

LCQ4: Cross-boundary vehicles

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Yiu-chung and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 23):

Question:

Over the past decade, there has been a persistent growth in the number of cross-boundary vehicles entering Hong Kong, with that of private cars increasing by nearly 50 per cent. The number of cross-boundary vehicles entering Hong Kong is expected to increase further in tandem with the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) within this year. Some members of the public are therefore concerned that the problem of local traffic congestion will become increasingly serious. They are also worried that the persistent increase in the quotas for cross-boundary vehicles will overload the local traffic network further, make the shortage of parking spaces more acute, and result in more traffic accidents. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of cross-boundary vehicles holding the International Circulation Permits issued by the Transport Department and the vehicle trips they made in Hong Kong, in each of the past five years, with a breakdown by vehicle class and original place of registration; whether it has estimated respectively the quotas for cross-boundary vehicles to be permitted to enter Hong Kong using HZMB and the vehicle trips to be made by such vehicles in Hong Kong in the coming five years, with a breakdown by vehicle class and original place of registration (i.e. Macao and Guangdong Province);

(2) as the problem of local traffic congestion has become increasingly serious, coupled with the commissioning of HZMB within this year, and an implementation date has not been fixed for the Ad Hoc Quota Trial Scheme for Cross-boundary Private Cars (Second Phase), whether the authorities have assessed the changes in vehicle trips to be made by cross-boundary vehicles in Hong Kong in the coming five to 10 years; if not, whether the authorities will conduct an assessment expeditiously; whether they will consider lowering the quotas for cross-boundary vehicles; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that, and the measures to prevent the problem of local traffic congestion from being aggravated further by an excessive number of cross-boundary vehicles; and

(3) of the respective numbers of drivers of cross-boundary vehicles prosecuted for various kinds of traffic offences in each of the past five years; whether it will introduce measures to enhance the road safety awareness among Mainland drivers when they drive cross-boundary vehicles in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), which is the first cross-boundary land-based connection linking Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Macao, will facilitate Hong Kong citizens to travel to the Mainland and Macao and bring strategic significance for the development of both Hong Kong and the Bay Area.

Cross-boundary vehicles using the HZMB to travel to the three places, except Hong Kong goods vehicles travelling to the Mainland, Hong Kong private cars joining the Macao Port Park-and-Ride Scheme and cross-boundary shuttle buses, are subject to the regulation of quota system. Cross-boundary vehicles with quota are required to apply for the Close Road Permits for Cross-boundary Vehicles (CRP) from the Transport Department (TD). According to the statistics kept by the TD, as of December 31, 2017, a total of some 36 150 cross-boundary vehicles (including cross-boundary private cars, Mainland cross-boundary goods vehicles, cross-boundary hire cars and cross-boundary coaches) have obtained quota and the CRP, whilst most of them (about 32 000, i.e. 88 per cent of the total number) being local vehicles registered in Hong Kong. Non-local cross-boundary vehicles merely amounted to around 4 200, accounting for about 12 per cent of the total number.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Leung Yiu-chung's question is as follows:

(1) Quota holder of non-commercial Mainland vehicles are required to apply for International Circulation Permits (ICPs), in addition to the CRP, from TD whose validity period does not exceed 12 months. In the past five years, the number of Mainland non-commercial cross-boundary vehicles holding valid ICPs has maintained at around 3 000 per year (detailed figures in Annex). The TD does not keep information on the number of vehicle trips of such vehicles in Hong Kong.

According to the transport arrangements as concluded by the three governments, the additional quota for non-local cross-boundary vehicles travelling to Hong Kong via the HZMB comprises a quota of 1 000 for Mainland cross-boundary private cars, 600 for Macao cross-boundary private cars, and 16 for Macao cross-boundary coaches. A new additional quota of 150 was permitted for cross-boundary coaches and hire cars travelling between Guangdong and Hong Kong respectively which are operated by joint venture companies of the two places and use local vehicles registered in Hong Kong. The number of quota for Mainland cross-boundary goods vehicles will not be increased upon the commissioning of the HZMB and will remain unchanged at 800. The governments of Hong Kong and Macao are discussing the quota distribution and detailed arrangements regarding cross-boundary hire cars and goods vehicles for both places.

