

CE's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address" to LegCo (3)

32. In the first half of this year, the Hong Kong economy grew strongly by 4% in real terms over the previous year, riding on the broadly positive global economic environment. Initial public offering (IPO) activities have been gaining momentum. Up to September, the total IPO funds raised in Hong Kong reached \$238 billion, the highest among our counterparts over the world so far. According to the latest annual survey jointly conducted by Invest Hong Kong and the Census and Statistics Department, there are over 8 700 business operations in Hong Kong with parent companies situated overseas or in the Mainland. Among them, 1 530 have their regional headquarters situated in Hong Kong, representing an increase of 8.3% as compared with the same period last year.

33. However, uncertainties in the global economy have increased markedly. As the trade friction between China and the United States is escalating, international trade, financial markets and investment activities might be affected. We will closely monitor changes in the economic environment so that we may respond swiftly and suitably, including providing support for affected enterprises. To this end, the Secretary of Commerce and Economic Development has met with trade associations several times and has just announced a host of supporting measures.

34. Meanwhile, Hong Kong is full of development opportunities. The HKSAR Government will act proactively, strengthen our roles in serving as "facilitator" and "promoter", and seize the opportunities brought by the Belt and Road (B&R) Initiative and the Greater Bay Area development, with a view to generating new impetus for our economy. The initiatives on the maritime industry, insurance industry, film industry, Chinese medicine sector etc. I propose in this Policy Address will be conducive to the development of the industries and sector. We also step up our efforts to promote I&T. Further to the \$50 billion earmarked in this year's Budget, we will allocate an additional \$28 billion for university research, re-industrialisation, application of technology in public services and fostering of an enabling environment for I&T etc.

35. Education is another area which also warrants the devotion of resources. Since the 2017/18 school year, the Government has expended a recurrent expenditure of \$3.6 billion to implement a series of measures in accordance with my belief and vision of education, thereby a stable and caring teaching and learning environment is gradually taking shape. Taking into account the recommendations and initial views from various professional-led task forces, I announce in my Policy Address a number of specific measures involving an additional recurrent expenditure of \$4.7 billion to further enhance the quality of education and respond to the aspirations of teachers, principals and parents. Such measures include providing to schools

a recurrent Life-wide Learning Grant, implementing in one go the all-graduate teaching force policy in public sector primary and secondary schools, earmarking funding to improve the manpower at the middle-management level in primary schools, strengthening the administrative support for schools, enhancing home-school co-operation, improving vocational education and training, increasing further the opportunities and subsidies for students to pursue post-secondary education, as well as enhancing support for students with special educational needs.

36. The commitment for the new initiatives has exceeded the \$3.4 billion additional recurrent provision earmarked earlier. However, given the determination of the current-term Government to promote quality education, we would not haggle over the resources needed, nor would we trim our measures due to resource constraints. I believe that the new resources for education would not be expended for no purpose and I look forward to working hand in hand with the education sector in nurturing quality future generations for Hong Kong.

37. Care for children, family support, patient care, poverty alleviation and elderly care are essential for building a compassionate and inclusive society. In addition, this Policy Address proposes a series of initiatives to strengthen support for ethnic minorities and the work on youth advocated by the new Youth Development Commission. We have earmarked \$500 million and \$1 billion in this year's Budget for these two initiatives respectively.

38. Hong Kong people use mainly public transport for passenger trips. Further to the non-means tested Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme proposed in last year's Policy Address, we propose this year waiving the tolls charged on franchised buses for using government tunnels and roads to ease fare increase pressure, thereby alleviating the burden of public transport expenses on citizens. The Government has reached an in-principle agreement with the franchisee of the Western Harbour Crossing (WHC) for the Government to pay for franchised buses the tolls for using the WHC. Our discussions with the franchisee of the WHC also include the adjustment of tunnel tolls for private cars, taxis and motorcycles to achieve re-distribution of traffic among the three tunnels so as to effectively alleviate cross-harbour traffic congestion.

39. Reducing traffic congestion also helps improve roadside air quality. To further bring down roadside air pollutant levels, we will, following the successful phasing out of pre-Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles, progressively phase out Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles by the end of 2023 and implement other measures to encourage green transport.

