

LCQ6: Improvement to pedestrian facilities in Sha Tin District

Following is a question by the Hon Dominic Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (April 27):

Question:

Under the "Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems" (HEL) and the Universal Accessibility (UA) Programme, the Government has taken forward certain projects in Sha Tin District to improve the pedestrian facilities there. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the latest design, implementation plan, latest progress and anticipated completion date of the lift retrofitting items at the following locations under the UA Programme: (i) the footbridge across Tai Chung Kiu Road near Belair Gardens, (ii) the pedestrian subway under the section of Tai Chung Kiu Road adjacent to Fo Tan Road and Sha Tin Road, and (iii) the lift and pedestrian walkway system between Saddle Ridge Garden and Sai Sha Road; as some residents in the district have relayed that they have been waiting for the completion of such facilities for a long time and are concerned that the epidemic may affect the progress of the works, whether the Government will take measures to ensure that such items can be completed as scheduled; if not, of the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will consider retrofitting lifts at the location connecting Hin Tai Street and Hin Tin Street, and including the works in the UA Programme, with a view to making it more convenient for members of the public to travel; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) of the details (including the design and construction schedule) of the HEL project proposed to be taken forward to link up Sha Tin Tau Road with the footway near Greenview Garden; and

(4) whether it will consider retrofitting barrier-free access facilities comprising short staircases and ramps at the location linking up the exit of Lung Yiu House of Kam Lung Court with Ma On Shan Family Medicine Centre, and including the works in the UA Programme, with a view to making it more convenient for residents to attend follow-up medical appointments and travel; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Dominic Lee is as follows:

(1) In respect of the footbridge across Tai Chung Kiu Road near Belair Gardens (Structure No.: ST03), the Highways Department (HyD) will retrofit a

total of two lifts, one each at its exits near Shing Mun River and Belair Gardens respectively, under the Third Phase of the Universal Accessibility Programme. As for the subway across Tai Chung Kiu Road near Fo Tan Road and Sha Tin Road (Structure No.: NS35), a total of two lifts will be retrofitted, one each at its exits near Shing Mun River and Sha Tin Road respectively. The proposed design of these two projects has been endorsed by the Traffic and Transport Committee (TTC) of the Sha Tin District Council (STDC) in April 2020.

The lift retrofitting works contracts of Footbridge ST03 and Subway NS35 commenced in April 2021. The contractors concerned are currently taking forward relevant works such as ground investigation, boring, relocation of trees and diversion of underground utilities for the two projects, which are expected to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2023 and the second quarter of 2024 respectively.

The proposed lift and pedestrian walkway system between Saddle Ridge Garden and Sai Sha Road is one of the hillside escalator links and elevator systems (HEL) projects to be implemented. The proposed works mainly include the construction of a lift tower with two lifts at Sai Sha Road, as well as a covered elevated pedestrian link connecting the lift tower at Sai Sha Road and Saddle Ridge Garden. The proposed works design has been endorsed by the TTC of the STDC in April 2020. Pursuant to the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 370), the works and its authorisation notice were gazetted in March 2021 and June 2021 respectively. To commence the construction works as soon as possible, the HyD initiated parallel tendering for its construction works contracts in March 2022. The Government plans to seek funding approval for the project from the Legislative Council within this year, which is targeted for completion in about three years.

To reduce the impact of the epidemic on the works progress, HyD's project teams have been implementing a series of prevention and control measures according to the guidelines issued by the Centre for Health Protection, encouraging all construction site personnel to get vaccinated and arranging for them regular rapid antigen tests. Starting from March 14, 2022, the Vaccine Pass arrangement has been fully implemented in all of the sites, in that all construction workers, site personnel and visitors entering the project site must have received COVID-19 vaccination. In addition, the contractors will provide suitable protective gears. For upcoming works projects, the HyD will also incorporate suitable clauses in the contracts, requiring contractors, their agents and subcontractors to follow the Vaccine Pass arrangement; and contractors to provide site personnel with adequate protective gears to reduce the impact of the epidemic. As for the supply of construction materials during the epidemic, HyD's project teams have been working with the contractors to review the construction procedures and material supplies, and will re-sequence construction procedures and identify alternative materials where appropriate to minimise the impact of the epidemic on the lift retrofitting works.

