

LCQ18: Littering problem in the countryside

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Pierre Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (May 26):

Question:

It has been reported that quite a number of members of the public turned to the country parks and hiking trails for recreation and amenity since they could not travel abroad and some of the cultural, recreational and sports facilities had been closed amid the epidemic, thus aggravating the problem of littering in such places. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether litter collection in the various country parks and hiking trails is undertaken by the staff of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) or the staff of outsourced service contractors (contractors) engaged by the AFCD; of the number of persons carrying out such work in each month of the past three years;

(2) of the respective average (i) monthly and (ii) daily frequencies of litter collection carried out by the AFCD and/or its contractors in the various country parks and hiking trails in the past three years; if such figures are unavailable, whether it will compile such statistics;

(3) of the respective numbers of visitor arrivals to the various country parks and hiking trails as well as the quantities of litter collected therein, in each month of the past three years; if such figures are unavailable, whether it will compile such statistics;

(4) whether the AFCD will increase the frequency of and the manpower for litter collection in the various country parks and hiking trails, and step up law enforcement actions against littering in such places; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) given that the Government has reduced the numbers of litter bins and recycling bins in the various country parks in recent years to encourage visitors to "take their litter home with them", whether the Government has reviewed if such an arrangement has aggravated littering by visitors in the country parks; if it has reviewed and the outcome is in the affirmative, of the details; if the review outcome is in the negative, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government notices that there have been a considerable number of

members of the public visiting country parks and other countryside areas since the epidemic last year. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has stepped up patrol and litter cleaning efforts in country parks (including hiking trails and recreational sites) where there are more visitors. It has also been promoting the messages of keeping the environment of country parks clean and caring for the nature to visitors through various channels.

Our reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Chan is as follows:

(1) Litter collection in country parks (including hiking trails within country parks) is carried out by the AFCD staff and their cleaning service contractors in their respective responsible areas. As collection and disposal of litter in country parks form part of the AFCD's regular management work for country parks, there is no breakdown of the staff involved in such services. Meanwhile, the number of cleaning service contractor workers involved is about 140 each year. In addition to litter collection in country parks, they are also responsible for cleaning of related facilities such as toilets.

(2) and (3) The collection and disposal of litter in country parks form part of the AFCD's regular management work for country parks, which would be adjusted according to the actual needs in different locations. Consequently, there would be variations on the services and the AFCD does not compile statistics specifically on the daily and monthly frequency of litter collection in individual country parks and hiking trails. On the other hand, the AFCD would flexibly increase the frequency of litter collection in the light of the utilisation and hygiene conditions of the sites, particularly for those more popular with visitors. There are cleaning service contractor workers stationed at highly popular recreational sites to carry out the cleaning work. In addition, after long holidays and weekends, the AFCD would also flexibly deploy additional manpower to popular hiking trails to step up litter collection.

Over the past three years, the number of visitors and the amount of litter collected in all country parks in Hong Kong for each month are tabulated in Table 1 and Table 2 in Annex respectively. As many country parks in Hong Kong are geographically connected or very close to each other, it is difficult to clearly define which individual country parks the visitors have visited and from which the litter has been collected. Therefore, the department does not have the monthly breakdown of the visitor number and the amount of litter collected for individual country parks.

(4) Since the epidemic last year, the AFCD has been deploying resources agilely on litter collection in country parks by increasing the frequency and manpower of such services subject to the actual situation in popular locations and after long holidays or weekends, and stepping up litter cleaning effort along popular hiking trails and recreational sites.

In addition, the AFCD is committed to combating illegal activities in country parks so as to protect the natural environment. The AFCD staff conduct patrols in country parks and special areas in various districts to

monitor the ground situation and visitors' utilisation of related facilities. If irregularities such as littering are detected, the AFCD will take enforcement actions against the persons involved under the Country Parks and Special Areas Regulations (Cap. 208A) and other relevant legislation.

In the light that many members of the public have visited country parks since the epidemic last year, the AFCD has stepped up patrol and law enforcement at popular locations. The AFCD reviews and adjusts the patrol arrangements in country parks from time to time subject to the actual situation and arranges special operations at specific locations when necessary to combat the irregularities in country parks. Last year, the AFCD arranged 42 special operations. Verbal advice was given to country park visitors on keeping the environment clean and 77 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued against littering.

(5) The AFCD has been implementing the "Take Your Litter Home" publicity and education programme in collaboration with green groups and hiking groups since 2015, and has installed water filling stations in country parks. The programme enables public's participation in the protection of the countryside by nurturing their good habits of taking away their own litter after visiting the country parks and bringing their own reusable water bottles.

