

LCQ6: Commemorative activities for 80th anniversary of victory in War of Resistance

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Yung and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (February 26):

Question:

This year marks the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance, and it is learnt that the Government will host a series of commemorative activities. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it will set up a "Preparatory Committee for commemorative activities for the 80th anniversary of Hong Kong's victory in the War of Resistance" led by the Working Group on Patriotic Education, and extensively invite the participation of representatives of community organisations to co-ordinate the relevant activities; if so, of the expected time to commence such work;
- (2) of the key activities to be hosted to commemorate the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance, so as to strengthen the sense of patriotism among the public while disseminating the message of peace;
- (3) how it will take the opportunity to make good use of the rich resources of the history of the War of Resistance in Hong Kong to promote the development of red tourism; and
- (4) how it will collaborate with the relevant Central authorities and other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in jointly commemorating the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the relevant bureaux, a consolidated reply in response to the questions raised by the Hon Chan Yung is as follows:

This year marks the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance. The Chief Executive announced in the 2024 Policy Address that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will host commemorative activities to strengthen the sense of patriotism. In terms of implementation, the Working Group on Patriotic Education led by the Chief Secretary for Administration will co-ordinate relevant bureaux and

departments in launching a series of commemorative activities, including:

(a) The HKSAR Government will host a solemn official ceremony at the Hong Kong City Hall Memorial Garden on September 3, the Victory Day of the War of Resistance, to honour the occasion. The commemoration will feature a rendition of the national anthem, ceremonial flag raising, a Rifle Volley by the Police Rifle Squad, an observation of silence, and bowing in tribute. The attendance at the ceremony will include the Chief Executive and senior government officials, representatives of the organs of the Central People's Government in Hong Kong, former Chief Executives, members of the Executive Council, members of the Legislative Council, representatives of war veterans' groups, HKSAR deputies to the National People's Congress, HKSAR members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, representatives of District Councils, representatives of Heung Yee Kuk, representatives of district organisations, members of uniformed groups and youth groups, etc;

(b) With the funding and support from the Home Affairs Department, three major associations, namely the Hong Kong Island Federation, the Kowloon Federation of Associations and the New Territories Association of Societies, will organise activities on September 3 to commemorate the victory of the War of Resistance. Examples of these activities include a talk by veterans to recount their experiences during the War and a film show about the War, with a view to deepening the understanding among members of the public about the historical events of the War of Resistance on the Mainland and in Hong Kong and fostering their sense of patriotism;

(c) The Hong Kong Museum of History (HKMH) under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is currently liaising closely with the National Museum of China on co-organising a large-scale thematic exhibition scheduled to launch in early September for a period of about three months. The exhibition will mainly feature our country's unyielding spirit of resistance during the War, as well as contents on Hong Kong people's support for the Mainland compatriots, and the three years and eight months of Japanese occupation of Hong Kong, with a view to giving Hong Kong citizens (particularly the younger generation) a better understanding of the War of Resistance;

(d) The Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence (MWRCD) is planning to collaborate with the Guangdong Museum of Revolutionary History to jointly organise a thematic exhibition on the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance. The exhibition will focus on an overview of the anti war activities of the Chinese Communist Party in Guangdong Province and Hong Kong during the War of Resistance. Through the display of valuable exhibits, historical photographs and multi-media programmes, the exhibition aims to enlighten the public about the history of the War, thereby promoting and inheriting the spirit of patriotic education;

(e) The LCSD museums will also organise a diverse array of public and educational programmes, including thematic talks, workshops, field trips, and film screenings to raise public awareness of the history of the War of

Resistance;

(f) The LCSD will, from August to December, organise a thematic talk "Reapproaching the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong from interactive map, 1941-1945" and a book display "Days of War" at the Hong Kong Central Library, as well as book displays, photo exhibitions and thematic talks at public libraries in different districts to introduce relevant collections and information, so as to enable citizens to learn about the history of the War of Resistance as well as the unity and resilience of the Chinese people in the fight for peace. These include the thematic talk cum roving exhibition "War of Resistance in Hong Kong: Sai Kung" to be held in Sai Kung District, guided tours of the Hong Kong Sha Tau Kok Anti-war Memorial Hall to be held in North District, and thematic talk series "Wartime Sham Shui Po" to be held in Sham Shui Po District, etc;

