skatepark at Lai Chi Kok Park in Sham Shui Po District which is available for use by skateboarders, and the outdoor and indoor sport climbing facilities at Shek Kip Mei Park Sports Centre in Sham Shui Po District and Tai Kok Tsui Sports Centre in Yau Tsim Mong District respectively. Moreover, as announced in the 2023-24 Budget, the Government is examining the conversion of some underutilised floors of the Kwun Chung Municipal Services Building into an urban sports centre to provide a suitable venue for activities such as sport climbing and skateboarding.

For the provision of sports facilities, the Government will consider various factors when determining whether a location is suitable to be used as facilities for specific sports, such as land use, traffic, environment and landscape. Depending on the conditions of some temporary sites, such as idle sites or spaces beneath flyovers, the Government will explore the possibility of using these sites to provide suitable sports and recreation facilities for the promotion of sports, including urban sports. In addition, the LCSD has been considering the enhancement of some existing facilities to promote relevant urban sports, including the renovation of some suitable venue facilities to provide bouldering walls and skateboarding facilities.

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## **LCQ9: Surrogacy arrangements**

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Dennis Lam and a written reply by

the Acting Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, in the Legislative Council today (May 24):

Question:

There are views that although the situation of low fertility rate in Hong Kong has lit up a red light of alert, the Government has not yet included improving the policy on surrogacy as one of its major tasks currently. Regarding surrogacy arrangements, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it will review if the eligibility criteria for subsidised assisted reproductive services are overly stringent, and if the relevant requirements regarding surrogacy arrangements have dampened the desire of couples with fertility problems to bear children through lawful surrogacy arrangements;
- (2) given that in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on the 26th of last month, the Secretary for Health indicated that at present, the Council on Human Reproductive Technology (the Council) had issued 12 licences to public healthcare institutions and 24 private healthcare institutions had been licensed to provide assisted reproductive services, whether such healthcare institutions provide surrogacy arrangements;
- (3) of the total number of cases concerning lawful surrogacy arrangements received by the Council in each of the past five years and, among them, the number of cases in which the "intended parents" were finally determined by the court to be the legal parents of the babies born through surrogacy arrangements;
- (4) as it is learnt that the surrogate mothers will become the legal mothers of the babies whose legal parentage with "intended parents" cannot be determined by the court, whether the Government has formulated a monitoring mechanism for the arrangements for the growth, welfare, etc of such babies; and
- (5) of the percentage of surrogacy arrangements in the total number of cases of assisted reproductive services in each of the past five years, and set out in the table below a breakdown of surrogacy arrangements?

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of applications for surrogacy arrangements	Age group to which the applicant belonged	Reason of application	Number of live births	Whether the applicant was determined to be the legal parent of the baby	Medical expenditure involved

Reply:

President,

The consolidated reply to the four parts of the question raised by the Dr Hon Dennis Lam is as follows:

People's decision to bear a child hinges on various factors, including personal preference, lifestyle, economic conditions and prevailing social circumstances. Childbearing is a personal choice of members of the public, and assisted reproductive healthcare service is generally not a primary factor of consideration in making the decision of childbearing. Currently, both public and private healthcare systems in Hong Kong have been offering assisted reproductive services, including in-vitro fertilisation (IVF), storage of oocytes, to support couples in need. While the Government's prevailing policy stance is neither to oppose nor to actively encourage the use of surrogacy arrangements, the Government nevertheless considers it necessary to regulate surrogacy arrangements to safeguard the role of families and welfare of children born as well as prevent abuse of the arrangement, and to ensure that all parties involved in the relevant arrangements are aware of the risks and consequences that they should bear.

Since reproductive technology (RT) activities involve complex social, moral, ethical and legal issues, the Government formulated the Human Reproductive Technology Ordinance (Cap. 561) (HRTO) in 2000 not only to ensure the proper conduct of RT service providers and researchers, but also to safeguard the role of families, the rights of service users and the welfare of the children born as a result of RT. The HRTO provides a statutory framework to, among others, regulate human RT procedures and the use of embryos and gametes; confine the provision of RT procedures to infertile couples; and regulate surrogacy arrangements. At the same time, established under section 4 of the HRTO in April 2001 and comprising members from different sectors of the community, the Council on Human Reproductive Technology (CHRT) is tasked to regulate matters related to human RT; formulate the Code of Practice on Reproductive Technology and Embryo Research (CoP); and provide members of the public with relevant information.