(2) Regarding the lift retrofitting works at the location connecting Hin Tai Street and Hin Tin Street as proposed in the question to make it more convenient for members of the public to travel, the Government will consider

the proposal under the scope of HEL. At present, the Transport Department and the HyD are taking forward the priority projects selected for implementation under the revised assessment mechanism for HEL. Depending on factors such as the progress of the priority projects and the resources available for allocation, the Government will assess the new proposal mentioned in the question according to the relevant assessment mechanism and follow up as appropriate in due course.

(3) The proposed HEL project to link up Sha Tin Tau Road with the footway near Greenview Garden mentioned in the question has been included as one of the proposed projects for priority implementation under the revised assessment mechanism for HEL. The HyD is embarking on relevant work such as technical feasibility studies, ground investigation, preliminary and detailed design, and will report on the details of the project in due course.

(4) It is understood that the proposed retrofitting of barrier-free access (BFA) facilities at the location linking up the exit of Lung Yiu House of Kam Lung Court with Ma On Shan Family Medicine Centre mentioned in the question involves retrofitting BFA facilities comprising short staircases and ramps at the staircase connecting the area outside Lung Yiu House of Kam Lung Court and the Sai Sha Road footpath to facilitate access by residents. According to the information provided by the Lands Department, the location of the staircase concerned falls entirely within the area of a Home Ownership Scheme estate of which private property rights are involved. Pursuant to the established mechanism, proposals of retrofitting such facilities at walkways or footways which fall entirely within private development/land (including Kam Lung Court) could be left to the owners of these properties for consideration.

LCQ4: Consolidating Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub

Following is a question by the Hon Frankie Yick and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (April 27):

Question:

It is learnt that currently, the five major airports in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area) (i.e. Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA), Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport (GBIA), Shenzhen Baoan International Airport (SBIA), Zhuhai Jinwan International Airport (Zhuhai Airport) and Macau International Airport) have overlapped among themselves in terms of flight destinations and sources of passengers. In addition, GBIA and SBIA have been actively expanding their international

routes in recent years and have gained, one after another, a place among the globe's busiest airports. On consolidating Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that it is proposed in the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area to consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub, and to pursue differential development and positive interaction of airports in the Greater Bay Area, of the Government's work and accomplishments in this regard;

(2) whether it will consider implementing the "co-location arrangement" at HKIA, so as to enhance passenger handling efficiency and competitiveness of Hong Kong's aviation services; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as the Chief Executive has stated in the 2020 Policy Address that the Central Government allows the Airport Authority Hong Kong to inject equity into the Zhuhai Airport on the basis of market principles, of the progress of the relevant work and implementation timetable; whether the Government has estimated the benefits to be brought to Hong Kong's aviation services upon injecting equity; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) as it has been reported that even if HKIA's Third Runway System could be completed in 2024 as scheduled, it would reach its full transport capacity in 10 years' time, and that it will take at least 10 years to build another airport or the fourth runway, whether the Government will expeditiously commence a study on the relevant issues; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

"Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035" stated support for the enhancement of Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub. "Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area" also clearly supported the consolidation of Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub and suggested that airports in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) should pursue complementary development and healthy interactions, and build a world-class airport cluster.

The Government and the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) are on one hand enhancing co-operation and interaction with other airports in the GBA, and on the other hand pursuing different airport infrastructural projects in order to increase the capacity and functionality of HKIA. At the same time, we are also improving the service standard of HKIA to consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub.

With regard to the enhancement of the interaction with other airports in

the GBA, the AAHK has been actively participating in the Forum for Five Pearl River Delta Airports to discuss the direction of development of the airports in the region and means to boost co-operation to promote sustainable development of the aviation industry. HKIA is also striving for better use of regional resources and improving service efficiency through strategic co-operation with airports in the GBA for the common benefits as well as greater international competitiveness of the GBA. Among such important initiatives is the co-operation with Zhuhai Airport. The Central Government staunchly supports the equity injection into Zhuhai Airport by the AAHK, which will help to pool the respective comparative advantages enjoyed by HKIA through its international aviation network and Zhuhai Airport through its expanding Mainland aviation network, achieve greater connectivity between the two airports in both passenger and air cargo services, and lay ground for co-operation on high-end aviation industrial developments. We are now proactively following up on the issue of equity injection and look forward to co-operation between the two airports soon for better synergy.