40. Our vision is to develop Hong Kong into an international cultural metropolis grounded in Chinese traditions and enriched by different cultures. In recent years, the development of museums has been particularly flourishing. The West Kowloon Cultural District will boast two world-class museums, namely M+ and the Hong Kong Palace Museum. Moreover, the Hong Kong Museum of Art has just received donations of precious paintings and calligraphy from Chih Lo Lou and the family of WU Guanzhong, and these two batches of art treasures will be displayed as permanent exhibits upon the re-

opening of the museum in end-2019. By then, these three museums with distinct identities will stand as novel landmarks for culture, arts and tourism on the waterfront of the Victoria Harbour.

41. In the Asian Games held in Indonesia last August, Hong Kong athletes impressed the world with their outstanding achievements. Having gone through years of tough training, our athletes demonstrated perseverance and remarkable sportsmanship in the games. I believe, like me, everyone in Hong Kong takes pride in their remarkable performance. I would like to thank all our athletes, their coaches, sports professionals and relevant organisations for their efforts. By providing athletes with greater support in training, sports science, sports medicine etc., and by proactively looking into ways to enhance facilities in the Hong Kong Sports Institute, the Government will continue to support the development of elite sports and assist our athletes in scaling new heights in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and in other major international sports competitions in the future.

42. Over the past year or so, my governing team and I, while focusing on the economy and improving people's livelihood, have upheld the "One Country" principle. In face of the complex situations and new conflicts emerged in the Hong Kong society in recent years, the HKSAR Government and I will not tolerate any acts that advocate Hong Kong's independence and threatens the country's sovereignty, security and development interests. We will fearlessly take actions against such acts according to the law in order to safeguard the interests of the country and Hong Kong. To nip the problem in the bud, we have also reinforced among all sectors understanding of the Constitution, the Basic Law and national security and fostered an awareness of "One Country" in the community.

43. The HKSAR Government has the constitutional responsibility to legislate for Article 23 of the Basic Law in order to safeguard national security. I have stated publicly for a number of times that the Government will carefully consider all relevant factors, act prudently and continue its efforts to create a favourable social environment for the legislative work. Yet, it does not suggest that we will turn a blind eye to the acts of violating the Constitution and the Basic Law, attempting to secede from the country and endangering national security; or our existing laws will be put aside and never be applied to deal with certain acts that should be prohibited. The fact that the Secretary for Security took actions last month by applying the Societies Ordinance bears a strong testimony to the above. This issue has aroused extensive public concern and intense discussion on the legislation for Article 23. I will listen to these views earnestly and explore ways to enable the Hong Kong society to respond positively to this constitutional requirement on the HKSAR.

44. The work of the Chief Executive is taxing and not easy at all. I need to remain composed and resilient under pressure, while taking care of the internal and external environment and unite all sectors of the community. Nevertheless, people's aspirations for a happy life and good governance are the driving force to keep me striving forward.

45. As the first female Chief Executive of the HKSAR, I have an extra

responsibility to devote efforts in promoting women's development. Although more women receive higher education than men do nowadays, the female labour force participation rate is much lower than that of male, and the ratio of women assuming managerial role is still relatively low. In this regard, I propose in this Policy Address a series of measures, including the following:

(i) we propose to extend the statutory maternity leave from the current 10 weeks to 14 weeks, so that mothers will have more time to spend with and take care of their newborn babies. Employers may apply to the Government for reimbursement of the additional four weeks' statutory maternity leave pay, which will be capped at \$36,822. That is to say for employees with monthly income of \$50,000 or below, the additional four weeks' statutory maternity leave pay will be borne by the Government in full. To set an example of a good employer, the Government will extend the maternity leave for all female employees of the Government to 14 weeks with immediate effect. Officers whose actual or expected date of confinement falls on or after today will all benefit from this initiative;

(ii) we will strengthen child care services provided by child care centres and home-based child carers and enhance the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project, so as to enable women with young children to take up or stay in employment;

(iii) the Government will include in future sale conditions of land a requirement for the provision of baby care facilities and lactation rooms by developers to encourage and support breastfeeding. Such facilities will also be provided in new government premises;