Sections 17 and 18 of the HRTO stipulate the prohibition against surrogacy arrangements on a commercial or enforceable basis and advertisements relating to such commercial dealings. Prohibiting surrogacy

arrangements on a commercial basis is the decision upon extensive deliberations by the Legislative Council prior to the enactment of the HRT0. On the other hand, surrogacy arrangements on a non-commercial or unenforceable basis are permitted only with gametes from married couples under section 14 of the HRT0, and is one of the specified activities that can be provided under the treatment licence issued by the CHRT. As at May 1 this year, a total of 12 public and 24 private healthcare institutions in Hong Kong were licensed by the CHRT to provide assisted reproductive services. While 16 of these institutions are treatment licence holders, none of them are allowed to provide surrogacy arrangements as a specified activity. Hence, the CHRT has not obtained any information on cases of surrogacy arrangements so far.

Although there is yet to be any RT centre providing surrogacy arrangements as a specified activity in Hong Kong, the CoP has provided clear guidelines on such arrangements. According to the CoP, applicant institutions which intend to provide surrogacy arrangements or holders of the relevant licence must comply with the requirements and regulations on surrogate arrangements set out in Chapter XII thereof. In particular, paragraph 12.2 mandates that the wife commissioning surrogate arrangements is required to prove that there is no other practicable and feasible alternative option for her to be pregnant till term, whereas paragraph 12.7 mandates RT centres to set up a multi-disciplinary expert team which shall provide counselling for the commissioning couple, surrogate mother and her husband (if married) to ensure that all parties concerned understand the medical, social, legal, moral and ethical implications of surrogacy.

In assessing the suitability of the surrogate mother and the commissioning couple for surrogacy, the welfare of the child to be born is of paramount importance. Hence, key assessment factors such as their commitment to caring for and bringing up the child and their ability to provide a stable and supportive environment for the development of the child born as a result of treatment are detailed in the CoP. Pursuant to section 9 of the Parent and Child Ordinance (Cap. 429), a woman who is pregnant as a result of surrogacy arrangements is the legal mother of the child to be born. However, it is also stipulated in section 12 of Cap. 429 that the commissioning couple may apply for a court order within six months of the birth of the child in order to become the parents of the child. Regarding the above arrangements, the CoP requires the commissioning couple, the surrogate mother and her husband (if married) to sign a standard consent form before such arrangements are made, demonstrating their understanding of the legal process involved in the arrangements concerned.

The policy of assisted reproductive healthcare services should reflect the opinion of the community towards the issue as a whole and consider the resource allocation implications within the healthcare system. Over the years, the CHRT has been receiving feedback and suggestions pertaining to regulatory and licensing matters under the HRT0, covering not only medical science technology and clinical procedures but also extensive and highly contentious ethical and social issues on which the community has yet to reach a sufficient consensus. In view of the Government's stance of not advocating

surrogacy, the Government has no plan to subsidise citizens for such services with public funds. The Government and the CHRT will closely monitor public opinions on surrogacy arrangements, consider stakeholders' feedback and the CHRT's operating experience, and examine various issues when necessary.

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## LCQ5: Attracting visitors to Hong Kong

â€‹Following is a question by the Hon Adrian Ho and a reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 24):

Question:

To promote the recovery and development of Hong Kong's tourism industry, the Government has launched the "Hello Hong Kong" global promotional campaign, and the Hong Kong Tourism Board has also rolled out a series of promotional activities to attract visitors to Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the aforesaid global promotional campaign includes giving away free of charge to visitors by various means within six months about 500 000 air tickets purchased in advance by the Airport Authority Hong Kong from several local airlines, and distributing "Hong Kong Goodies" visitor consumption vouchers to one million visitors to Hong Kong, so as to attract them to visit and spend money in Hong Kong, whether the Government has set targets for the substantive benefits and effects of such activities as the basis for implementing such activities;

(2) whether, prior to conducting activities to publicise and promote Hong Kong around the world, the authorities have established the publicity targets, including the countries and regions as well as the age groups of visitors, in order to formulate corresponding publicity strategies; and

(3) whether the authorities will organise a series of activities highlighting the various unique cultures and characteristics of Hong Kong, with a view to establishing Hong Kong's tourism brand and selling points as well as telling the stories of Hong Kong well; if so, of the details of the various activities?