In terms of airport infrastructure, the AAHK is pursuing various projects in earnest to enhance HKIA's capacity and functions in an effort to develop HKIA into an "Airport City". With the flight check of the third runway of HKIA smoothly completed according to International Civil Aviation Organization standards in early April 2022, the AAHK is now actively preparing to commission the third runway in 2022, while the entire Three-Runway System is expected to be completed in 2024. Upon its expansion, HKIA is expected to be able to handle the targeted 120 million passengers and 10 million tonnes of air cargo annually from 2035 onwards. The Government will closely monitor the development of the aviation industry and air traffic demand and suitably plan for the next phase of the development of HKIA.

The AAHK also strives to improve HKIA's services, especially in enhancing the connectivity between HKIA and the GBA as well as HKIA's clearance efficiency. The AAHK has rolled out various relevant measures, including providing sea-air intermodal passenger transfer service, which allows passengers going to and from nine ports in the GBA using SkyPier to complete airline check-in, baggage check and Mainland immigration and customs clearance at the Mainland ports concerned, and to transfer at HKIA without the need to go through Hong Kong's immigration procedures. Such service will be extended to the SkyPier Terminal which is under construction, thereby allowing passengers from Macao and Guangdong travelling to Hong Kong through the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge to enjoy the aforesaid seamless transfer service as well. The AAHK has also set up city terminals in strategic locations in the GBA. Passengers from the GBA can check in at the city terminals before taking transportation for HKIA for convenient baggage drop-off and boarding for departure. The Government and the AAHK will continue to explore other possible measures, including implementing the co-location of Hong Kong and Mainland customs, immigration and quarantine facilities at HKIA, to facilitate more efficient clearance at HKIA and enhance passengers' travelling experience, thereby consolidating and enhancing HKIA's status as an international aviation hub.

We will continue to closely monitor market changes in the aviation

industry and review the air traffic demand forecast at appropriate junctures in complement with the overall development of the aviation industry. With HKIA's past experience in pursuing co-operation in the Mainland and its status as the benchmark for airports all over the world, it will surely be able to continue to contribute to the development of the GBA. The Government will strive to co-operate with neighbouring airports to build a wholesome cluster of airports with synergy, as well as to support the development of the national aviation industry.

LCQ15: Development of green finance

Following is a question by the Hon Yim Kong and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, in the Legislative Council today (April 27):

Question:

There are views pointing out that the development of green finance will enable Hong Kong to fully leverage its advantages as an international financial centre, and contribute to the national strategic goals of achieving carbon emission peak before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060 (the twin carbon goals). Some analyses have pointed out that the green and low-carbon investments required by the Mainland for achieving the twin carbon goals can amount to Renminbi (RMB) 100 trillion to 180 trillion, and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority has estimated that the volume of green and sustainable debt issued in Hong Kong in 2021 exceeded US\$50 billion, many of which were RMB green bonds. Hence, the development potentials for green finance in Hong Kong is considerable. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that the Government has carried out an assessment on the feasibility of developing Hong Kong into a regional carbon trading centre, whether it has formulated a timetable for setting up in Hong Kong an institution (e.g. an exchange) responsible for handling carbon emissions related trading; if not, of the specific reasons for that, and whether it will commence the relevant planning work;
- (2) whether it will consider providing further subsidies or introducing other concessionary policies with a view to attracting Mainland institutions (particularly enterprises) to issue green bonds in Hong Kong; and
- (3) of the measures in place to grasp the socio-economic opportunities arising from the achievement of the twin carbon goals as well as the green and low-carbon transformation in the Mainland, so as to develop green finance in Hong Kong, thereby further promoting the city's status as an offshore RMB hub?

Reply:

President,

By leveraging our advantages as an international financial centre, Hong Kong can facilitate matching between international capital and quality green projects, contribute proactively to helping our country achieve its "3060 Target" in relation to carbon emission peak and carbon neutrality, as well as propelling Hong Kong towards our carbon neutrality target by 2050 and promoting green transformation of our economy. The development of green and sustainable finance in Hong Kong offers promising prospects.

The reply to the Hon Yim's question is as follows:

(1) Formed by relevant Government bureaux and financial regulators, the Green and Sustainable Finance Cross-Agency Steering Group (Steering Group) published in end March 2022 a preliminary feasibility assessment for Hong Kong to pursue carbon market opportunities and is of the view that Hong Kong's success factor in adding value to global carbon markets lies in our close links with the Mainland, which enables us to facilitate global capital flows into the Mainland's carbon markets. In addition, Hong Kong's green certification services at international level and familiarity with both Mainland and international standards will enable us to serve as a bridge to the world for Mainland which will, in turn, contribute to the development of the carbon market.