Upon the commissioning of the HZMB, the three governments will review in a timely manner the arrangements and number of quota for the cross-boundary vehicles in the light of actual circumstances, thereby leading to changes to the number of vehicle trips. Currently, we do not have any estimation on the number of vehicle trips for cross-boundary vehicles entering Hong Kong via the HZMB in the coming five years.

(2) As regards the impact of non-local cross-boundary vehicles on the road traffic of Hong Kong, as of December 31, 2017, the total number of non-local cross-boundary vehicles is less than 1 per cent as compared with the local vehicles registered in Hong Kong, and hence the impact is not significant.

The Government will closely monitor the operation and traffic conditions of the Hong Kong Port and roads in its vicinity upon the commissioning of the HZMB. The Highways Department is striving for early completion of the southern and northern sections of the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link (TM-CLKL) which provides the most direct route between the Northwest New Territories and the HZMB, the Airport, as well as the North Lantau. To strengthen the preparedness for the increased traffic flow during the initial period upon the commissioning of HZMB and to take precautionary measures to minimise the impact of traffic incidents on the relevant roads, the Government will consider traffic arrangements for that initial period in a prudent and practical manner so as to ensure normal operation of the road networks around the Hong Kong Port, the Airport and Tung Chung. The TD will adopt temporary traffic arrangements, where necessary, to allow some of the cross-boundary and local vehicles to use individual link roads in an orderly manner, and will announce any such arrangements as soon as possible.

Moreover, we have been striving to tackle the problem of traffic congestion in Hong Kong. The Government is taking forward the 12 short-, medium- and long-term measures recommended by the Transport Advisory Committee in its Report on Study of Road Traffic Congestion in Hong Kong in an orderly manner, including the study of measures to contain private car growth.

(3) According to the traffic accidents statistics of the past five years, the accident rate of Mainland cross-boundary private cars has been far lower than that of local private cars. Taking the figure in 2017 as an example, the average accident rate of the Mainland cross-boundary private cars is 2.2 vehicles (per 1 000 vehicles) which is lower than the corresponding figure of 15.8 (per 1 000 vehicles) of local private cars. The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) does not keep the breakdown of drivers involved in various traffic offences, as well as the number of related traffic offence and prosecution figures.

We have been conducting promotion and education work to further raise the road safety awareness of non-local cross-boundary vehicle drivers. Non-local cross-boundary vehicle drivers must obtain valid driving licenses when they drive in Hong Kong. The TD will distribute the Road User Code (the Code) to the applicants for driving licences when issuing the licences. The Code contains in detail the rules, instructions and information that should be known by road users in Hong Kong. Besides, the TD and the HKPF, in collaboration with the Road Safety Council, have been carrying out promotion and education activities to promote road safety and good driving manner among drivers.

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Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the email concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the email should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

[LCQ3: Foreign domestic helpers congregating in public places during holidays](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Yung Hoi-yan and a reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (May 23):

Question:

At present, there are over 350 000 foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) in Hong Kong. During holidays, a large number of FDHs congregate in public places, such as parks, footbridge passages and places under flyovers. They sit, eat and sleep on the ground, thus affecting the daily lives of the public, the operation of shops and the environmental hygiene in public places. The problem has persisted for many years and shows a worsening trend. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) Whether it knows the details (to be set out by District Council district) of various popular gathering places for FDHs during holidays, including the

average number of FDHs gathering, the duration of gathering, the general activities conducted by FDHs, and the number of personnel deployed by the various government departments to station in those places during the relevant periods; if it does not have such information, of the reasons for that and whether it will collect such information; the respective numbers of the various kinds of relevant complaints received by the authorities, and the respective numbers of FDHs who were given verbal warnings, issued penalty tickets, served summons and convicted for the various types of law-breaking acts, in each of the past three years;

(2) Given that the Government launched a scheme in 1994 to establish centres for FDHs under which the premises on loan by seven schools during weekends were used as activity centres for FDHs, but only one centre remains in operation at present, of the current or past details of each of the centres, including the years in which they were opened and closed down, the facilities provided therein, weekly opening hours and average utilisation rates, as well as reasons for closure; whether the authorities have reviewed the objectives of the scheme, its operational difficulties and effectiveness; if so, of the outcome and the improvement measures; whether the authorities will consider setting up more centres in various districts for convenient use by FDHs; and

(3) On the premise of balancing the rights of both FDHs and members of the public to use public places and the related obligations, of the authorities' new thinking on alleviating the problem caused by the congregation of FDHs in public places during holidays?