Reply:

President,

In respect of the question raised by the Hon Adrian Ho, having consulted the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, Transport and Logistics Bureau and Information Services Department, the consolidated reply is as follows:

(1) According to the information provided by the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) purchased in advance around 500 000 air tickets from three locally-based carriers in 2020 to support Hong Kong's aviation industry, which had been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. To complement the Government's "Hello Hong Kong" global promotional campaign launched in February this year, AAHK launched the "World of Winners" Tickets Giveaway Campaign in March to give away these air tickets through the three locally-based carriers, the travel trade and public organisations, with a view to increasing the airport passenger throughput, speeding up airlines' recovery as well as boosting the business of upstream and downstream supporting services. Visitors to Hong Kong winning the free tickets are also entitled to special offers on hotel accommodation, shopping and entertainment, etc. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has been rendering full support on promotion. The whole campaign will last for six months. A total of about 200 000 air tickets have been given away. AAHK expects that the campaign will bring more than 1.5 million visitors to Hong Kong in total.

Riding on the launch of the "Hello Hong Kong" global promotional campaign, HKTB also launched a series of promotional activities to welcome visitors, including distributing "Hong Kong Goodies" visitor consumption vouchers which consisted offers at dining and retail outlets, attractions or transport to one million visitors through HKTB's Discover Hong Kong e-platform. As of mid-May, the vouchers have been distributed to more than 760 000 visitors.

(2) HKTB has been promoting the tourism appeal of Hong Kong leveraging Hong Kong's uniqueness, such as the Victoria Harbour, city life, natural scenery, traditional culture, food and beverage of the East and the West, as well as various cultural, arts and sports mega events, which meet various needs of different target visitors. Attracting high value-added visitors is our major promotional target. In addition to organising and supporting mega events in Hong Kong, HKTB will also step up efforts to attract Meetings, Incentive Travels, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) events of various scales and types to be held in Hong Kong.

With the launch of the "Hello Hong Kong" global promotional campaign, HKTB and government departments have rolled out series of activities to send out welcoming messages to the world, promote Hong Kong, and attract visitors around the world to visit Hong Kong. HKTB expects that short-haul markets such as the Mainland and Southeast Asian markets and regional travel will resume faster than long-haul markets. As such, HKTB first targets short-haul markets in promotion, including inviting travel trade, the media and KOLs on social media platforms in the Mainland to visit Hong Kong in depth, bringing CCTV famous news anchors to Hong Kong to introduce the city, and inviting popular Mainland reality TV variety shows to introduce Hong Kong's authentic gourmet culture, classic drama and new attractions. Besides, HKTB has organised a number of mega trade familiarisation trips for travel trade in Southeast Asia to promote new tourism products of Hong Kong. HKTB will also invite stars and directors from Korea, Thailand and the Philippines to film in Hong Kong and promote the city.

This year, HKTB plans to invite over 1 000 travel trade, media, film stars, KOLs and Hong Kong Super Fans to visit Hong Kong to generate positive word-of-mouth and good comments. At the same time, HKTB plans to lead the travel trade to participate in more than 20 major tourism exhibitions and MICE-related events in the Mainland and overseas throughout the year.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong overseas Economic and Trade Offices strive to maintain close communication and interaction with the international community, to promote and explain the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's (HKSARG) major policies, promote Hong Kong's cultural and creative industries and foster cultural exchanges, conduct, sponsor and participate in various arts and cultural activities, and leverage activities during the visits of Government senior officials, to promote Hong Kong's status as Asia's emerging arts and cultural hub, and our uniqueness as a quality tourist destination and Asia's world city. Besides, the HKSARG Mainland Offices (Mainland Offices) take the opportunity of senior Government officials' visits to the Mainland to arrange them to attend promotional activities, give speeches and join media interviews in order to enhance promotion. Mainland Offices will continue to play the bridging role, and make good use of the online and offline platforms to promote Hong Kong's advantages and opportunities in the Mainland.

The Information Services Department (ISD) aims to promote Hong Kong's advantages, potentials, and opportunities to overseas countries and the Mainland, showcasing Hong Kong's vibrancy and attractiveness as Asia's world city. ISD has also stepped up its promotional and publicity efforts in major target markets, in particular the Middle East and ASEAN countries, to tie in with the Government's policies for attracting enterprises and investment. Target audiences of these promotional efforts include business and political leaders, investors, entrepreneurs, professionals and young talents, etc.

(3) Cultural, sports and tourism mega events will provide visitors with rich and diverse experiences, and attract visitors to visit Hong Kong. In 2023-24, mega events organised or under planning in Hong Kong include the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races, Harbour Chill Carnival, Hong Kong Cyclothon, Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, Hong Kong WinterFest, Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong Sevens, Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival 2023, Hong Kong New Year Countdown Celebrations, and Hong Kong Chinese New Year Celebrations next year.

