

LCQ8: Development of digital economy

Following is a question by the Hon Yung Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, in the Legislative Council today (May 26):

Question:

The "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" (the 14th Five-Year Plan) puts forward accelerating digitalisation development, including the creation of new advantages of a digital economy. The Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area) also puts forward strengthening cooperation in innovation and technology in the Greater Bay Area, and the authorities of both Hong Kong and the Guangdong Province have planned to jointly strengthen the innovation and development of the digital economy in the Greater Bay Area. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will, by drawing reference from documents such as the Implementation Plan for the Innovation and Development of Digital Economy Industries of the Shenzhen City (2021-2023), expeditiously formulate a blueprint for Hong Kong's development of digital economy with clear targets; if so, of the details and work schedule;

(2) in respect of strengthening the innovation and development of the digital economy in the Greater Bay Area, of the latest progress of the Government's work on facilitating the cross-boundary flow of the scientific research resources of Hong Kong's higher education institutions and scientific research institutes within the Greater Bay Area; whether it has formulated new plans for the coming three years to participate in developing the Greater Bay Area into a global hub for digital economy development; if so, of the details (including the timetable); and

(3) whether, in the coming year, it will formulate corresponding development strategies and plans in respect of the seven digital economy key industries (i.e. cloud computing, big data, Internet of Things, industrial Internet, blockchain, artificial intelligence, as well as virtual reality and augmented reality) as set out in the 14th Five-Year Plan; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Regarding the various parts of the question, our consolidated reply is as follows:

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has been actively promoting the development of digital economy. In December 2017, the Government published the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong (Blueprint), formulating the blueprint for the development of digital economy in Hong Kong and the building of a world-renowned Smart Hong Kong characterised by a flourishing economy and people's high quality of living. The Blueprint set out 76 initiatives under six smart areas, i.e. "Smart Mobility", "Smart Living", "Smart Environment", "Smart People", "Smart Government" and "Smart Economy", with a view to addressing city management challenges and improving people's livelihood through innovation and technology (I&T), and more than 40 initiatives have been completed.

In December 2020, the Government released the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong 2.0 (Blueprint 2.0), setting out over 130 smart city initiatives which continue to enhance and expand existing city management measures and services, hoping that members of the public can better perceive the benefits of smart city and I&T in their daily lives.

Besides, we have implemented as scheduled several digital infrastructure projects in the past three years, including the Next Generation Government Cloud and the Big Data Analytics Platform which commenced operation in September 2020, and the "iAM Smart" one-stop personalised digital services platform which was also launched in December of the same year. We also actively promote the opening up of data by public and private organisations in a bid to foster technological research and innovation, thereby bringing convenience and benefits to members of the public and assisting the industry in expanding business opportunities at the same time. Currently, more than 4 500 datasets are available on the webpage of the Government's Public Sector Information Portal, and over 10 billion downloads were recorded in 2020.

The "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" (the 14th Five-Year Plan) clearly supports Hong Kong's establishment of an international I&T hub and put forth nurturing and building up of emerging digital industries, including artificial intelligence (AI), big data, blockchain, cloud computing and cyber security etc. in the era of digital economy, thereby enhancing industry level, such as communication equipment, core electronic components and key software etc. Meanwhile, the National 14th Five-Year Plan also proposes high-quality Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) development, and supports Hong Kong's integration into national development, leveraging the complementary advantages of the Mainland.

To act in concert with the national development strategy to enable Hong Kong to better integrate into the overall development of the country, the HKSAR Government is taking forward a series of I&T infrastructure initiatives. The areas of development of these initiatives will align with the above emerging industries mentioned in the 14th Five-Year Plan in the age of digital economy, including the Cyberport expansion project that will strengthen its I&T ecosystem and continue to drive the development of cutting-edge technologies such as AI, big data and blockchain etc.; the Hong Kong-Shenzhen I&T Park that will focus on technology domains such as AI and

big data etc.; as well as the Phase 2 expansion of the Hong Kong Science Park project which will focus on the needs of research activities for technologies such as AI. The Blueprint 2.0 initiatives also make use of these digital technologies, including cloud computing, big data analytics, AI, blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), and 5G etc. to improve public services and stimulate the industry to develop more innovative technological applications.