(g) In terms of teachers and students, the Education Bureau (EDB) has always attached great emphasis on the education about the history of the War of Resistance, and continuously organises relevant activities for teachers and students to help them understand the history of the War and the heroic deeds of the martyrs, experience the indomitable spirit of the Chinese nation, learn to cherish peace through remembering history, as well as cultivate their sense of identity, belonging, responsibility and patriotic spirit. On teacher training activities, the EDB plans to organise an academic seminar on the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance, lecture on the contributions of the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column, visits to places such as the Chinese People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison Exhibition Center at Ngong Shuen Chau Barracks, the Hong Kong Sha Tau Kok Anti-Japanese War Memorial Hall, and the Wu Kau Tang Martyrs Memorial Garden, as well as a study tour for teachers in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area themed on the footprints in relation to the War of Resistance. On student activities, the EDB plans to roll out the "Visual Narrative of the War of Resistance: Territory-wide Creative Competition", the History e-Reading Award Scheme themed on the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance, the second "Learn from Museums – Novice Curator Training Programme" co-organised with the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence, as well as field study activities related to the history of the War of Resistance in both the local region and the Mainland; and

(h) The Information Services Department is actively planning to collaborate with relevant government organisations on programme production under the theme of "Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of Victory in the War of Resistance", so as to promote patriotic education through storytelling in a vivid manner.

To make good use of the abundant resources relating to the history of the War of Resistance in Hong Kong to promoting characteristic tourism, the Tourism Commission, in collaboration with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), has been taking forward the Enhancement of Hiking Trails (the Project) since 2018 to enhance the tourism supporting facilities of 20 hiking trails in country parks which are popular and with

tourism potential. The Project covers hiking trails relating to war history, namely Lion Rock Historic Walk, Shing Mun War Relics Trail and Luk Keng War Relics Trail. The AFCD completed the enhancement works at Lion Rock Historic Walk in December 2023, whereas those at Shing Mun War Relics Trail and Luk Keng War Relics Trail are expected to be completed progressively in 2026. In addition, the AFCD installed at the Robin's Nest Country Park interpretation panels about its war relics and the deeds of nearby villagers at the War of Resistance, and produced a video for broadcasting on social media platforms, thereby showcasing the history of the War of Resistance at the Robin's Nest Country Park. The HKSAR Government will continue to encourage the trade to make better use of the abundant resources relating to the history of the War of Resistance to develop more unique tourism products covering different themes of in-depth tours.

Besides, to preserve the history of the War of Resistance in Hong Kong, the MWRCDC has commenced relevant historical research with a view to providing related historical information for the War of Resistance heritage trails to be set up by responsible government departments in the future. The information will offer the public an insight into the history of the War of Resistance, and enrich their travel experience.

Government appoints Professor Tsui Lap-chee as expert advisor to Task Group on New Medical School

The Government announced today (February 26) the appointment of Professor Tsui Lap-chee as an expert advisor to the Task Group on New Medical School.

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, said, "Professor Tsui is an internationally renowned expert in the field of molecular human genetics, the incumbent Chair of the College Council of the Hong Kong Chu Hai College and the former President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, with extensive experience in leading both the higher education sector and the area of academic research. The next stage of the work of the Task Group will be to assess the proposals submitted by universities interested in establishing the new medical school according to the devised parameters. I am very confident that Professor Tsui will definitely be able to provide invaluable advice to the Task Group in its new stage of work, particularly in the consideration of the governance and scientific research development strategies of the new medical school."

The Chief Executive announced in his 2024 Policy Address that the Government supports the establishment of a third medical school by a local

university, with a view to nurturing more talented medical practitioners in support of the local healthcare system to provide quality service, while at the same time driving Hong Kong's development into an international medical training, research and innovation hub. The Government invited seasoned local, Mainland and overseas academics for medical teaching and university management, professionals, the Chairman of the Medical Council of Hong Kong and the President of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, together with relevant Directors of Bureaux and Heads of Departments of the Government, to form the Task Group. The Task Group is responsible for devising the direction and parameters for the new medical school, as well as selecting a suitable university for setting up the new medical school.