HKTB will also extend and expand the "Hong Kong Neighbourhoods" promotions, injecting new elements into "Old Town Central", "Sham Shui Po" and "West Kowloon", to attract visitors with authentic local culture. In addition, HKTB will continue to implement the Pilot Scheme for Characteristic Local Tourism Events and provide funding support for staging events showcasing local characteristics. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department is actively organising the "Hong Kong Week" to be staged in Bangkok, Thailand from October to November this year to feature the unique East-meet-West arts and cultural ambience of Hong Kong.

Pursuing in-depth and personalised travel experiences is on a rising trend. With a variety of cultural, sports and mega events, Hong Kong will

continue to attract visitors from all over the world. We believe that the number of visitors will continue to increase within this year, which will benefit Hong Kong's tourism, retail, catering, business, exhibitions and other sectors.

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## LCQ10: Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point

Following is a question by the Hon Yiu Pak-leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (May 24):

Question:

Some members of the tourism industry have relayed that after the implementation of full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland on February 6 this year, the number of Mainland visitor arrivals to Hong Kong has steadily increased, and the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point (BCP) has become a major control point used by inbound and outbound tour group travellers. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the BCP has only nine parking spaces available for picking up/setting down passengers by local tourist coaches, with the number of inbound and outbound tour group travellers increasing continuously, the parking spaces concerned will be insufficient to meet the demand, whether the Government will consider adjusting the layout of the public transport interchange at the Passenger Terminal Building of the BCP, so as to ease passenger and vehicular flows there;

(2) of the Government's plans to enhance the public transport connections at the BCP to cope with the increasing number of travellers in the future;

(3) as some members of the public have relayed that although they found vacant parking spaces in the public car park at the BCP, the online booking system showed that the parking spaces in the car park were full, whether the Government will enhance the booking system to identify vehicles which have left the car park early, and update the number of parking spaces that are available for booking via the booking system in a timely manner, so as to expedite the turnover of parking spaces in the car park, thereby optimising the use of resources in the car park; and

(4) as some members of the tourism industry are of the view that with the current opening hours of the BCP being from 7am to 10pm, it is difficult for them to arrange for tour groups to depart via the BCP after having dinner in Hong Kong, whether the Government has considered extending the opening hours

of the BCP to 11pm, so as to facilitate Mainland visitors' entry to and departure from Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point (HYW BCP) is the first BCP which adopts the design of "direct access to people and vehicles". It has been well received by the members of the public since commissioning of passenger clearance service in February 2023. Apart from taking local public transport services including franchised buses (FBs), green minibus (GMBs) and taxis, members of the public may also access the BCP by private cars or on foot through the connecting pedestrian subway. The Government has been closely monitoring the operation of the BCP and adopting appropriate measures to facilitate members of the public to travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong. In consultation with the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau and the Security Bureau, the reply to the question raised by the Hon Yiu Pak-leung is as follows:

(1) During the planning of the HYW BCP Public Transport Interchange (HYW PTI), various operational facilities, including the boarding and alighting facilities for FBs, GMBs, taxis as well as local non-franchised buses (local NFBs), have been arranged in different areas having regard to the operational needs of different public transport services. Among the facilities, there are nine spaces for picking up and dropping off passengers by local NFBs. The Government has also reserved an area in the vicinity of the HYW BCP for temporary parking of 30 local NFBs where needed. In addition, the Transport Department (TD) has reminded relevant operators that tour coaches should, as far as possible, enter the HYW PTI to pick up passengers only after all tour group members have assembled, so as to better utilise the parking spaces and speed up the vehicular flow. According to the TD's observation during the recent Labour Day Golden Week period, the boarding and alighting spaces for local coaches were in general operating smoothly. To avoid affecting the operation of other public transport services including FBs and GMBs, we have no plan to convert the boarding and alighting facilities for other public transport modes into facilities for use by local NFBs.