Reply:

President,

Currently, there are almost 380 000 foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) working in Hong Kong. FDHs assist local families in performing household chores and taking care of their children and elderly, thereby unleashing the potential of our local labour force and contributing significantly to Hong Kong's development. The Government has strived to enhance the protection and support for FDHs through various means, such as publicity and educational activities, in order to maintain Hong Kong as an attractive place for FDHs to work in.

A consolidated reply in consultation with the concerned bureaux and departments to the sub-questions raised by the Member is set out as follows:

(1) The Government does not maintain detailed statistics on the gathering of FDHs in public places during holidays. Generally speaking, FDHs tend to gather during the daytime on Saturdays and Sundays in parks or footbridges in the Central and Western District and Yau Tsim Mong District, Victoria Park and its nearby areas in Wai Chai District, and areas under Kwai Chung Road Flyover in Mei Foo for social or religious gatherings and activities. Government departments do not specially deploy personnel to station at FDH gathering places.

The number of complaints received by the Leisure and Cultural Services

Department (LCSD) relating to the gathering of FDHs in LCSD facilities during holidays, the numbers of cases of verbal warnings, penalty tickets and summonses issued and the number of convictions in the past three years are at the Annex. Other Government departments do not maintain the relevant statistical breakdowns on cases relating to FDHs.

(2) In 1994, the Government, with the co-operation of various bureaux and departments (including the then Urban Services Department (now the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)), the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), the then Education Department (now the Education Bureau), the Transport Department and the Home Affairs Bureau/Home Affairs Department), leased a former school site in Kennedy Town to the Hong Kong Bayanihan Trust (the Trust) to set up an Overseas Domestic Helpers Centre (the Centre) for FDHs to gather and organise activities on their rest days. The Trust is a non-profit making organisation formed by a group of Filipino businessmen in Hong Kong. The finance, promotion and management of the Centre are fully undertaken by the Trust. The Centre opens daily except Fridays (9am to 5pm from Monday to Thursday; 9am to 6pm on Saturday and 9am to 7pm on Sunday), providing facilities such as auditorium, classrooms, library, music room, photocopying machines, etc. The Centre has been operating till now, attracting up to 1 800 FDHs to use its facilities on every Sunday and public holiday. According to the arrangement, the Trust can, subject to demand and practical situation, apply directly to six schools for organising activities in their venues on Sundays. The Government has no plan to set up additional Centres at this stage.

(3) The problems caused by the gathering of FDHs involve various law enforcement agencies such as the FEHD, LCSD, Immigration Department (ImmD) and HKPF. The District Offices will, in light of the requests by the relevant District Councils (DCs), local personalities and bureaux/departments, liaise and co-ordinate, where necessary, with the enforcement agencies in the districts to conduct joint operations in accordance with their respective functions.

In the joint operation, the District Offices will also, together with the law enforcement agencies concerned, educate relevant persons and liaise with relevant FDHs' associations as necessary to address the said problems. For instance, there are cases where illegal catering by FDHs has been found in and outside Victoria Park. The Wan Chai District Management Committee, in conjunction with the FEHD, LCSD, ImmD, HKPF and DC members, distributed leaflets to FDHs in Victoria Park and the nearby areas to remind them not to carry out hawking activities, illegal catering and obstruct public pedestrian walkways.

Apart from gathering in public places, same as other members of the public and/or organisations, individual FDHs and/or FDH organisations could, subject to meeting the relevant venue hiring conditions, book different public venues and facilities (such as sports and cultural venues and community hall facilities) from relevant departments for use or organisation of various kinds of activities.

LCQ2: Measures to improve reception of visitors to Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai and a reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, in the Legislative Council today (May 23):

Question:

Since 2017, there has been a continued rebound in visitor arrivals to Hong Kong, reversing the downward trend since 2015 and bringing economic benefits to the local tourism and related sectors (including the retailing, catering and transport sectors). The visitor flows in districts frequented by visitors have also increased consequently. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the authorities have, since 2017, stepped up the relevant efforts in districts frequented by visitors to Hong Kong in response to the rebound in visitor arrivals, including deploying additional manpower to clean the streets more frequently and assigning additional patrolling police officers to maintain law and order; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will comprehensively review and improve the current measure of deploying District Tourism Ambassadors (DTAs) to station in Kowloon City District, including selecting candidates more stringently in the recruitment of DTAs, strengthening the training, supervision and management of those recruited, expanding their duties (e.g. answering visitors' enquiries in addition to calling upon the visitors to keep places clean and maintain smooth passages), as well as extending the measure to other districts frequented by visitors, with a view to reducing the inconvenience caused by visitors to the residents; and