To tie in with the relevant publicity and education programme, litter bins and recycling bins along the hiking trails in country parks were removed by end of 2017 while there are still litter collection facilities at recreational sites (e.g. barbecue sites and campsites) for use by members of the public if needed. Although all barbecue sites and campsites in country parks are temporarily closed during the epidemic, in view of the increased number of visitors recently, the AFCD has adjusted the cordoned off area as needed to ensure that country park visitors could continue to use the litter collection facilities in some barbecue sites and campsites in order to maintain environmental hygiene. When patrolling the country parks, the AFCD staff would remind visitors to take away their litter and take appropriate enforcement actions against littering if detected.

The "Take Your Litter Home" publicity and education programme has been up and running for some time. It has been effective in enhancing the public awareness towards litter reduction and environmental conservation during their visits to the countryside. The overall amount of litter collected in country parks has been on a downward trend since 2017. The AFCD will continue to promote messages such as those related to hiking etiquette and caring for the nature through various channels from time to time as necessary.

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.

LCQ18: Littering problem in the countryside

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Pierre Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (May 26):

Question:

It has been reported that quite a number of members of the public turned to the country parks and hiking trails for recreation and amenity since they could not travel abroad and some of the cultural, recreational and sports facilities had been closed amid the epidemic, thus aggravating the problem of littering in such places. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether litter collection in the various country parks and hiking trails is undertaken by the staff of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) or the staff of outsourced service contractors (contractors) engaged by the AFCD; of the number of persons carrying out such work in each month of the past three years;

(2) of the respective average (i) monthly and (ii) daily frequencies of litter collection carried out by the AFCD and/or its contractors in the various country parks and hiking trails in the past three years; if such figures are unavailable, whether it will compile such statistics;

(3) of the respective numbers of visitor arrivals to the various country parks and hiking trails as well as the quantities of litter collected therein, in each month of the past three years; if such figures are unavailable, whether it will compile such statistics;

(4) whether the AFCD will increase the frequency of and the manpower for litter collection in the various country parks and hiking trails, and step up law enforcement actions against littering in such places; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) given that the Government has reduced the numbers of litter bins and recycling bins in the various country parks in recent years to encourage visitors to "take their litter home with them", whether the Government has reviewed if such an arrangement has aggravated littering by visitors in the country parks; if it has reviewed and the outcome is in the affirmative, of the details; if the review outcome is in the negative, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government notices that there have been a considerable number of

members of the public visiting country parks and other countryside areas since the epidemic last year. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has stepped up patrol and litter cleaning efforts in country parks (including hiking trails and recreational sites) where there are more visitors. It has also been promoting the messages of keeping the environment of country parks clean and caring for the nature to visitors through various channels.

Our reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Chan is as follows:

(1) Litter collection in country parks (including hiking trails within country parks) is carried out by the AFCD staff and their cleaning service contractors in their respective responsible areas. As collection and disposal of litter in country parks form part of the AFCD's regular management work for country parks, there is no breakdown of the staff involved in such services. Meanwhile, the number of cleaning service contractor workers involved is about 140 each year. In addition to litter collection in country parks, they are also responsible for cleaning of related facilities such as toilets.

(2) and (3) The collection and disposal of litter in country parks form part of the AFCD's regular management work for country parks, which would be adjusted according to the actual needs in different locations. Consequently, there would be variations on the services and the AFCD does not compile statistics specifically on the daily and monthly frequency of litter collection in individual country parks and hiking trails. On the other hand, the AFCD would flexibly increase the frequency of litter collection in the light of the utilisation and hygiene conditions of the sites, particularly for those more popular with visitors. There are cleaning service contractor workers stationed at highly popular recreational sites to carry out the cleaning work. In addition, after long holidays and weekends, the AFCD would also flexibly deploy additional manpower to popular hiking trails to step up litter collection.

Over the past three years, the number of visitors and the amount of litter collected in all country parks in Hong Kong for each month are tabulated in Table 1 and Table 2 in Annex respectively. As many country parks in Hong Kong are geographically connected or very close to each other, it is difficult to clearly define which individual country parks the visitors have visited and from which the litter has been collected. Therefore, the department does not have the monthly breakdown of the visitor number and the amount of litter collected for individual country parks.