Hong Kong all along has advantages in scientific research in the above technology areas. According to the university ranking published by Quacquarelli Symonds in 2021, five Hong Kong universities rank among the top one hundred in overall performance and their faculties of engineering and technology, demonstrating Hong Kong's strong capability in basic research. According to the finding as early as in 2018 by Scopus, the world's largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature, universities in Hong Kong as a whole ranked third globally in terms of producing the most highly cited and impactful research on AI. In addition, the City University of Hong Kong has established the State Key Laboratory of Terahertz and Millimeter Waves approved by the Ministry of Science and Technology. The City University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong have also participated respectively in the establishment of the GBA Joint Laboratory of Big Data Imaging and Communications, as approved to be set up by the Department of Science and Technology of Guangdong Province, led by the Shenzhen Academy of Information and Communications Technology, and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Joint Laboratory on Smart Cities led by the Shenzhen University.

Apart from the strength in scientific research capability, Hong Kong also has an edge in internationalisation and a robust intellectual property protection regime, while other GBA Mainland cities have capabilities in advanced manufacturing and commercialising research and development results. As a result, for more than 15 years, the HKSAR Government has been collaborating with the Guangdong Provincial and Shenzhen Municipal Governments through the Guangdong-Hong Kong Technology Cooperation Funding Scheme (TCFS) to enhance productivity and competitiveness of enterprises in Guangdong and Hong Kong. The themes of the 2020 TCFS are also in line with the emerging industries in the era of digital economy covered in the National 14th Five-Year Plan, such as new-generation information technology, AI, IoT, big data and cloud computing. The 2020 TCFS received a total of 211 project applications to be jointly funded by Guangdong/Shenzhen and Hong Kong. The Guangdong/Shenzhen authorities and the Innovation and Technology Commission will each conduct independent vetting of the eligible applications received, and compare the results to identify projects to be jointly supported afterwards.

The HKSAR Government will continue to facilitate effective flow of innovative elements, including talent, capital, goods and information etc., thereby promoting collaboration in scientific research and better leveraging the complementary advantages among different cities in the GBA. Government policy bureaux/departments and related organisations will actively collaborate with the relevant Mainland authorities with a view to fostering the development of digital economy and I&T in Hong Kong, and strive to build

Hong Kong into an international I&T hub.

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“Cruise-to-nowhere” itineraries can resume under set of health control protocols from end-July

The Government announced today (May 26) that cruise lines are expected to resume, for Hong Kong residents, "cruise-to-nowhere" (CTN) itineraries, which do not involve ports outside Hong Kong, at end-July 2021 the earliest on the condition that they strictly comply with a set of health precautionary measures specifically designed for cruise travel.

"With the stabilising COVID-19 epidemic situation in Hong Kong since mid-February this year, the public, the cruise trade and the tourism industry have strong aspirations for the gradual resumption of cruise travel which has been suspended for more than 15 months since February last year. The resumption of CTN itineraries under prudent health precautionary measures can strike a proper balance between public health protection on the one hand, and the public aspirations for some form of leisure travel on the other. CTN itineraries underpinned by health control safeguards will offer an additional safe vacation option for the community as from the coming summer," the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, said.

The health precautionary measures, which have been worked out in consultation with relevant bureaux and departments (B/Ds) as well as the cruise trade, include:

(a) all incoming crew members are required to comply with the prevailing quarantine and testing requirements for travellers entering Hong Kong (see Note 1);

(b) all crew members must be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines recognised by health authorities before commencement of a cruise journey, except for those not suitable to do so with valid medical proof. Non-local crew members who have not been vaccinated prior to entry into Hong Kong may receive vaccinations for free in Hong Kong, and they have to be fully vaccinated before they can serve on a cruise journey. Cruise lines will strictly implement the COVID-19 vaccination requirement for crew members;

(c) all fully vaccinated crew members are still required to undergo a

COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) nucleic acid test shoreside and obtain a negative result every 14 days. Meanwhile, crew members who are not suitable for vaccination due to medical grounds must undergo every seven days a COVID-19 PCR nucleic acid test shoreside and obtain a negative result, as well as undergo every three days testing at on-board facilities and obtain a negative result;

(d) all passengers must be fully vaccinated (see Note 2), except for those not suitable to do so with medical proof or aged below 16, before commencement of a cruise journey;

(e) all passengers have to undergo a COVID-19 PCR nucleic acid test within 48 hours prior to boarding and obtain a negative result;

(f) cruise lines are required to adopt a maximum 50 per cent passenger capacity on a cruise ship, comply with the respective sets of hygiene, social distancing and contact tracing measures for various similar premises and facilities in force under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), and promulgate contact tracing mechanism for journeys; and

(g) passengers are required to use the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application to scan the QR code of the cruise ship before boarding. After boarding, they must also follow the social distancing and contact tracing mechanism executed by the cruise lines.