(iv) we will introduce in the 2019/20 school year free cervical cancer vaccination for school girls of particular age groups for the prevention of cervical cancer. Upon completion of the study conducted by a local university on the risk of breast cancer among local women, the Government will review our strategies on prevention of breast cancer;

(v) as for unfortunate women that have suffered miscarriage, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Hospital Authority have already implemented various administrative measures to facilitate the handling of abortuses. The Government is examining proposals to further improve such arrangements in a holistic manner, including provision of facilities; and

(vi) the Government will continue to monitor the proportion of female members in statutory bodies and advisory committees, as the current percentage of 33% is not far from the target of 35%. Now that the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited has its first-ever Chairlady Mrs Laura CHA, we call on all listed companies to appoint more females as their board members.

46. Mr President, Honourable Members and fellow citizens, at the Inaugural Ceremony of the Fifth-term Government of the HKSAR, I said that "hope propels a society forward, and confidence is the foundation of hope." In the past year or so since I assumed office as the Chief Executive, I made nearly 30 outbound visits, called on ministries and commissions of the Central Government in Beijing and met with leaders of provincial, municipal and

autonomous region governments. I have also received many visiting international organisations and senior officials, and attended countless gatherings with the business community, academia and professional sectors. By listening attentively and observing carefully, I have come to the conclusion that Hong Kong's intrinsic strengths are ever increasing, Hong Kong people remain outstanding, our can-do spirit is alive and well, and that Hong Kong is still highly regarded and envied by many.

47. I believe that the HKSAR Government and myself are capable of building a better Hong Kong. I believe that all sectors in the community will leverage on their own strengths and seize the opportunities presented by the B&R Initiative and the Greater Bay Area development in exploring new areas of economic growth. I believe that our country will continue to provide staunch support for Hong Kong, help us rise to challenges and continue to inject new impetus to facilitate Hong Kong's development. Holding on to these three beliefs of believing in ourselves, believing in Hong Kong and believing in our country, we will certainly see hope.

48. Let us strive ahead to rekindle hope for Hong Kong! Thank you.

LegCo subcommittees under Finance Committee elect Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

Two subcommittees under the Legislative Council Finance Committee, the Establishment Subcommittee and the Public Works Subcommittee, held separate meetings today (October 10) to elect Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen for the 2018-2019 session.

Mrs Regina Ip and Mr Holden Chow were elected Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Establishment Subcommittee respectively. Dr Lo Wai-kiwok and Mr Charles Mok were elected Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Public Works Subcommittee respectively.

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14. Meeting the public's demand for housing is the greatest challenge for the current-term Government. In this Policy Address, housing and land supply is treated as a stand-alone chapter and is placed before the chapters on economy and people's livelihood. The purpose is to demonstrate clearly that the shortage of land supply not only directly leads to a shortage of housing supply, but also affects people's quality of life. From child care centres to elderly care facilities; from basic education and healthcare services to leisure open space and cultural and recreational facilities; and from maintaining the advantages of traditional trades to promoting new economy industries, land is strictly necessary. In short, improvement of livelihood and development of the economy and transport infrastructure of our society hinge on land resources, without which all strategies or plans will end up in empty talk.

15. I stated in my Policy Address in October last year that the current-term Government's housing policy comprises four elements, which include establishing the Government's role in the provision of housing, building a housing ladder for our people, focusing on supply and optimising the existing housing resources to improve people's living conditions. Of the six new housing initiatives I announced in June this year, the most important one is the revision of the pricing of subsidised sale flats (SSFs) to the effect that their selling prices will no longer be linked to market prices of private flats. Instead, the selling prices will be determined primarily with reference to the affordability of applicants. In addition, I have announced the re-allocation of nine private housing sites for public housing development. These initiatives have received wide recognition from all sectors of the community.

16. To further demonstrate the Government's determination to solve the housing problem faced by our people, I stated in my Policy Address today that:

(i) we will develop land resources in a resolute and persistent manner – the Government's determination to identify and produce land and build a land reserve will never waver in face of short-term changes in economic environment or fluctuations in property prices;

(ii) it is the Government's responsibility to provide decent housing for families in different income brackets. During my term of office, I will increase the ratio of public housing and allocate more land for public housing development. The Transport and Housing Bureau will reflect this policy consideration in updating the next ten-year housing target under the Long Term Housing Strategy; and

(iii) we undertake that 70% of housing units on Government's newly developed land will be for public housing.