Specifically, Hong Kong can leverage the work of the relevant international institution on voluntary carbon markets (VCMs) and financial expertise to develop a centralised and on-exchange VCM, so that buyers of carbon credits from Hong Kong, Mainland and overseas can have an additional and transparent purchase channel. Meanwhile, Hong Kong can be a bridge to the world for Mainland China's carbon credits and the underlying projects under the China Greenhouse Gas Voluntary Emission Reduction Programme administered by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment. Hong Kong is the gateway between the Mainland and international markets and has unique institutional advantages in facilitating international capital flows into the Mainland. Hong Kong should leverage its strengths to proactively assist and integrate into national and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) developments, which are moving towards a comprehensive green transformation.

Based on the assessment, the Steering Group intends to proceed with the following next steps with a view to developing Hong Kong into a regional carbon trading centre:

(i) develop Hong Kong into a global, high-quality VCM, leveraging Hong Kong's status as a champion of international standards, a facilitator to channel global capital into the Mainland, and an international financial centre with a stable and mature regulatory system;

(ii) collaborate with relevant authorities and stakeholders to work towards establishing the GBA Unified Carbon Market in line with Mainland policies to strengthen GBA co-operation;

(iii) explore opportunities to link up international investors with the GBA Unified Carbon Market and potentially the national emissions trading system; and

(iv) strengthen co-operation with the Guangzhou Futures Exchange (GFEX) on carbon market development to enable Hong Kong to act as the Mainland's offshore risk management centre.

The Steering Group will consider which market and regulatory model would be the most appropriate, and prepare a detailed roadmap, implementation plan and indicative timeline after consulting market experts and relevant authorities.

The Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEX) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the GFEX in August 2021 with a view to driving a green and low-carbon market in the GBA and supporting sustainable development through the promotion of exchanges and co-operation in areas such as clearing, technology, marketing and investor educational efforts. The HKEX also signed a MoU with the Guangzhou-based China Emissions Exchange in March 2022 to explore co-operation opportunities in carbon finance, including jointly exploring the development of a voluntary carbon emission reduction programme in the GBA, with the aim of supporting the country's efforts to peak carbon emissions and reach carbon neutrality; and working together to share research and experience on carbon market financing and global carbon market standards, to help boost the internationalisation of the Mainland's carbon market. Moreover, Hong Kong's first carbon futures exchange traded fund (ETF) was listed on the HKEX on March 23, 2022, which extends the coverage of Hong Kong-listed commodity ETFs to carbon credits, an important asset class in the global drive to achieving carbon neutrality.

In addition, the International Platform on Sustainable Finance published in November 2021 the Common Ground Taxonomy (CGT) report, which could help define what activities are considered to contribute significantly to climate change mitigation as well as reduce the risk of green washing. The Steering Group will, with the aim of aligning with the CGT, explore developing a green classification framework for adoption in the local market which facilitates easy navigation among the CGT, the Mainland's and the European Union's taxonomies, aligning Hong Kong's regulatory standards with international best practice.

(2) As an international financial centre, Hong Kong has a large financial market and a sound world-class regulatory framework, bringing together global leading financial and professional institutions, green assessment and certification bodies as well as international investors. With these strengths and advantages, Hong Kong is well placed to develop into a green finance hub in the region.

Last year, the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government issued offshore Renminbi (RMB) municipal government bonds totalling RMB 5 billion in Hong Kong, including green bonds. In respect of interest paid or profit received arising from the debt instruments issued in Hong Kong by the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Government (HKSAR Government) will exempt the payment of profits tax. This is the first time a Municipal People's Government issues bonds in Hong Kong, testifying to the strength of Hong Kong as a platform to issue RMB bonds, including green bonds.