There will be a robust contingency management mechanism catering for fluctuations of the local epidemic situation. In the event that there is a suspected case on board during a cruise journey, the journey will be suspended at once and the cruise ship will return to the cruise terminal in Hong Kong. Relevant B/Ds will invoke contingency management measures based on an epidemiological investigation and laboratory findings, having regard to the circumstances of the case and relevant health guidelines. Such measures may include requiring the concerned passengers and crew members to undergo testing, medical surveillance and/or quarantine.

"Given the nature of a cruise operation, considerable lead time is required for cruise lines to prepare for resumption of CTN itineraries. The announcement today enables the tourism industry, in particular cruise lines, to make preparations for the resumption immediately by arranging their cruise ships and crew members to come to Hong Kong. In fact, cruise lines interested in resuming CTN itineraries have already indicated that they will arrange crew members suitable for vaccination or those already vaccinated to serve in Hong Kong to the extent possible. Hong Kong residents who have yet to be vaccinated may wish to do so as soon as possible in order that they may join CTN itineraries. The relevant B/Ds will, in the meantime, continue to work in tandem with the cruise lines in the coming few weeks on the detailed execution plan and on-board inspections," Mr Yau said.

Relevant further information will also be uploaded to Tourism Commission's website before CTN itineraries resume.

Note 1: Such requirements include those under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) where applicable.

Note 2: For both the Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine (CoronaVac vaccine) and Fosun Pharma/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (Comirnaty vaccine), "fully vaccinated" in general means having received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine 14 clear days ago.

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LCQ13: Moral education

Following is a question by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 26):

Question:

It has been reported that recently there have been incidents of some secondary school students being alleged of jointly robbing a goldsmith shop and sneaking into school premises to commit burglary, arousing concerns among members of the community about the moral standards of students and the effectiveness of moral education in schools nowadays. Some members of the community consider that teachers shoulder heavy responsibilities for nurturing an able and virtuous next generation. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the details of the moral education curriculum in schools, including policy objectives, curriculum content and activities, staff establishment and expenditure, since Hong Kong's return to China;

(2) whether it has formulated key performance indicators for the moral education curriculum mentioned in (1); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as there are views that in recent years, the prevalence of hatred-inciting remarks and misleading messages on the Internet have had a negative impact on students, whether the Government has strengthened teacher training on moral education, including the technique on handling such remarks and messages, so that teachers can effectively instil positive values in students and help them nurture good character and conduct; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

There are social expectations that school education has an obligation to develop virtues in young people, teach them to appreciate positive values and attitudes, and promote their holistic growth so that they can become law-abiding, responsible, and good citizens who can contribute to society. It is indeed heartbreaking to see students engage in unlawful activities and bear criminal liability as a result. The reasons for students' involvement in unlawful activities are complicated and it is impossible to make generalisations. Students' behaviour is subject to the influence of schools, their families, peers, social atmosphere and media/online information. In the face of students' deviant behaviour or even involvement in unlawful and improper activities, schools, as a place for nurturing students and developing their moral values, should endeavour to help them rectify their misdemeanor regardless of the reasons behind and re-develop positive values and attitudes through a concerted effort by strengthening communication and co-operation with their parents and actively arranging for school social workers and external organisations to provide relevant guidance and support.

Our reply to the different parts of the question is as follows:

(1) The Education Bureau (EDB) attaches great importance to moral and civic education, and developing students' positive values. Through developing curriculum guides, providing teacher professional development programmes, producing learning and teaching resources and organising student activities, the EDB supports schools in holistically promoting values education both within and outside the classroom through the learning and teaching of various Key Learning Areas/subjects as well as Other Learning Experiences. All these efforts aim at creating a positive atmosphere in schools through a whole-school approach.