17. We expect that the revision of the pricing of SSFs will attract a large number of applications. Following the new pricing policy, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HKHA) has re-opened application for Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) 2018 and the sale of the first project under the regularised Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme (GSH) and the “Starter Homes” (SH) pilot project of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) will also be launched subsequently. These three projects will provide a total of 7 426 housing units.

18. We have conducted tests on these three batches of SSFs. With prices adjusted and a loan-to-value (LTV) ratio as high as 90% or above, the SSF units are affordable to the target households. The monthly payment will generally not exceed 40% of the total household income. Now that the Government has rebuilt the housing ladder and adjusted the pricing mechanism of SSFs, the issue we now need to urgently deal with is where to get land.

19. The Task Force on Land Supply (Task Force) set up in September last year has shouldered the task of forging collaborative deliberation with the public, in an attempt to build the greatest consensus in society. The full commitment and hard work of all members are highly respectable. Half a month ago, upon my request, the Task Force shared with me its preliminary key observations. While public attention has centred on observations in respect of individual land supply options, I am attracted to the Task Force’s three general observations that the community broadly agrees that land supply is pressing; that we should be prepared for the rainy days; and that a multi-pronged approach should be adopted.

20. In the Policy Address, I present some plans on land supply in line with such policy objectives. They include Lantau Tomorrow Vision, development of brownfield sites, land sharing and revitalisation of industrial buildings. As regards the further analysis of individual options, I will give detailed consideration to the Task Force’s recommendations in its full report to be submitted by the end of this year.

21. Lantau, the largest outlying island in Hong Kong, is home to the Hong Kong International Airport and the gateway to the world. With the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, the transport connectivity between Hong Kong and other cities in the Greater Bay Area will be further improved, making Lantau a “Double Gateway” to the world and other Greater Bay Area cities.

22. The Government’s vision for the development of Lantau covers the development areas at artificial islands with a total area of about 1 700 hectares near Kau Yi Chau and Hei Ling Chau in the Central Waters, North Lantau as well as the coastal areas of Tuen Mun, including the River Trade Terminal after re-planning and Lung Kwu Tan, to be supported by a new set of transport networks connecting various development areas. The vision aims to instil hope among Hong Kong people for economic progress, improve people’s livelihood and meet their housing and career aspirations. The vision of providing 260 000 to 400 000 residential units, with 70% being public housing, and accommodating 700 000 to 1 100 000 people, and creating 340 000 jobs for the coming 20 to 30 years will be realised through five policy

directions. They are: increasing land supply, according priority to transport infrastructure, promoting economic development, enhancing environmental capacity and increasing leisure and entertainment facilities. And we will make investment to achieve this vision.

23. The Lantau Tomorrow Vision involves the overall planning of the city and implementation of a number of major infrastructure projects in the coming decades, and requires the efforts of various bureaux, government departments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), which entails a large amount of meticulous co-ordination work. As the Lantau Tomorrow Vision is a priority area of the current-term Government, I will set up as soon as possible a dedicated co-ordination office, which is directly accountable to me, to steer the overall direction as well as co-ordinate and monitor the planning and implementation of the programme. This office will be expanded as needed to ensure that the policy and implementation could be effectively matched.

24. The Lantau Tomorrow Vision is a long-term planning. In order to address our pressing housing problem, we will speed up the studies on brownfield sites in the New Territories and make necessary arrangements for reprovisioning existing operations to facilitate housing development. We also propose introducing the Land Sharing Pilot Scheme so that private land not covered by Government's planned development may be better utilised through a fair and highly transparent mechanism to meet the needs of both public and private housing in the short to medium term. To dispel public worries, not less than 60% to 70% of the increase in floor areas shared between the Government and applicants must be used for public housing development mainly SSFs. We will also reactivate the revitalisation scheme for industrial buildings and in order to address the imminent housing problem, allow for the first time wholesale conversion of industrial buildings for transitional housing.