Since its establishment in October 2024, the Task Group has formulated the directions and parameters for establishing the new medical school, and [issued a letter of invitation in December last year to local universities interested in establishing the new medical school for submission of proposals by March 17 this year](#). In the next stage of the work of the Task Group, concrete criteria for assessing proposals will be formulated to ensure that a qualified and eligible university will be selected in a transparent and fair manner for the establishment of the new medical school. It is anticipated that the Task Group will complete its assessments and make recommendations to the Government within this year.

The biography of Professor Tsui is as follows:

Professor Tsui is an expert in the field of molecular human genetics with outstanding achievements in the realms of genetic research and medical innovation. Professor Tsui served as the 14th President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong and is the Founding President of the Hong Kong Academy of Sciences. He is also currently the Chairman of the University of Hong Kong Foundation for Educational Development and Research, and Emeritus University Professor at the University of Toronto.

The membership of the Task Group with effect from February 26, 2025, is as follows:

Co-chairmen

Secretary for Education
Secretary for Health

Alternate Co-chairmen

Permanent Secretary for Education/Under Secretary for Education
Permanent Secretary for Health/Under Secretary for Health

Expert advisors

Chairman of the Medical Council of Hong Kong
President of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (or representative)
Professor Nivritti Gajanan Patil
Professor Joseph Sung Jao-yiu

Professor Zhao Yupei
Professor Tsui Lap-chee *
Mr Philip Tsai Wing-chung

Official members

Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands) (or representative)
Permanent Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry (or representative)
Secretary-General of the University Grants Committee (or representative)
Director of Health (or representative)
Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority (or representative)
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)
Deputy Secretary for Health 3
Commissioner for Primary Healthcare (or representative)

* New appointment

LCQ22: COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

Following is a question by Professor the Hon Chan Wing-kwong and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (February 26):

Question:

To safeguard public health, the Government is implementing a territory-wide COVID-19 Vaccination Programme (the Vaccination Programme) free of charge for eligible persons. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of received vaccination doses and vaccination rates under the Vaccination Programme in the past two years; among them, the respective numbers of received doses and vaccination rates for initial and booster doses;

(2) of the respective numbers of received booster doses and booster vaccination rates in the past two years for various priority groups eligible for free booster vaccination, i.e. (i) older adults aged 50 or above (including those living in residential care homes), (ii) persons aged 18 to 49 years with underlying comorbidities, (iii) persons with immunocompromising conditions aged six months and above, (iv) pregnant women, and (v) healthcare workers;

(3) of the financial expenditure incurred by the Government in implementing the Vaccination Programme in each of the past two years;

(4) whether it knows the number of deaths due to COVID-19 infection in the past two years, and the number of COVID-19 vaccine doses received by the deceased prior to their death; and

(5) since the restoration of normalcy after the pandemic, what measures the Government has put in place to promote COVID-19 vaccination among the public, particularly high-risk groups, in order to effectively prevent COVID-19?

Reply:

President,

With the ever evolvement of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the prevention and treatment capacities of the local healthcare system and society as a whole have been enhanced significantly. COVID-19 has been managed as an upper respiratory tract illness by the Government since early 2023. Despite this, the World Health Organization (WHO) highlights that high-risk persons should receive COVID-19 booster doses at appropriate times to lower the risks of serious illness and death. With reference to the recommendations from the WHO as well as the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (JSC) under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health (DH), the Government is currently providing the JN.1 lineage COVID-19 vaccines for eligible individuals aged six months or above.

As the vast majority of the public had past COVID-19 infection, according to the recommendation of the JSC, the Government has simplified the arrangements for initial vaccination, which replaced the previous three-dose definition for initial vaccination, since August 19, 2024. Under the new arrangement, in general, persons aged five or above (regardless of their history of infection with COVID-19) are considered to have completed initial vaccination by receiving one dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. Persons aged six months to four years who have been infected with COVID-19 are considered to have completed initial vaccination by receiving one dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. For those who have not been infected, they should receive two or three doses of vaccines in accordance with the recommendations of the vaccine manufacturers to be considered as having completed initial vaccination. In addition, the JSC recommended that high-risk priority groups, including individuals aged 50 or above and those with chronic diseases, should receive a booster dose at least six months after the last dose or COVID-19 infection (whichever is later), regardless of the number of doses received previously, in order to enhance protection.