The curriculum guides for different learning stages set out clear recommendations on moral education for schools to follow. The Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide (2017) specifies that fostering children's moral development and teaching the concept of right and wrong should be one of the objectives of moral education and recommends that kindergartens should help children learn these concepts by practising through daily learning activities with the help of parents' participation. In the Basic Education Curriculum Guide (P1-P6) (2014) (the Guide), fostering students' ability in distinguishing right from wrong is one of the learning goals of the primary curriculum and the Guide also provides recommendations on implementation strategies and illustrative examples to help teachers plan their school-based curricula of values education. The Secondary Education Curriculum Guide (2017) for secondary schools further lists "strengthening values education" as one of the major renewed emphases in the secondary curriculum and provides schools with recommendations on the promotion of values education through whole-school curriculum planning. The Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework (2008) presents the "Proposed Major Learning Expectations" for

different learning stages with recommendations on the expected attitudes and behaviours of students.

To meet social changes and the development needs of students, the EDB has announced a set of priority values and attitudes including "Perseverance", "Respect for Others", "Responsibility", "National Identity", "Commitment", "Integrity", "Care for Others", "Law-abidingness" and "Empathy", which serve as the directions for schools to promote values education at various learning stages.

Moral and civic education is not an independent subject and could be implemented in different modes by schools. For example, schools can deliver their school-based life education lessons, guidance lessons and class teacher lessons whilst schools with religious backgrounds can foster students' values through Religious Studies, morning assemblies or religious activities. Schools should make reference to the relevant curriculum guides to plan appropriately and enhance school-based moral and civic education on an on-going basis, having regard to the schools' mission and characteristics as well as the development needs of their students. In addition, schools should organise life-wide learning activities such as seminars and service learning with the aim of developing future generations into citizens who are socially responsible and equipped with a sense of national identity, an affection for Hong Kong and international perspectives.

Besides, the EDB continues to produce learning and teaching materials covering "life event" teaching resources of different themes to enable teachers to conduct interactive learning with students in class. These include "stop school bullying (primary school)", "say 'no' to undesirable peers (primary school)", "upholding justice at the expense of friendship (reporting misconduct of good friends) (secondary school)" and "resisting undesirable trend in society (secondary school)". Schools should follow the directions of nurturing students' positive values and attitudes and make use of authentic topics to better co-ordinate subject teaching and cross-curricular learning activities, with a view to providing students with holistic learning experiences inside and outside the classroom and enhancing the connection among different domains to facilitate their whole-person development.

The EDB also attaches great importance to parents' participation. To support schools in promoting parent education and developing children's positive values and attitudes in collaboration with parents, the EDB has organised parents' talks, and produced animations, posters and parent booklets. Furthermore, we encourage schools to foster an atmosphere conducive to values education through the annual activity "My Pledge to Act". The theme "Be grateful and treasure what we have, stay positive and optimistic" has been adopted since the 2019/20 school year and this will continue into the 2021/22 school year. 610 and 521 schools commenced the related learning activities in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 school years respectively. Schools may also flexibly deploy the Life-wide Learning Grant provided annually by the EDB or apply to the Quality Education Fund for the "My Pledge to Act – Be grateful and treasure what we have, stay positive and optimistic" Funding

Programme for additional resources to promote values education-related learning activities. Relevant information has been uploaded to the EDB's webpage on moral and civic education:
www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/4-key-tasks/moral-civic/index.html.

Meanwhile, we continue to organise award schemes and a wide range of student guidance programmes/activities (e.g. the Understanding Adolescent Project for primary schools and the Enhanced Smart Teen Project for secondary schools) to enhance students' resilience and promote the spirit of caring, respect and self-discipline through adventure-based, team-building and problem-solving training as well as parent-child activities.