25. Furthermore, we will support the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) to redevelop its aged rental estates, invite the URA to launch the redevelopment of buildings under the Civil Servants' Co-operative Building Society Scheme, and support the Settlers Housing Corporation Limited in taking forward the redevelopment project of Tai Hang Sai Estate. By so doing, we will meet the long aspirations of the owners and residents concerned and also increase housing supply.

26. To make efficient use of public housing resources, the HKHA will, in light of the operational experience of the HKHS's pilot scheme, join the scheme and allow owners of HKHA's SSFs with premium unpaid to sublet their flats to needy families. The HKHA will also introduce a new initiative whereby under-occupation households whose family members are all aged 70 or above are allowed to enjoy lifetime full rent exemption upon their transfer to small, new or refurbished units. Furthermore, the Government will accept the HKHS's recommendation to introduce a "Flat for Flat Pilot Scheme for Elderly Owners" for its SSFs with premium not yet paid. Under this scheme, owners aged 60 or above who have owned their flats for at least ten years can sell their original flats and then buy a smaller SSF flat in the secondary market without payment of premium.

27. Our economic development requires land as well as adequate manpower resources. As the current 2.8% unemployment rate in Hong Kong is the lowest in more than 20 years, employers of many sectors have expressed difficulties in staff recruitment. Labour force is an important asset to the development of Hong Kong. It is our top priority to improve our labour welfare in order to maintain the competitiveness of Hong Kong enterprises and enhance employees' productivity.

28. I present in this Policy Address a series of labour-related policy initiatives with a view to fostering good labour relations and sharing the fruits of economic growth with all walks of life.

29. The first initiative concerns the abolition of the "offsetting" arrangement under the MPF Scheme, which has beleaguered wage earners for years. Having carefully considered the views of various parties, the Government has decided to further enhance its support for employers. We will extend the period of the second-tier subsidy to 25 years. Together with the 12-year first-tier subsidy, the financial commitment of the entire government subsidy scheme will be significantly increased to \$29.3 billion. I believe that the new arrangement can reduce the impact of abolishing the "offsetting" arrangement on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Our target is to secure the passage of the enabling legislation by the LegCo within the current term of the Government (i.e. by 2022), and implement the abolition of "offsetting" arrangement two years after the passage of the legislative amendments.

30. Besides, we will strengthen the protection of the rights and benefits of employees injured at work and are actively looking into new measures to speed up their recovery and enhance effectiveness. We also take employees' occupational safety and health seriously. The Labour Department will conduct more in-depth surprise inspections, put in place new guidelines and set up an online platform so that employees can report unsafe working environment through mobile electronic devices for prompt follow-up by the department.

31. The employees of government service contractors are an important source of human resources in the provision of government services. Improving their employment terms and conditions as well as labour benefits can help enhance service quality. The inter-departmental working group has completed a review of the employment terms and conditions as well as labour benefits of non-skilled employees engaged by government service contractors. The proposed improvement measures will be introduced to the relevant government service contracts tendered on or after 1 April 2019.

(to be continued)

CE's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address" to LegCo (1)

Mr President, Honourable Members and fellow citizens,

Today, I present the second Policy Address in my term of office to the Legislative Council (LegCo). As in last year, I prefer sharing with Hong Kong people my governance philosophy and highlighting some of the specific measures to reading out the whole Policy Address.

2. Titled "Striving Ahead Rekindling Hope", this Policy Address runs to roughly 40 000 words. It comprehensively covers such areas as good governance, housing and land, diversified economy, nurturing talent, improving people's livelihood, liveable city and connecting with young people. I hope that when you read it, you will get a better grasp of Hong Kong's current situation and the Government's responses to various social issues. Building on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's (HKSAR) unique strengths under "One Country, Two Systems" and combining with the current-term Government's unflagging efforts since assuming office on 1 July last year, this Policy Address carries my unswerving determination in leading Hong Kong to strive forward. While there are many words, they serve just one purpose: rekindling hope for Hong Kong.