The HKSAR Government launched a new Green and Sustainable Finance Grant Scheme (Grant Scheme) in May 2021 to provide subsidy for eligible bond issuers and loan borrowers to cover their expenses on bond issuance and external review services. The scheme has been well received by the industry. As at early April this year, over 60 applications have been approved under the Grant Scheme, involving a grant amount of over \$70 million. Among the applications approved, many of them involved subsidies for covering the external review costs relating to green and sustainable loans. Lowering the minimum loan size threshold in respect of applications for subsidies for covering external review costs would facilitate relatively small enterprises in obtaining green financing. Therefore, we have lowered the threshold from \$200 million to \$100 million, with a view to benefitting more enterprises interested in green transformation and promoting the development of green finance in Hong Kong at the same time.

We will continue to take forward the relevant work on green finance through different channels, including maintaining liaison with the Mainland authorities (including the GBA) and promoting the Grant Scheme to encourage more Mainland entities to use Hong Kong's platform for green and sustainable investment, financing and certification. The Qianhai authorities also provide a subsidy of not more than RMB 2 million to Qianhai corporates that issue green bonds in Hong Kong, which will be conducive to attracting more bond issuances in Hong Kong by corporates.

(3) The Central People's Government promulgated the Outline Development Plan for the GBA in 2019, supporting Hong Kong's development into a green finance centre in the region. The Opinion on Providing Financial Support for the Development of the GBA subsequently promulgated in May 2020 encourages more GBA entities to make use of Hong Kong's platform for the financing and certification of their green projects and supports Guangdong incorporated financial institutions to issue green bonds and other green financial products in Hong Kong. Leveraging Hong Kong's strengths as an international financial centre and the gateway between China and the rest of the world, Hong Kong is well positioned to connect the flow of green and sustainable funds with the Mainland and the world to promote green investments and ecological civilisation in the Mainland.

The Government has successfully issued Government green bonds under the Government Green Bond Programme totalling over US\$7 billion equivalent since May 2019, which were well received by the global investment community with oversubscription recorded for many times. In particular, we issued a total of RMB 5 billion green bonds for the first time in November last year, including a 3-year tranche and a 5-year tranche, setting an important benchmark for potential issuers. The Government also announced in February this year the offering details of the inaugural retail green bond for public subscription, of which the issuance was previously postponed due to the epidemic situation. The Government subsequently announced the relaunch of the subscription from

April 26 to May 6, 2022 and combining the issuance targets of the last and the current financial years, so as to minimise issuance costs and administrative work. The target issuance size is HK\$15 billion. The Government may further increase the issuance size to a maximum of HK\$20 billion having regard to market conditions. We also doubled the borrowing ceiling of the Government Green Bond Programme to HK\$200 billion last year and will, having regard to the market situation, continue to issue green bonds, including RMB green bonds, to provide a pricing reference for the market.

In addition, the Government plans to launch the Pilot Green and Sustainable Finance Capacity Building Support Scheme to provide subsidies for practitioners in the financial and other relevant sectors to participate in green and sustainable finance training and obtain relevant professional qualifications, so as to encourage them to enroll in the relevant training, and help build up the local green and sustainable finance talent pool. This will support the industry in capturing green finance opportunities and bring long-term economic benefits to Hong Kong. According to the current plan, the scheme will cover practitioners in the financial services and persons from relevant sectors who need to build up their knowledge in green and sustainable finance. Eligible courses or qualifications to be subsidised will be devised after taking into account views of relevant parties and other places' experiences. The scheme will last for three years with an estimated provision of \$200 million.

We will continue to capitalise on the enormous green finance opportunities presented by the country's green development, work closely with Mainland authorities and the industry, with a view to facilitating more entities to make use of Hong Kong's financial and professional services for green and sustainable investment, financing and certification to support green enterprises and projects in the Mainland. At the same time, we are promoting talent development and capacity building to tie in with the industry efforts on strengthening resilience to climate risks, as well as encouraging more financial institutions, professional service providers and external reviewers to set foot in Hong Kong and enhancing Hong Kong's attractiveness as a one-stop platform, directing green capital to and from the Mainland and promoting RMB internationalisation.

CHP notified of human case of avian influenza A(H3N8) in Mainland

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (April 27) received notification from the National Health Commission on a human case of avian influenza A(H3N8) in Henan Province, and again urged the public to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both

locally and during travel.

According to information from the National Health Commission, this is believed to be the first case of human infection with avian influenza A(H3N8) in the world. The case involves a 4-year-old boy living in Zhumadian City in Henan Province, who had exposure to live domestic poultry before onset. He developed symptoms on April 5 and was admitted for treatment on April 10. He is in critical condition. His relevant close contacts did not show any abnormalities during the medical surveillance period. Upon genetic analysis, the genes of the virus were determined to be of avian origin.