To optimise the curriculum, the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum (Task Force), which was set up by the EDB in November 2017, submitted its review report to the EDB in September 2020. The Task Force recommended the Government to update the Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework (2008); provide multifarious values education-related learning experiences in the curriculum to broaden students' perspective; provide different modes of professional development activities to enhance teachers' grasp of the goals and objectives of different facets of values education and deepen their understanding of the professional role of teachers; and prepare more resource materials to support teachers in developing the universal core values underpinning Chinese morals and culture. The related recommendations are in line with the on-going support measures for moral education undertaken by the EDB. The EDB accepted the directional recommendations set out in the report in December 2020. In the same month, the Curriculum Development Council set up the Standing Committee on Values Education to oversee the development of values education at the primary and secondary levels. We will continue to strengthen the work on the professional development of teachers as well as the development of teaching resources. Moreover, we have commenced the work of updating the Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework (2008) and the "Proposed Major Expected Learning Outcomes" in various key stages of learning to provide guidance for schools.

The on-going efforts to cultivate students' moral character mentioned above have become regular and on-going tasks of the EDB. The staffing expenditure involved has been subsumed under the EDB's overall expenditure and a breakdown is not available.

(2) Moral and civic education should be implemented through the integration of cognition, affection and action. The enrichment of cognition can help students identify the values and attitudes from life events and issues for making rational analyses and judgements. The nurturing of affection can develop students' empathy, which empowers them to uphold their values against challenges with perseverance and courage. Through action, students can build up and reinforce positive values and attitudes in real life situations. Noting that the level of reflection and improvement in attitudes and behaviours may vary among different students, it is difficult to formulate any key performance indicators.

To assist schools in gaining a clearer picture of students' performance

in the affective and social areas so that proper planning and follow-up actions can be implemented, the EDB provides schools with evaluation tools and data (e.g. the Assessment Program for Affective and Social Outcomes) to review the needs of students in whole-person development. Schools can also collect relevant information and data through daily observations and tools like school-based questionnaires, and the feedback collected will be reflected in the planning of values education which will benefit the sustainable development of related schools.

We have always been seeking to understand the quality of learning and teaching of schools (including the effectiveness of implementing values education) through different channels such as inspections and curriculum development visits, and will give concrete professional advice to schools according to schools' performance in learning and teaching.

(3) Among the five domains of moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic developments, moral development is regarded as the most important one. Nurturing students' moral character and proper conduct is an important mission of schools as well as the collective responsibility of all teaching staff. A whole-school approach is essential for creating a conducive atmosphere in schools to promote values education. The EDB attaches great importance to teacher training on moral education and organises a great variety of professional development activities for teachers including structured training such as short-term courses, seminars, conferences and workshops. Teachers of different posts and ranks (including newly-joined teachers, teachers of moral and civic education, teachers aspiring for promotion, principals and curriculum leaders) are provided with relevant professional development programmes on an on-going basis according to their needs and requirements of related work with a view to enhancing their knowledge and skills in implementing values education. Apart from enhancing teachers' understanding and skills in values education, the contents of these programmes also convey an important message that teachers' words and deeds have an impact on students' moral character, and reiterate that teaching by words and examples are equally important in values education.

With the advancement in information technology (IT) in today's society, the Internet has profound impact on students' minds, words and deeds. Therefore, the professional development programmes on values education organised by the EDB for teachers also cover topics on enhancing teachers' capability to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills as well as the positive values and attitudes to operate in the cyber world. Experts and organisations of relevant fields will be invited to provide talks and workshops on topics such as knowledge on cyber risks, personal privacy protection, handling cyber bullying and discerning the authenticity of information. This can help teachers design suitable values education curriculum and learning activities catering for students' developmental needs and needs in life. In this school year, the EDB and the Journalism Education Foundation are co-organising a series of seminars and workshops on media and information literacy to increase teachers' knowledge on the operation of the media, and also to enable teachers to handle information with critical thinking and guide students to use information and social media ethically

(e.g. do not forward unverified information at will, say "no" to cyber bullying). The related contents will also be used in developing appropriate learning and teaching materials to further support schools in implementing information/media literacy education. Furthermore, we have organised school networks to share good practices and visited schools to give advice and discuss with teachers on curriculum planning and teaching of values education, including the effective way to nurture students' moral character and positive values in an era of rapid IT development and promote the professional development of teachers.

Nurturing young people to distinguish right from wrong, be polite and abide by the rules and stay away from crime is a shared responsibility of every sector of society. Teachers' role modelling is of utmost importance to students' learning and growth. We appeal to different stakeholders in the community to work together to create a positive learning atmosphere and environment for the cultivation of positive values, attitudes and behaviours in students so that they can become persons of good character and conduct.