(4) Since the epidemic last year, the AFCD has been deploying resources agilely on litter collection in country parks by increasing the frequency and manpower of such services subject to the actual situation in popular locations and after long holidays or weekends, and stepping up litter cleaning effort along popular hiking trails and recreational sites.

In addition, the AFCD is committed to combating illegal activities in country parks so as to protect the natural environment. The AFCD staff conduct patrols in country parks and special areas in various districts to

monitor the ground situation and visitors' utilisation of related facilities. If irregularities such as littering are detected, the AFCD will take enforcement actions against the persons involved under the Country Parks and Special Areas Regulations (Cap. 208A) and other relevant legislation.

In the light that many members of the public have visited country parks since the epidemic last year, the AFCD has stepped up patrol and law enforcement at popular locations. The AFCD reviews and adjusts the patrol arrangements in country parks from time to time subject to the actual situation and arranges special operations at specific locations when necessary to combat the irregularities in country parks. Last year, the AFCD arranged 42 special operations. Verbal advice was given to country park visitors on keeping the environment clean and 77 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued against littering.

(5) The AFCD has been implementing the "Take Your Litter Home" publicity and education programme in collaboration with green groups and hiking groups since 2015, and has installed water filling stations in country parks. The programme enables public's participation in the protection of the countryside by nurturing their good habits of taking away their own litter after visiting the country parks and bringing their own reusable water bottles.

To tie in with the relevant publicity and education programme, litter bins and recycling bins along the hiking trails in country parks were removed by end of 2017 while there are still litter collection facilities at recreational sites (e.g. barbecue sites and campsites) for use by members of the public if needed. Although all barbecue sites and campsites in country parks are temporarily closed during the epidemic, in view of the increased number of visitors recently, the AFCD has adjusted the cordoned off area as needed to ensure that country park visitors could continue to use the litter collection facilities in some barbecue sites and campsites in order to maintain environmental hygiene. When patrolling the country parks, the AFCD staff would remind visitors to take away their litter and take appropriate enforcement actions against littering if detected.

The "Take Your Litter Home" publicity and education programme has been up and running for some time. It has been effective in enhancing the public awareness towards litter reduction and environmental conservation during their visits to the countryside. The overall amount of litter collected in country parks has been on a downward trend since 2017. The AFCD will continue to promote messages such as those related to hiking etiquette and caring for the nature through various channels from time to time as necessary.

LCQ19: Combating advocacy of Hong Kong

independence in universities

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Priscilla Leung 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 in recent years, the executive committees of the students' unions (SUs) of a number of universities have publicly made remarks in support of "Hong Kong independence", self-determination etc. which violate the Constitution, the Basic Law, "one country, two systems" and the National Security Law for Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) in respect of the 10 publicly funded institutions (i.e. the eight universities funded through the University Grants Committee, The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts funded directly, and The Open University of Hong Kong, some courses and research projects of which are funded, by the Government), whether it knows the following information of each of the institutions: (i) whether the SU is an independently registered society or body corporate, (ii) whether the SU has used the facilities of the institution for purposes such as offices and democracy walls, and has been entrusted with the management rights of such facilities, (iii) whether the SU membership fees are collected by the institution on behalf of the SU, and (iv) whether it is set out in the institution's statutes that the SU's representatives are ex-officio members of its Council; and

(2) whether the Education Bureau gained last year an understanding from the aforesaid institutions about (i) how they had handled their conflicts with the SUs in respect of making remarks in support of Hong Kong independence, and (ii) the new measures put in place by them in recent years to combat the infiltration of the idea of Hong Kong independence into school campuses and to ensure that the facilities in school campuses would not be used by the SUs for the purpose of advocating Hong Kong independence?

Reply:

President,

(1) The eight University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities, The Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) and The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) are institutions established pursuant to their respective laws. In accordance with the powers vested upon Councils and procedures prescribed under these relevant laws, they handle management matters, including campus management and student affairs.

The students' unions (SUs) of the abovementioned institutions are not subordinate to their institutions, and operate independently in accordance

with their constitutions. The work relationship between the institutions and their SUs is part of the administration handled by the institutions individually and varies between the institutions. The institutions shall ensure that their operations comply with the law. As with other individuals, organisations and institutions, the SUs are required to abide by the laws of Hong Kong, which includes registering with the relevant authorities under applicable laws.

It is understood that the SUs of the City University of Hong Kong (CityU), the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), the Lingnan University (LU), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), OUHK and HKAPA are allowed to use and/or manage specific on-campus facilities. In terms of membership fee collection on behalf of the SUs, HKBU, LU, The Education University of Hong Kong, PolyU, HKUST and HKAPA currently have such an arrangement.