(3) whether it has drawn up plans that may effectively divert visitors to various districts throughout the territory (e.g. by distributing at boundary control points leaflets on the characteristics of places in Hong Kong other than those tourist hot spots, so as to attract visitors to those places), thereby allowing tourism to bring benefits to local economy and, at the same time, minimising the inconvenience caused to certain districts by over-concentration of visitors?

Reply:

President,

The tourism industry, accounting for 5 per cent of our Gross Domestic

Product and providing nearly 260 000 employment opportunities for people at different levels, is one of the important industries of Hong Kong. In recent years, thanks to the concerted efforts of the Government and various parties, coupled with the improvement in the external environment, the tourism industry has regained growth. In 2017, total visitor arrivals to Hong Kong rose by 3.2 per cent year-on-year. We are glad to see a rebound in visitor arrivals, but at the same time will continue to steadfastly enhance the infrastructures and services of Hong Kong's tourism industry.

As regards the question raised by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai, with the relevant bureaux and departments consulted, my reply is as follows:

(1) The Hon Shiu Ka-fai asked whether the Government has strengthened district work in response to the rebound in visitor arrivals. My answer is affirmative, particularly with various arrangements already made to co-ordinate departments' efforts. Before peak periods of Mainland visitor arrivals, including the Chinese New Year and National Day Golden Weeks, the Tourism Commission convenes inter-departmental meetings to remind the departments concerned to strengthen visitor crowd control measures. It also maintains close liaison with District Offices to understand the situation of visitors' activities in different districts so as to make deployment and respond accordingly.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department enhances the cleansing of streets and public facilities such as public toilets at popular gathering spots for visitors to keep the cityscape clean. It also calls upon members of the public and visitors to maintain environmental hygiene through various channels, including its website and public transport.

The Police deploys additional manpower to ensure smooth traffic flow and maintain public order at boundary control points, major tourist spots and shopping hotspots. During major festivals and holidays, departments including the Police, the Immigration Department, the Customs and Excise Department, etc strengthen the monitoring of land boundary control points, maintain liaison with the relevant authorities of the Mainland and, when necessary, implement contingency measures.

Furthermore, the Government has adopted various targeted measures to minimise the impact brought about by inbound tour groups to the community. Such measures include encouraging coaches to use legal parking spaces, urging the trade to maintain order when receiving tour groups as well as make good use of information technology to strengthen visitor and vehicular flow control, etc. From time to time, the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) also conducts on-site inspections, and issues circulars to and holds talks for the trade to appeal for their proper management of tour groups.

(2) To alleviate the impact brought about by inbound tour groups to Kowloon City, the Kowloon City District Office (KCDO) has recruited District Tourism Ambassadors (DTAs), progressively increased to 60, on a part-time basis with the funding from the District-led Actions Scheme since October 2016. DTAs

remind visitors to keep the environment clean and passage clear, and advise coach drivers not to pick up, drop off or park illegally, at popular gathering spots for visitors. When necessary, they call upon law enforcement agencies to take follow-up actions on-site. The KCDO has also invited the Police and TIC to provide DTAs with safety instructions and practical information about inbound travel to strengthen training by enhancing their skills of handling different situations.

(3) Last October, the Government published the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry. One of the strategies is to nurture and develop tourism products and initiatives with local and international characteristics to cater for the preferences of different visitor segments. The aim is essentially to divert visitors to different districts of Hong Kong, thereby alleviating the congestion at tourist hotspots. For instance, last month, the Government finished the revitalisation works of the Dr Sun Yat-sen Historical Trail. The Trail, together with the PMQ, "Old Town Central" campaign launched by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), as well as "Tai Kwun" to be opened later this month, will help promote the Central and Western District as a district of cultural and heritage tourism. In addition, the Government is planning to take forward different initiatives of cultural, creative and green tourism in Sham Shui Po, Wan Chai, Yim Tin Tsai of Sai Kung, etc.