(2) In respect of local public transport services connecting to the HYW BCP, currently passengers may take Citybus Route B7 for travelling to and from Sheung Shui (Po Wan Road) via Fan Ling or GMB Route 59S for travelling to and from MTR Sheung Shui Station. On Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, passengers may also take Citybus Route B8 for travelling to and from MTR Tai Wai Station via Tai Po, and Kowloon Motor Bus Route B9 for traveling to and from MTR Tuen Mun Station via Yuen Long. The TD has been closely monitoring the passenger flow and actual situation at the HYW BCP, and would liaise with the public transport operators to adjust services as necessary to meet passenger demand. At the request of the TD, the relevant operators have also arranged spare buses/GMBs during peak hours for enhancing services when needed to reduce queues. As at late April, the average occupancy rates during peak hours of the FB routes serving the HYW BCP ranged from 50 per cent to 90

per cent. The headway of the GMB service during peak periods was about five minutes on average. Overall, the current public transport services are able to meet passenger demand.

(3) To facilitate the public to travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong through the HYW BCP, the Government Property Agency (GPA) has implemented enhancement measures since February 17 this year to ensure the smooth operation of the HYW BCP public car park (HYW car park), after reviewing the operation of the HYW car park. Only vehicles with online booking are allowed to park at the HYW car park and vehicles without prior booking are not accepted. Currently, the online booking system of the HYW car park allows the public to reserve parking spaces from two hours to seven days prior to entry and the reserved parking period is from a minimum of two hours up to a maximum of seven days, with a view to facilitating the public to arrange their travel plans. The public can reserve parking spaces that have not been reserved or used by other vehicles through the online booking system of the HYW car park.

Turnover of parking spaces in the HYW car park is dynamic. If vehicles with reserved parking spaces arrive late or leave early, there may be the situation where the online booking system shows that there are no parking spaces available for booking but some parking spaces in the HYW car park are unoccupied.

The GPA will continue to closely monitor and review the operation of the HYW car park, particularly during weekends or cross-boundary peak periods. Besides, the GPA will review the operation mode of the HYW car park and the functions of the online booking system from time to time, and arrange enhancement measures as necessary, so as to facilitate the public to travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong through the HYW BCP.

(4) At present, among various land boundary control points, Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port provide 24-hour passenger clearance service.

Also, in the light of the full resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong since early February this year, the Hong Kong and Shenzhen governments will monitor the demand for cross-boundary travel, and implement 24-hour passenger clearance service at the Shenzhen Bay Port in due course to further facilitate the flow of people between the two places.

With regard to the HYW BCP, as it is still at the initial stage of commissioning, and as 24-hour clearance service is already available at other control points, both the Hong Kong and Shenzhen governments will continue to closely monitor the operation of the HYW BCP, and consider whether it is necessary to extend its opening hour based on actual demand for passenger clearance service.

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# LC: Speech by CS in presenting Government Minute in response to Report No. 78 and Report No. 79 of Public Accounts Committee

Following is the speech (translated from Chinese) by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, in presenting the Government Minute in response to Report No. 78 and Report No. 79 of the Public Accounts Committee in the Legislative Council today (May 24):

Mr President,

Laid on the table today is the Government Minute (GM) responding to Report No. 78 and Report No. 79 of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) presented to the Legislative Council on February 15, 2023.

I welcome the Reports of PAC and am grateful for the time and efforts devoted by the Chairman of the PAC, the Hon Shiu Ka-fai, and members of the PAC. The Government accepts the PAC's various recommendations and sets out in detail in the GM the specific responses of the relevant bureaux and departments. The PAC has conducted public hearings on the chapters "Licensing services for drivers" in Report No. 78 and "Continuing Education Fund" in Report No. 79. I would like to highlight the key measures taken and progress made by the Government and relevant organisations in response to the recommendations.

Licensing services for drivers

In response to the comments and recommendations made by the Audit Commission and the PAC on licensing services for drivers, the Transport Department (TD) has taken various measures to ensure an effective driving training and testing system for promotion of road safety.

Regarding the provision of driving tests, the TD has taken measures to increase the driving test output. Upon utilisation of the time saved from the introduction of an electronic driving test form and arrangement of Driving Examiners to take up additional work on Saturdays starting late March 2023, around 1 000 additional driving tests can be provided for early test appointments per month, with a view to improving the overall waiting time for driving tests. In addition, the TD is conducting a new round of Driving Examiner II recruitment exercise. New recruits will assume duty in the second half of 2023. Meanwhile, the TD has been working with the Independent Commission Against Corruption since February 2023 for reviewing the duty reporting arrangement of Driving Examiners to examine the possibility of making adjustments in order to further increase the driving test output. The relevant review is expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2023.

In respect of updating the computerised question banks of driving written tests, the TD has enhanced the system to ensure that the question banks are reviewed regularly and as necessitated by legislative amendments, with a view to ensuring that all the questions and answer options are up to date.