Between 2023 and 2024, the activity level of SARS-CoV-2 virus followed a cyclical pattern, with minor waves occurring every four to six months. For example, the virus became active in early January 2024 with a positive rate of 6.8 per cent among respiratory specimens, peaking at 16.8 per cent in early March before decreasing to lower levels in June. The subsequent wave peaked at 9.06 per cent from late July to early August before subsiding. As of the week ending on February 8, 2025, the positive rate for COVID-19 testing remained at a low level of 0.46 per cent. Regarding the monitoring of variant strains, the JN.1 and its descendant lineages were the most

prevalent variant strains.

The reply, in consultation with the DH and the Hospital Authority (HA), to the question regarding the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme raised by Professor the Hon Chan Wing-kwong is as follows:

(1) As at January 31, 2025, a total of more than 21 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered under the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. In 2023 and 2024, about 586 000 and about 222 000 doses were administered respectively. The definition for initial vaccination was updated since August 19, 2024. Starting from August 19, 2024, about 61 000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered, including about 1 000 initial doses and about 60 000 booster doses. The estimated proportion of people that completed COVID-19 initial vaccination in Hong Kong is about 94 per cent.

(2) According to the recommendation of the JSC, since April 20, 2023, citizens have to declare themselves as priority groups to continue receiving free boosters. Therefore, the DH only maintains records of the actual number of vaccinations for individuals who declared themselves as belonging to a priority group on or after April 20, 2023.

From April 20, 2023 to 2024, around 342 000 booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered for the self-reported priority groups. The vaccination figures broken down by the priority groups are as follows:

Self-reported priority group	Number of booster doses administered
Persons aged 50 or above and adult residents living in residential care homes	332 000
Healthcare workers	6 000
Persons aged 18 to 49 years with underlying comorbidities	3 000
Persons aged six months or above with immunocompromising conditions	1 000
Pregnant women	Less than 400
Total	Around 342 000

Note: Due to the lack of data on the population size of some priority groups, the vaccination rate cannot be calculated.

(3) The expenditure figures of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 (as at January 31, 2025) were \$230 million and \$124 million respectively.

(4) According to the data of the Deaths Registries, a total of 2 944 cases died of COVID-19 between January 2023 and December 2024, with over 98 per cent involving adults aged 50 or above, and among them, nearly 80 per cent had not received COVID-19 vaccination within six months prior to death. In addition, among those fatal cases with available information, nearly 90 per

cent had history of known chronic diseases. The data showed that timely booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines for high-risk persons help lower the risk of severe illness and death.

(5) Since the launch of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, the Government has set up an online booking system which is available around the clock. Members of the public may make a booking through the system for COVID-19 vaccination at Private Clinic COVID-19 Vaccination Stations, Children Community Vaccination Centre, designated general out-patient clinics under the HA, as well as designated Student Health Service Centres, Maternal and Child Health Centres or Elderly Health Centres under the DH. The Government also provides vaccination for adult residents of residential care homes (RCHs) for the elderly and RCHs for persons with disabilities through outreach services under the Residential Care Home Vaccination Programme.

The Centre for Health Protection has been disseminating health messages on prevention of communicable diseases and maintaining personal and environmental hygiene through various channels, such as TV and radio announcements in the public interest, social media, printed media, Health Education Infoline, media and radio interviews, advertisements on public transport, outdoor and digital media. The messages also cover the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. The Centre for Health Protection will continue to strengthen relevant publicity and health education through various channels. The DH has also encouraged and assisted the elderly in the community, especially elderly singletons, to receive necessary vaccines including COVID-19 vaccine via district networks, such as District Services and Community Care Teams. District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres under the Social Welfare Department, District Health Centres (DHCs) and DHC Expresses under the Health Bureau, as well as Elderly Health Centres under the DH, will also provide assistance to the elderly in need to make online bookings for COVID-19 vaccination.

In addition, the HA provides COVID-19 vaccination services at its 18 designated general out-patient clinics, 13 designated specialist out-patient clinics, the Children Community Vaccination Centre located at the Hong Kong Children's Hospital, as well as its staff vaccination depots. The HA also encourages eligible long-stay patients to receive COVID-19 vaccination to reduce the risk of severe cases and fatalities.