3. The Policy Address I present today also reflects my experience since I assumed office as the Chief Executive. In the past year or so, my political team and I have taken a pragmatic approach to "care", "listen" and "act" while being "innovative", "interactive" and "collaborative" in implementing our policy initiatives proactively. From enhancing our position as a financial centre, which includes revision of listing regulations and application of financial technologies (Fintech), to forging ahead the development of innovation and technology (I&T), such as the establishment of I&T clusters on healthcare technologies, artificial intelligence and robotics technologies, the outcomes of our initiatives have been remarkable. All these are testimonies to my belief when I was running for the Chief Executive: "Hong Kong people are outstanding and our foundations are solid. As long as we stand united and remain focused, I have no doubt that we will scale new heights!"

4. My another realisation is that there is no perfect solution in this world and it would be difficult to forge an absolute consensus in the community, yet divergence of views should not become an obstacle to the Government's leading Hong Kong to make progress and more importantly, it should never bring Hong Kong to a standstill. We have already spent a lot of efforts on many rounds of public consultations, whether on land supply options or abolition of the "offsetting" arrangement under the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) Scheme. It is high time for us to decide and proceed after discussions; since procrastination will just bring greater sufferings

to families living in a poor and overcrowded environment, in particular the children, and to grass-roots workers who need better retirement protection.

5. My third realisation is that we need companions as we “move forward”; the more inclusive the Government is, the more companions it will have. I would not harbour an unrealistic wish that all our political parties or Members of this Council share the same political stance, yet so long as the principle of “One Country” is not compromised, there should be plenty of room for collaboration. A good case in point is the visit by a cross-party delegation to various Mainland cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area) arranged by the LegCo early this year; another example is the approach of “dealing with simple issues before the difficult ones” adopted by the Government in presenting many funding items to this Council after consultation with Legislators of different parties towards the end of the last legislative session. This has helped reduce confrontation in this Council and contributed to the smooth passage of initiatives that benefit our economy and people’s livelihood.

6. My last realisation is that the Government should act swiftly and boldly on matters which clearly serve the public interest. In this Policy Address, I propose a total ban on electronic cigarettes for protecting the health of our citizens, particularly children and teenagers; actively promote primary healthcare services to change the present treatment-oriented healthcare system, and provide further resources for research and development (R&D) to enhance our research capability for supporting Hong Kong’s development into an international I&T centre. All these are big strides towards clear objectives.

7. These realisations from my experience as the Chief Executive may have added a personal touch to this Policy Address, but in fact many parts of it also reflect the views presented to me by LegCo Members and various sectors of the community. I have to thank my political team and colleagues of various ranks in the civil service for their exemplary dedication and progressive attitude in seeking and embracing change.

8. I have advocated a new style of governance in the current-term Government, of which the Government playing the roles of “facilitator” and “promoter” has received wide recognition from the community. Various bureaux and departments have become more proactive in handling economic and livelihood issues, and part of the efforts have been reflected in the 2018 Policy Address and the over 240 new initiatives in the Policy Agenda.

9. Some may ask whether the Government’s proactiveness will deviate from the market economy upheld by Hong Kong. My answer is “no”; but the city’s competitiveness is like a boat sailing against the current, and it must forge ahead in order not to be driven back, and hence the Government has every responsibility to provide policy support and explore business opportunities for enterprises locally and overseas, and to engage in more “government-to-government” interactions.

10. I introduced a new fiscal philosophy in the current-term Government to provide tax concessions to enhance the economic competitiveness of Hong Kong

and allocate resources to alleviate people's burdens and nurture talent. The Financial Secretary had introduced in the first Budget of the current-term Government a broad range of policy initiatives with long-term benefits and earmarked another \$388 billion for further investment in the future and enhancing public services.

11. Some may also question whether the Government will, by allocating resources more robustly to improve people's livelihood, deviate from the principles of fiscal prudence and keeping expenditure within the limits of revenues, thus embarking on the road to a welfare society. My answer is "no". With our ample fiscal reserves, it is the Government's responsibility to use resources derived from the community for the good of the community, invest for the future, relieve people's burdens and enable people from different walks of life to share the fruits of our economic growth.