In accordance with the relevant laws of the institutions, the Presidents of the SUs of CityU, HKBU, LU and OUHK are ex-officio members of the Councils. There is no such arrangement for other institutions.

(2) The Government has all along been respecting institutional autonomy and academic freedom, and at the same time requesting the institutions to uphold good governance and accountability to the public while ensuring that their operations comply with the law and meet the interests of students and the community at large. With the implementation of The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (NSL), the institutions are introducing measures to enhance campus management and to require the SUs and their members to comply with the law including the NSL. The institutions shall also promote national security education to raise the awareness of national security and of the obligation to abide by the law among staff members and students. We note that some UGC-funded universities have recently issued statements on the administrative support and facility management matters for their SUs with a view to clarifying the work relationship and legal obligations between the institutions and their SUs.

As always, the Education Bureau will maintain close liaison with post-secondary education institutions to ensure that the latter's operations continue to meet the interests of the community at large, so as to enable them to focus on research and academic development, strive for academic excellence, and seize the unprecedented opportunities presented by the developments of our country and the region, and technological advancements.

LCQ19: Combating advocacy of Hong Kong

independence in universities

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Question:

It has been reported that in recent years, the executive committees of the students' unions (SUs) of a number of universities have publicly made remarks in support of "Hong Kong independence", self-determination etc. which violate the Constitution, the Basic Law, "one country, two systems" and the National Security Law for Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) in respect of the 10 publicly funded institutions (i.e. the eight universities funded through the University Grants Committee, The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts funded directly, and The Open University of Hong Kong, some courses and research projects of which are funded, by the Government), whether it knows the following information of each of the institutions: (i) whether the SU is an independently registered society or body corporate, (ii) whether the SU has used the facilities of the institution for purposes such as offices and democracy walls, and has been entrusted with the management rights of such facilities, (iii) whether the SU membership fees are collected by the institution on behalf of the SU, and (iv) whether it is set out in the institution's statutes that the SU's representatives are ex-officio members of its Council; and

(2) whether the Education Bureau gained last year an understanding from the aforesaid institutions about (i) how they had handled their conflicts with the SUs in respect of making remarks in support of Hong Kong independence, and (ii) the new measures put in place by them in recent years to combat the infiltration of the idea of Hong Kong independence into school campuses and to ensure that the facilities in school campuses would not be used by the SUs for the purpose of advocating Hong Kong independence?

Reply:

President,

(1) The eight University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities, The Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) and The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) are institutions established pursuant to their respective laws. In accordance with the powers vested upon Councils and procedures prescribed under these relevant laws, they handle management matters, including campus management and student affairs.

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with their constitutions. The work relationship between the institutions and their SUs is part of the administration handled by the institutions individually and varies between the institutions. The institutions shall ensure that their operations comply with the law. As with other individuals, organisations and institutions, the SUs are required to abide by the laws of Hong Kong, which includes registering with the relevant authorities under applicable laws.

It is understood that the SUs of the City University of Hong Kong (CityU), the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), the Lingnan University (LU), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), OUHK and HKAPA are allowed to use and/or manage specific on-campus facilities. In terms of membership fee collection on behalf of the SUs, HKBU, LU, The Education University of Hong Kong, PolyU, HKUST and HKAPA currently have such an arrangement.

In accordance with the relevant laws of the institutions, the Presidents of the SUs of CityU, HKBU, LU and OUHK are ex-officio members of the Councils. There is no such arrangement for other institutions.

(2) The Government has all along been respecting institutional autonomy and academic freedom, and at the same time requesting the institutions to uphold good governance and accountability to the public while ensuring that their operations comply with the law and meet the interests of students and the community at large. With the implementation of The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (NSL), the institutions are introducing measures to enhance campus management and to require the SUs and their members to comply with the law including the NSL. The institutions shall also promote national security education to raise the awareness of national security and of the obligation to abide by the law among staff members and students. We note that some UGC-funded universities have recently issued statements on the administrative support and facility management matters for their SUs with a view to clarifying the work relationship and legal obligations between the institutions and their SUs.

As always, the Education Bureau will maintain close liaison with post-secondary education institutions to ensure that the latter's operations continue to meet the interests of the community at large, so as to enable them to focus on research and academic development, strive for academic excellence, and seize the unprecedented opportunities presented by the developments of our country and the region, and technological advancements.