New application fee and raised visa fee for talent and capital investment admission schemes introduced

The 2025-26 Budget announced that a new application fee will be

introduced under various admission schemes to attract talent and capital investors, and the visa/entry permit issuance fees for approved applications will be raised based on the length of the limit of stay to peg to their costs and reflect the "user pays" principle. To implement these fees, the Immigration (Amendment) Regulation 2025 has been published in the Gazette and came into effect from 11am today (February 26) (commencement time).

With effect from the commencement time, principal applicants under specified admission schemes and their dependants will be required to pay an application fee of \$600 for each application under a specified admission scheme for entry, change of conditions of stay or extension of limit of stay; and the visa/entry permit fee for an approved application will be increased, based on the length of the limit of stay, from the original flat rate of \$230 to \$600 (with a limit of stay of 180 days or below) or \$1,300 (with a limit of stay of 181 days or more). Pursuant to the amended Immigration Regulations (Cap. 115 sub. leg. A), the Director of Immigration has specified that the above fees apply to the following admission schemes:

1. Top Talent Pass Scheme;
2. General Employment Policy;
3. Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals;
4. Quality Migrant Admission Scheme;
5. Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates;
6. Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents;
7. New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme;
8. Capital Investment Entrant Scheme;
9. Technology Talent Admission Scheme; and
10. Vocational Professionals Admission Scheme.

A Government spokesman said, "The various admission schemes for talent and capital investors have been well-received since their introduction or enhancement. The number of applications for different talent admission schemes has grown from around 58 000 in 2022 to more than 221 000 in 2023 and around 208 000 in 2024, representing an increase of more than 250 per cent compared with 2022. Processing such applications involved substantial administrative resources. With reference to the fees charged for similar applications in overseas jurisdictions, the Government has decided to introduce a universal application fee and raise the visa/entry permit issuance fees for applications under the specified schemes to recover as far as possible the administrative costs incurred in processing the applications.

"The Government will continue to review and enhance the various talent admission arrangements, promote Hong Kong's unique strengths and development opportunities, and provide comprehensive support services to incoming talent to attract global talent with diverse backgrounds to pursue development in Hong Kong. We are confident that the newly implemented measures would not affect Hong Kong's quest for talent," the spokesman added.

The existing fees applicable to other types of visas/entry permits other than those applied under the specified schemes remain unchanged.

The list of specified schemes and the fee structure have been uploaded to the dedicated website of the Immigration Department (ImmD) (www.immd.gov.hk/eng/specifiedschemes.html). For enquiries, please contact the ImmD by enquiry hotline (2824 6111), by fax (2877 7711) or by email (enquiry@immd.gov.hk).

LCQ19: Improving the Government's human resources planning

Following is a question by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (February 26):

Question:

It is learnt that the number of posts in the civil service establishment dropped from around 193 000 as at March 31, 2022 to 191 742 as at September 30 last year, while the civil service strength fell from around 176 000 to 172 499. On the other hand, there are views that the Government may further enhance its administrative efficiency by making good use of innovative technology and improving the existing human resources planning. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the Government will review the existing establishment structure and integrate posts with similar or overlapping functions as appropriate; if so, of the details and the implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that as indicated on November 20 last year in its reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council, the Government had started to provide a generative AI document processing copilot application (the AI application) developed by the Hong Kong Generative AI Research and Development Center for internal trial use by government staff to perform document processing work like drafting, translation and summarisation of documents, of the following information regarding the AI application: (i) the government departments using the AI application on a trial basis, (ii) the percentage of government documents drafted with the assistance of the AI application out of the total number of government documents and (iii) the Government's savings in time and manpower costs after using the AI application;

(3) whether the Government will further utilise the AI application to handle more routine document processing work so as to further release manpower; if so, of the details and the implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) whether the Government has currently formulated policies and measures to streamline the government structure and enhance administrative efficiency; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) whether the Government will consider setting up a high-level steering committee to assist itself in reviewing on a regular basis the establishment and functions of various government departments, as well as the application of various innovative technologies in government departments, and to make recommendations on the addition or deletion of posts within the establishment; if so, of the details and the implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Regarding the question raised by Hon Mrs Regina IP, we have consulted the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, and our consolidated reply is as follows:

(1), (4) & (5) The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) has been committed to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service, encouraging various policy bureaux/departments (B/Ds) to regularly review and appropriately deploy their manpower to effectively implement government policies and initiatives.