12. The rule of law is the most important core value of Hong Kong, and independence of the judiciary is the key to embodying the rule of law. Let me reiterate that, any behaviour arising from disappointment with certain court verdicts, including unreasonable attacks on the judicial system and the Judiciary, interference with the independence of the judicial power or verbal insults on judges, are totally unacceptable as well as detrimental to the judicial system and the spirit of jurisdiction in Hong Kong. As the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, Mr Geoffrey MA Tao-li, pointed out at the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year 2018, any criticisms which are levelled against the Judiciary should be on an informed basis. Courts and judges are concerned only with the law and the legal issues which arise in any disputes to be determined by them. It is not relevant, nor is it any part of their constitutional duty to adjudicate on political, economic or social issues as such without reference to the law. It is in everyone's interest that the rule of law remains strong, respected and visible.

13. The HKSAR Government respects the functions of the LegCo to exercise checks and balances on the executive authorities. Upon the proposal of the LegCo Committee on Rules of Procedure, I have been attending Chief Executive's Question Time on a monthly basis to answer Members' questions in a "short question, short answer" format, in addition to Chief Executive's Question and Answer (Q&A) Session held four times a year. In the 2017-18 legislative session, I attended four Chief Executive's Q&A Sessions and seven Chief Executive's Question Times, and responded to a total of 139 questions. The Q&A sessions strengthen accountability, while interaction with Members allows me to better feel the pulses of society and promptly respond to issues of public concern. For example, the "Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme" proposed in the Policy Address with an allocation of some \$2.5 billion to assist the public with repair of lifts in older buildings is a response to several Members' suggestions.

(to be continued)

Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Happy Valley

Special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Happy Valley today (October 10). The arrangements will come into effect one and a half hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

A. Traffic arrangements before the commencement of the first race

1. Road closure

Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp outside Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) will be closed except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel.

2. Traffic diversions

- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the up-ramp outside HKJC will be re-routed one way northbound;
- Vehicles from eastbound Queen's Road East heading for Wan Chai and Happy Valley will be diverted to turn left to Morrison Hill Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along Queen's Road East cannot turn right to Wong Nai Chung Road except for vehicles heading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Queen's Road East will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Morrison Hill Road to turn right at the junction of Wong Nai Chung Road and Queen's Road East; and
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley or Racecourse will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, southbound Morrison Hill Road, Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road.

B. Traffic arrangements before the conclusion of race meeting

1. Road closure

The following roads will be closed from 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- The up-ramp on Wong Nai Chung Road outside HKJC leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the Public Stands of HKJC;
- Westbound Leighton Road between Wong Nai Chung Road and Canal Road East; and
- Southbound Morrison Hill Road between Leighton Road and Queen's Road East.

In addition, southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel and the Public Stands of HKJC will be closed from about 10 minutes before the start of the last race.

2. Traffic diversions

The following traffic arrangements will be implemented from 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- Eastbound Queen's Road East at its junction with Morrison Hill Road will be reduced to one-lane traffic heading for northbound Canal Road flyover;
- Vehicles from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Wan Chai will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from Canal Road East, U-turn slip road beneath Canal Road flyover, Canal Road West and Hennessy Road;
- Vehicles from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from Canal Road East, eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic on southbound Morrison Hill Road will be diverted to turn left to eastbound Leighton Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road; and
- Traffic along westbound Leighton Road will be diverted to Wong Nai Chung Road.

C. Learner drivers prohibition

Learner drivers will be prohibited to turn left from Caroline Hill Road to Leighton Road between one and a half hours before the start of the first race and one hour after the last race. In addition, learner drivers will be prohibited from accessing the following roads within the above period of time:

- Shan Kwong Road between Yik Yam Street and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Village Road between its upper and lower junctions with Shan Kwong Road;
- Percival Street between Hennessy Road and Leighton Road;
- Canal Road East; and
- The service road leading from Gloucester Road to Canal Road flyover.

D. Suspension of parking spaces

Parking spaces on southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Sports Road and Blue Pool Road will be suspended from 11am to 7pm during day racing, from 4.30pm to 11.59pm during evening racing, and from 5pm to 11.59pm during night racing.

Any vehicles found illegally parked within the precincts of the above affected areas will be towed away without prior notice.

Actual implementation of road closure and traffic diversion will be made by the Police at the time depending on traffic conditions in the areas. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience, and follow the instructions of Police on site.