"All novel influenza A infections, including H3N8, are notifiable infectious diseases in Hong Kong," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Travellers to the Mainland or other affected areas must avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms. They should be alert to the presence of backyard poultry when visiting relatives and friends. They should also avoid purchasing live or freshly slaughtered poultry, and avoid touching poultry/birds or their droppings. They should strictly observe personal and hand hygiene when visiting any place with live poultry.

Travellers returning from affected areas should consult a doctor promptly if symptoms develop, and inform the doctor of their travel history for prompt diagnosis and treatment of potential diseases. It is essential to tell the doctor if they have seen any live poultry during travel, which may imply possible exposure to contaminated environments. This will enable the doctor to assess the possibility of avian influenza and arrange necessary investigations and appropriate treatment in a timely manner.

While local surveillance, prevention and control measures are in place, the CHP will remain vigilant and work closely with the World Health Organization and relevant health authorities to monitor the latest developments.

The public should maintain strict personal, hand, food and environmental hygiene and take heed of the advice below when handling poultry:

- Avoid touching poultry, birds, animals or their droppings;
- When buying live chickens, do not touch them and their droppings. Do not blow at their bottoms. Wash eggs with detergent if soiled with faecal matter and cook and consume the eggs immediately. Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling chickens and eggs;
- Eggs should be cooked well until the white and yolk become firm. Do not eat raw eggs or dip cooked food into any sauce with raw eggs. Poultry should be cooked thoroughly. If there is pinkish juice running from the cooked poultry or the middle part of its bone is still red, the poultry should be cooked again until fully done;
- Wash hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, before handling food or eating, and after going to the toilet, touching public installations or equipment such as escalator handrails, elevator control panels or door knobs, or when hands are dirtied by

- respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing; and
- Wear a mask if fever or respiratory symptoms develop, when going to a hospital or clinic, or while taking care of patients with fever or respiratory symptoms.

The public may visit the CHP's pages for more information: the [avian influenza](#) page, the weekly [Avian Influenza Report](#), [global statistics and affected areas](#) of avian influenza, the [Facebook Page](#) and the [YouTube Channel](#).

LCQ 13: Promoting development of youth uniformed groups

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Lam and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, in the Legislative Council today (April 27):

Question:

There are comments pointing out that promoting youth uniformed groups' exchanges with the Mainland will help the youth establish a positive outlook on life, nurture their values on patriotism, law-abidingness and discipline, as well as develop a team spirit. It will also enable such groups to have a good development. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information in each of the past four years in respect of each of the youth uniformed groups subvented by the Government: the number of members, the amount of subvention received, and other subsidies received (set out in a table);

(2) whether the Education Bureau will consider requesting schools to require that all students must join at least one youth uniformed group, with a view to cultivating in them good characters and correct values; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether the Government assisted students of youth uniformed groups in having exchanges with their Mainland counterparts in the past four years; if so, of the details, and whether it will provide further assistance to such groups (e.g. providing subsidies and carrying out relevant co-ordination work), so that such groups may deepen their exchanges with their Mainland counterparts; if it did not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Youth uniformed groups (UGs) are major partners of the Special Administrative Region Government in promoting youth development. The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) provides recurrent subvention to 11 youth UGs in the community to support the provision of informal education and training to young people which serves to help them foster positive values, strengthen leadership skills and attain whole-person development.

My reply to the Hon Andrew Lam's question is as follows:

(1) The funding provisions from the HAB for the relevant youth UGs in the past four years were as follows:

Youth UGs		Amount of recurrent subvention (\$) (Note 1)			
		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 (Note 2)	2021-22
1	Scout Association of Hong Kong	19,524,000	19,324,280	19,570,280	19,324,280
2	The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association	21,830,000	24,023,940	24,269,940	24,023,940
3	Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps	2,650,000	2,889,150	3,135,150	2,889,150
4	Hong Kong Sea Cadet Corps	2,990,000	3,264,502	3,510,502	3,264,502
5	Hong Kong Adventure Corps	2,520,000	2,740,434	2,986,434	2,740,434
6	Hong Kong Red Cross Youth	16,150,000	17,753,344	17,999,344	17,753,344
7	Hong Kong St. John Ambulance Brigade Youth Command	3,260,000	3,557,378	3,803,378	3,557,378
8	The Boys' Brigade, Hong Kong	4,790,000	5,530,868	5,776,868	5,530,868
9	The Girls' Brigade Hong Kong	2,420,000	2,930,036	3,176,036	2,930,036
10	Hong Kong Road Safety Patrol	2,480,000	2,675,479	2,921,479	2,675,479
11	Association of Hong Kong Flag-guards	1,800,000	2,235,172	2,481,172	2,235,172