To strictly control the civil service establishment and ensure the sustainability of public finances, the Government has implemented the zero-growth policy in the overall civil service establishment since 2021-22. B/Ds have improved their work efficiency through re-organisation of work and internal redeployment, etc. It is anticipated that by March 31, 2025, the civil service establishment will have reduced, on a cumulative basis, by approximately 2 000 posts from the level as at end-March 2021.

The adjustment of the civil service establishment must adhere to the two principles of stability and sustainable development, balancing the manpower requirements of B/Ds to effectively provide existing and new services and the need to streamline the civil service. The current term Government will continue to strictly control the growth of the civil service establishment and optimise the use of manpower resources through the application of technology, for serving the society and citizens with dedication.

We have all along been mindful of the functions of different grades and ranks as to whether they are very similar or largely overlap, and will make adjustments or consolidation accordingly. We are also mindful of the need to update and adjust the functions of certain grades due to technology advancement. For instance, the demand for typing services has significantly dropped following the prevalence of the use of computers. As a result, the Government stopped the recruitment of Typists more than two decades ago and gradually re-appointed the serving Typists as Clerical Assistants through the In-service Appointment Scheme (IAS) and the provision of appropriate training. Apart from the continued delivery of clerical services, those

Clerical Assistants re-appointed from Typists also provide frontline customer services and carry out various supporting work at B/Ds. After multiple rounds of IAS and through natural wastage, the number of Typists, which once exceeded 3 000 at its peak, has been successfully reduced to some 120 at the end of last year. The functions of the Typists now remaining have also been adjusted. In addition to handling Chinese and English clerical work through the use of word-processing softwares, they perform data entry or other clerical duties in law enforcement departments or departments which process large amounts of personal data (e.g. Inland Revenue Department).

Individual civil service grades whose future manpower needs are uncertain, such as those with surplus staff or those undergoing institutional reviews, are classified as "Controlled Grades" by the CSB. These grades require the CSB's approval before open recruitment, which is not lightly granted unless they have clear prospect for development and the demand for manpower is obvious and certain. Under these "controlled" circumstances, B/Ds must seek alternative solutions to handle the responsibilities of these grades, including integrating the duties of the "Controlled Grades" with other grades.

The above-mentioned work has been carried out by the Government on a long-term basis without a fixed timeline.

The operation of B/Ds and the work of civil servants must keep pace with the times. The Supplement to the Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address has set out the initiative of promoting the adoption of management measures and digitalisation among B/Ds to reprioritise and re-organise their work, capitalise on technology solutions, and streamline work processes, with a view to optimising the use of the civil service manpower resources. With assistance from the Digital Policy Office (DPO), the CSB will drive these initiatives among B/Ds in 2025, with a view to deploying human resources more appropriately and enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service. The DPO will continue to lead various B/Ds in applying innovative technologies and accelerating the development of digital government. The DPO will also actively support the above-mentioned measures of promoting digitalisation for optimising the use of civil service manpower resources, thereby enhancing government efficiency and services.

(2) & (3) The Government has started the pilot use of a generative artificial intelligence document processing copilot application (the Application) developed by the Hong Kong Generative AI Research and Development Center (HKGAI) under InnoHK since mid-2024 to assist government officers in handling document processing tasks such as drafting, translation, and summarisation of documents. The DPO has invited all B/Ds to arrange their officers of different grades to participate in this pilot use exercise.

The Application is currently at the development stage. The purpose of conducting the pilot use exercise is to collect the government officers' feedback on using the Application according to their operational needs, thus facilitating HKGAI in further training and optimising its large language model and the Application. The DPO does not, at the current stage, maintain information on the percentage of documents processed in the pilot use against

all the government documents, as well as the time and manpower costs saved. In the longer term, the Application will help reduce the manpower required for government officers to handle general document processing tasks, allowing manpower to be deployed to other areas of need, thereby creating maximum value.

The DPO will continue to co-ordinate with various B/Ds to extend the pilot use of the Application to more government officers in handling the tasks of drafting, translation, and summarisation of documents, and through the collection of user feedback, to assist HKGAI in optimising the Application's performance in handling document processing work.