As regards the management of driving training schools, the TD will enhance the monitoring of the operators' gearing-up progress during the relevant tender and selection exercises for schools in future to ensure that the schools have met all requirements before being designated as driving schools. The TD has also consulted the Competition Commission and adopted a new marking scheme for awarding tenders, under which a technical assessment and a rental proposal each carries weighting of half of the overall score. The TD will continue to conduct re-tendering exercises with the Lands Department for the schools located on government short-term tenancy sites on a regular basis, and to examine further enhancement of the assessment criteria in future tender exercises to introduce more competition into the market of driving training schools.

On the licensing and monitoring of private driving instructors (PDIs), the TD will continue to regularly review and closely monitor the situation of "inactive" PDIs in assessing the need for issuing new PDI licences. The TD plans to collect information from candidates regarding the driving instructors who provided training to them, the number of training hours taken, etc when they attend driving road tests starting June 2023, with a view to enhancing the monitoring of the situation of "inactive" PDIs. Moreover, the TD has strengthened the arrangement of roving inspections of PDIs on a regular basis to monitor the teaching quality of PDIs more closely.

#### Continuing Education Fund

In response to the recommendations on the Continuing Education Fund (CEF), the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency (WFSFAA) have taken various measures to proactively improve different aspects of the CEF's operation.

As regards the monitoring work on inspection, the LWB has completed the review of the service agreement with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) for 2022-23, and followed up and rectified the arrangements on inspection of registered courses. The HKCAAVQ agrees to refund the fees paid with regard to the unsuccessful audit visits in the past five years as mentioned in the Audit Report. After deduction of the service fees payable for the preparatory work for conducting audit visits, the formalities to refund the remaining fees had been completed in 2022-23. In addition, in 2022-23, the HKCAAVQ could only charge service fees for audit visits successfully conducted. Upon completion of the 2022-23 service agreement, the LWB will engage a service provider for conducting audit visits through open tender. The LWB will make reference to the recommendations of the Audit Report and the PAC Report to set out clearly the contents of the service agreement and the arrangement, adding appropriate provisions to define clearly the roles and responsibilities of the service provider, the service requirements to be fulfilled, etc.

The LWB and the WFSFAA attach great importance to safeguarding national security, and issued a letter in March 2023 reminding all course providers under the CEF to abide by the Hong Kong National Security Law. The LWB and the WFSFAA will issue letters to all course providers under the CEF in June 2023, requiring them to sign an undertaking on safeguarding national security, as well as revise the application forms for new course registration and renewal requiring all course providers to sign a declaration to acknowledge that their operational arrangement of CEF courses must fulfil the requirements of the Hong Kong National Security Law. Additional provisions on the requirements of safeguarding national security will be added in the CEF Terms and Conditions and the Guide in mid-2023.

On strengthening the regulation of promotion of CEF courses, the LWB and the WFSFAA have reminded all course providers in writing not to promote CEF courses in any way deviating from the objectives of the CEF. The LWB and the WFSFAA have also stepped up inspections of promotional materials of CEF courses on the internet to ensure that they are compatible with the objectives of the CEF. The CEF authorities have requested submission of duly prepared promotional materials by course providers at the time of application for course registration for checking their compatibility with the objectives of the CEF. If course providers are found to have allegedly promoted CEF courses as a means to pave the way for emigration, or in any way deviated from the objectives of the CEF, the CEF authorities will request them to withdraw and/or cease using relevant promotional materials, and take other appropriate regulatory actions in case of severe non-compliance, such as issuing warning letters or reprimands to the non-complying course providers or de-registering the courses.

The LWB and the WFSFAA have enhanced the use of information technology to improve the efficiency of the CEF's operation, including commencing the development of a centralised e-service portal in the first quarter of 2023 to provide a one-stop service portal for applicants of all financial assistance schemes, including the CEF, under the purview of the WFSFAA. The portal will facilitate CEF claimants' online submission of applications and supporting documents as well as their viewing of the status of their applications. The LWB will also consult the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer to explore the feasibility of setting up an operating system to co-ordinate operations involving multiple parties.

The LWB and the WFSFAA will continue to monitor the implementation of the various improvement measures, so as to ensure that the CEF can give full play to its functions and safeguarding learners' interests.

Closing

Mr President, I would like to thank the PAC again for its efforts and suggestions. The bureaux and departments concerned will strictly adhere to their responses and implement improvement measures as set out in the GM.

Thank you, Mr President.