The youth membership of the relevant youth UGs was set out as follows:

Youth UGs		Youth membership (Note 3)			
		Dec 31, 2018	Dec 31, 2019	Dec 31, 2020	Dec 31, 2021
1	Scout Association of Hong Kong	43 593	41 541	41 588	38 652
2	The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association	21 074	21 450	21 213	18 761
3	Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps	4 981	3 949	2 536	3 099
4	Hong Kong Sea Cadet Corps	2 645	2 251	2 251	1 664
5	Hong Kong Adventure Corps	6 329	5 574	4 882	3 833
6	Hong Kong Red Cross Youth	16 587	17 204	17 718	17 368
7	Hong Kong St. John Ambulance Brigade Youth Command	4 129	4 044	3 933	3 888
8	The Boys' Brigade, Hong Kong	10 179	7 594	7 525	7 351

9	The Girls' Brigade Hong Kong	1 232	1 373	1 799	1 997
10	Hong Kong Road Safety Patrol	7 075	6 460	5 216	4 841
11	Association of Hong Kong Flag- guards	7 923	8 567	9 010	9 009

(2) According to the information provided by the Education Bureau (EDB), secondary and primary schools in Hong Kong have all along arranged a wide range of extra-curricular activities, covering academic learning, sports, arts, interests and services, according to their school mission, school context and students' needs, so as to cater for students' different interests, unleash their potential, and promote whole-person development. Youth UGs are one of the extra-curricular activities. All kinds of extra-curricular activities help cultivate students' good character and proper values. Schools generally allow students to choose their favourite extra-curricular activities; some schools require students to participate in at least a certain type of extra-curricular activity, such as "One Life, One Sport and One Art" or a youth UG. Both arrangements are considered school-based extra-curricular activities that can achieve the goal of cultivating positive character and attitude. The EDB provides schools with various resources, such as the Life-wide Learning Grant, to support schools in organising more experiential learning activities outside the classroom (including youth UG activities) to enrich students' learning experiences.

(3) The current-term Government has strived to promote youth development by addressing young people's concerns about education, career pursuit and home ownership, and encouraging their participation in politics as well as public policy discussion and debate. Our vision is to instil in our young people a positive outlook on life, commitment to society, a sense of national identity, love for Hong Kong and an international perspective. In collaboration with non-governmental organisations, we support diverse development of young people, providing them with opportunities to participate in community affairs and serve the community, and encouraging them to broaden their horizons and enhance their understanding of national and world affairs.

In the past four years, a total of about 80 exchange programmes on the Mainland were organised by youth UGs subvented by the HAB for their members, including 12 activities on exchanges with Mainland groups held online in view of the pandemic, with participants exceeding 2 800. Some of these activities were subsidised under the Funding Scheme for Youth Exchange in the Mainland of the Youth Development Commission. These exchange programmes provided young people with opportunities to engage in exchanges on the Mainland which helped enhance their understanding of "one country, two systems", the Basic Law and national affairs, acquainted them with the prevailing economic, social and cultural landscapes of our country, as well as promoted their inclusiveness of different cultures through exchanges with young people from the Mainland.

Looking ahead, we will work closely with the youth UGs to support their ongoing youth work in our collaborative efforts to help young people adopt a positive attitude towards life and foster a new generation with strong commitment to society, a sense of national identity, love for Hong Kong and an international perspective.

Note 1: The above figures include the baseline subvention and the provisions for the Assistance Scheme for Needy Student Members provided by the HAB.

Note 2: In order to support youth UGs in coping with financial difficulties arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and procuring necessary anti-epidemic supplies so as to maintain basic operation, the HAB disbursed an additional one-off subsidy of about \$240,000 to each youth UG in 2020-21, totalling about \$3 million.

Note 3: The youth membership includes young people aged between 8 and 26.