Every year, the HKTB organises major events including the International Chinese New Year Night Parade, Hong Kong Dragon Boat Carnival, etc, and promotes to visitors various traditional festivals including the Yu Lan Ghost Festival, Cheung Chau Jiao Festival, the Tai O dragon boat water parade, Tai Hang fire dragon dance, etc, with a view to attracting visitors to experience Hong Kong as an events capital in different districts.

Furthermore, the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort is taking forward the expansion and development plan, of which the first new attraction "Moana: A Homecoming Celebration" stage show will be launched soon. The waterpark and two new hotels of the Ocean Park will be completed progressively from this year onwards until 2021. The various facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District, including Xiqu Centre, M+ Museum, etc, will also be completed by phase in the years ahead.

The Government and HKTB have also been promoting the tourism offerings and specialities of various areas of Hong Kong through different channels, such as guidebooks, digital media platforms and public relations campaigns. Early this year, the HKTB revamped the website featuring travel information about the 18 districts of Hong Kong into a new thematic one called "Hong Kong Neighbourhoods" to showcase the history, local culture, tourist spots and culinary delights of different districts of Hong Kong, with a view to attracting visitors to travel and spend there.

Looking ahead, the Government will continue to join hands with the HKTB and the trade to nurture and develop diversified tourism products and initiatives to entice visitors to patronise different districts of Hong Kong, while supporting the development of local economy at the same time.

Thank you.

LCQ22: Supply of first-hand private residential units

Following is a question by the Hon James To and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 23):

Question:

Regarding the supply of first-hand private residential units, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of unsold first-hand private residential units on December 31 in each year from 2008 to 2017 which had been issued with occupation permits ("OPs");
- (2) of the number of unsold first-hand private residential units on March 31, 2018 which had been issued with OPs, broken down by the number of years (e.g. one, two or three years) for which OPs had been issued;
- (3) of the number of first-hand private residential units under construction on December 31 in each year from 2008 to 2017 and on March 31, 2018 which had been sold;
- (4) whether it has set the following target: keeping the number of unsold first-hand private residential units which have been issued with OPs at a low level; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (5) whether the Government implemented the following measure in the past 25 years: including in the pre-sale consents a provision requiring the developers to put the residential units concerned on the market for sale within a specified period; if so, of the details of the measure (including the implementation date, content and effectiveness); and
- (6) whether the Government will study the implementation of the measure mentioned in (5) in the near future, in order to reduce the number of first-hand private residential units hoarded by developers; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that and the alternative measures?

Reply:

President,

After consulting the Lands Department (LandsD), my reply to various parts of the question raised by the Hon James To is as follows:

(1), (2) and (3) The Government releases statistics on private housing supply in the primary market on the website of the Transport and Housing Bureau on a quarterly basis. The statistics include the number of unsold units in completed projects and the number of units under construction that have been sold.

The statistics requested by Hon James To in parts (1), (2) and (3) of his question are set out in Annex 1, Annex 2 and Annex 3 respectively.

(4), (5) and (6) In the face of the current housing demand-supply imbalance, the Government has been striving to increase land and housing supply through a multi-pronged approach. The Government has all along been closely monitoring the development of the private residential property market and the supply of first-hand private residential units. The Government is also aware that the number of unsold first-hand private residential units in completed projects has been increasing in recent years. We are exploring ways to address the situation.

In March 1997, the Government announced that LandsD would impose a new term in issuing pre-sale consent letters, specifying that the consent given would be valid for six months and that developers would have to offer for sale all residential units covered by the relevant consent letter within the validity period. If the developers concerned failed to sell all the residential units within the validity period but wished to continue offering the units for pre-sale, they would need to apply to LandsD for an extension of the validity period. Subsequently, with the significant drop in housing prices, the Government considered that developers were inclined to sell their units as early as possible. There was hence no longer the need to continue implementing the measure under the prevailing circumstances. The Government announced the cancellation of the measure in May 1998.

According to LandsD's records, the department issued altogether 32 pre-sale consent letters for residential properties during the implementation of the measure. In five of these 32 cases, the developers concerned failed to sell all the residential units before the expiry of the relevant consent letters. LandsD subsequently granted an extension such that the developers concerned could continue offering the remaining units for sale.

As regards whether the above-mentioned measure should be reinstated, the Government has to carefully consider the justifications, feasibility and effectiveness of various proposals before making a decision.