

SED's opening remarks at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the English translation of the opening remarks by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 12):

Chairman,

The total expenditure on education in 2019-20 is \$124 billion, which is higher than the 2018-19 revised estimate by over 12 per cent. Of this, the recurrent education expenditure increases by about 6 per cent to \$90.6 billion. Both the total and recurrent education expenditure account for more than one-fifth of the respective government expenditure and take up the largest share among all policy areas. The Government will continue to devote resources in enhancing the quality of education and providing students with quality education.

In 2019-20, we will take forward the following new measures announced in the Policy Address and Budget.

For primary and secondary education, we will implement the all-graduate teaching force policy, and carry out the "One Executive Officer for Each School" policy to increase the administrative support for public sector schools, Direct Subsidy Scheme schools and their management committees. In calculating promotion posts of public sector secondary schools, those regular teaching posts converted from the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant and the Career and Life Planning Grant will be accounted for. We will provide the Life-wide Learning Grant to promote life-wide learning with enhanced efforts. We will also enhance various support measures under integrated education policy to support students with special educational needs (SEN). Furthermore, we will provide additional resources to support parent education and continue to carry out various improvement projects of school premises. In addition, we consulted the Panel on Education in late March on the proposal of increasing the manpower at the middle management level and rationalising the salaries for school heads and deputy heads in public sector primary schools. We will soon submit the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee and the Finance Committee.

We will enhance the subsidy for kindergartens joining the kindergarten education scheme and admitting non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students, provide additional resources for NCS students with SEN and to support NCS students to use Chinese in learning Chinese History, and commission school-based professional support services for schools and kindergartens admitting NCS students from the 2019/20 to 2021/22 school years.

We propose injecting \$20 billion into the Research Endowment Fund, and setting up a \$3 billion Research Matching Grant Scheme. We will also introduce three new fellowship schemes for outstanding academics to support

research work and help retain talents. Moreover, we have earmarked \$16 billion for the University Grants Committee-funded universities to construct or renovate their campus facilities, including the acquisition of necessary research equipment.

We will expand the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors to self-financing sub-degree programmes, and regularise the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme as well as the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme.

As regards Vocational and Professional Education and Training, we will regularise the Pilot Training and Support Scheme with an increased quota. For the 2019/20 to 2021/22 academic years, we will introduce a new pilot incentive to employers participating in the workplace assessment from, and provide tuition fee subsidies to students admitted to designated professional part-time programmes offered by the Vocational Training Council.

Furthermore, we will provide a support grant of \$2,500 for financially needy students, and pay the examination fees for school candidates sitting for the 2020 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, as relief support measures.

Chairman, my colleagues and I will be happy to answer further questions from Members. Thank you, Chairman.

Compensation levels for work injuries and occupational diseases increased and list of medical appliances for pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma sufferers expanded

The levels of compensation for employees injured at work or suffering from prescribed occupational diseases under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (ECO) or family members of deceased employees, persons suffering from pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma or family members of persons who die as a result of these diseases, and persons suffering from occupational deafness, will be increased on April 26. The list of medical appliances applicable to sufferers of pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma will also be expanded on the same day.

The Legislative Council passed three resolutions on April 3 to increase the levels of 18 compensation items under the ECO, the Pneumoconiosis and Mesothelioma (Compensation) Ordinance (PMCO), and the Occupational Deafness

(Compensation) Ordinance (ODCO), and to expand the list of medical appliances under the PMCO. The amendments were gazetted today (April 12) and will become effective from April 26.

"Under the established mechanism, the levels of compensation under the ECO, the PMCO and the ODCO are adjusted every two years where appropriate. Adjustments for most compensation items, if required, are normally made in the light of wage movement as reflected by the Nominal Wage Index or the price movement as reflected by the Consumer Price Index (A) in the relevant period, whereas the levels of some compensation items are adjusted having regard to other relevant factors," a spokesman for the Labour Department (LD) said.

As a result of this adjustment, the levels of 18 compensation items under the three Ordinances will be increased by 4.34 per cent to 81.47 per cent (see details in the Appendix).

Moreover, the list of medical appliances applicable to sufferers of pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma under the PMCO will be expanded. Two new items will be added, namely the non-invasive positive pressure ventilation device (and a humidifier when used with the device) and accessories, as well as the sputum suction device and accessories. Under the PMCO, an eligible person who suffers from pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma is entitled to the reasonable expenses of the use or supply of medical appliances listed in the Ordinance.

"The increased levels of compensation and the expanded list of medical appliances will enhance the protection for employees injured at work or sufferers of occupational diseases as well as family members of deceased employees or persons who die of work injuries or occupational diseases," the LD's spokesman added.

Construction and operation of offshore Liquefied Natural Gas terminal east of Soko Islands proposed

The Government intends to allow Castle Peak Power Company Limited and The Hongkong Electric Company Limited to construct and operate an offshore Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal in the waters to the east of the Soko Islands. The terminal will enable a Floating Storage and Regasification Unit vessel (FSRU vessel) and an LNG carrier to be moored at a double berth jetty. The regasified LNG from the FSRU vessel will be supplied to the gas receiving stations at the Black Point Power Station (BPPS) and the Lamma Power Station (LPS) via two separate subsea gas pipelines. The extent of the area of foreshore and seabed affected is described in a notice published in the

[Government Gazette](#) today (April 12).

The proposed works include the construction of a double berth jetty and its associated facilities, as well as two subsea gas pipelines connecting the jetty to the BPPS and to the LPS with lengths of approximately 45 kilometres and 18 kilometres respectively. The total area of foreshore and sea-bed affected by the works is approximately 68.5 hectares. The proposed works are scheduled for commencement in late 2019 and completion by 2020 or 2021.

The notice and the related plan are posted near the site. The plan is also available for inspection at:

- * Survey and Mapping Office of the Lands Department (23/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong) (where copies can be purchased on order);
- * Islands District Office (20/F, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong);
- * Tuen Mun Home Affairs Enquiry Centre of the Tuen Mun District Office (2/F, Tuen Mun Government Offices, 1 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun, New Territories); and
- * Lands Department's website (www.landso.gov.hk) under Government Notices.

Any person who considers that he or she has an interest, right or easement in or over the foreshore and sea-bed involved may submit a written objection to the Director of Lands, 20/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong, within two months from the above-mentioned date, i.e. on or before June 12. The notice of such objection shall describe the interest, right or easement of the objector and the manner in which he or she will be allegedly affected.

[Lifesaving services suspended at Castle Peak Beach](#)

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (April 12) that due to an insufficient number of lifeguards on duty, the lifesaving services at Castle Peak Beach in Tuen Mun District is suspended until further notice.

First aid service will be maintained at the beach.

Vacancy in Yuen Long District Council

The Government declared by notice in the Gazette today (April 12) the vacancy of an elected seat in the Yuen Long District Council Shap Pat Heung West Constituency.

As Mr Ching Chan-ming has become an ex-officio member of the Yuen Long District Council by virtue of holding office as the Chairman of the Shap Pat Heung Rural Committee, his office as an elected member of the Yuen Long District Council Shap Pat Heung West Constituency became vacant on March 31, 2019, pursuant to sections 10 and 26(b) of the District Councils Ordinance (Cap 547).