DSJ attends 8th China-Eurasia Expo in Xinjiang (with photos)

The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, on behalf of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, today (June 26) attended the 8th China-Eurasia Expo in Urumqi, Xinjiang, to help foster co-operation between the country and the Eurasian regions in the development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Upon his arrival in Xinjiang yesterday (June 25), Mr Cheung attended a welcome dinner to meet with representatives from different countries and regions. This morning, Mr Cheung met with member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Secretary of the CPC Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Regional Committee, Mr Ma Xingrui, with other guests before attending the opening ceremony of the Expo. He also visited exhibitions at the Expo. The Expo, co-hosted by the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, and the People's Government of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, attracted the participation of a large number of countries, regions, international organisations as well as over 1 000 Chinese enterprises and organisations as exhibitors. In addition, a dedicated pavilion for enterprises in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao was set up in the Expo for the first time.

Mr Cheung said that under the "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong has the unique advantage of enjoying the strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world, and is the only common law jurisdiction within the country. The city can certainly play an active role in promoting the economic and trade co-operation and people-to-people exchanges between the country and Eurasian countries.

He pointed out that as the key link for the Belt and Road Initiative, Hong Kong will be committed to providing enterprises and economies in the Belt and Road regions with the high-quality professional services they need, in particular one-stop and diversified legal and dispute resolution services. Enterprises can count on the city's strong professional support when participating in Belt and Road projects.

The Department of Justice is also actively taking forward the establishment of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy to provide training for talents in the practice of foreign-related legal affairs for the country, and nurture legal talents conversant with international law, common law, civil law and the country's legal system for promoting the development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Mr Cheung said he hoped that the enterprises will leverage on Hong Kong to participate in the development of the Belt and Road Initiative and take forward more high-quality development projects for mutual benefits.

Mr Cheung will return to Hong Kong this afternoon.

LCQ11: Complaints handled by Ombudsman

Following is a question by the Hon Doreen Kong and a written reply by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

Section 10(2)(d) of The Ombudsman Ordinance (Cap. 397) stipulates that the Ombudsman may in his discretion decide not to undertake or continue an investigation into a complaint, if he is of the opinion, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, that any investigation or further investigation is for any other reason unnecessary. There are views pointing out that, notwithstanding this provision which requires the Ombudsman to consider all the circumstances of each case before exercising his discretionary power, the Office of the Ombudsman (OTO) states on its website that OTO usually does not investigate complaints about actions taken fully in line with a policy which is made with proper authority following a due process. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows how the Ombudsman defines government "policy" and government "policy decision" when handling complaints;

(2) whether it knows if it is the case that (i) actions taken fully in line with policies made with proper authority following a due process and (ii) all administrative decisions made thereunder will not be considered by the Ombudsman as having constituted "maladministration" as defined in section 2(1) of Cap. 397 anyway, irrespective of whether the Ombudsman has given due regard to all the circumstances of the cases concerned, and the Ombudsman's justifications for that; and

(3) as I have received a complaint from a member of the public pointing out that the internal procedures of OTO for reviewing its original decision do

not conform to the principle of natural justice because (i) only the government department under complaint (and not the complainant) is entitled to comment on the draft review and (ii) the review is handled by the same officers who made the original decision (and not by other officers) before submitting to the Ombudsman for final decision, whether the Government knows how such procedures can be improved?

Reply:

President,

In response to the Hon Doreen Kong's question, the Government's reply in consultation with The Ombudsman is as follows:

(1) and (2) Under The Ombudsman Ordinance (Cap. 397) (the Ordinance), The Ombudsman may investigate into any action taken by the Government or major public organisations which constitutes maladministration. Maladministration may take many forms, e.g. abuse of power or authority; delay/inaction; disparity in treatment; failure to follow procedures, etc. The Ombudsman is vested with extensive investigative powers with respect to maladministration under the Ordinance. He may obtain any information, document or thing from such persons, and make such inquiries, as he thinks fit. He may summon before him any person who in his opinion is able to give any information relating to any action that is being investigated by him, and examine the person under oath and require the person to furnish to him any information and to produce any document or thing relates to that action. The Ordinance also stipulates that The Ombudsman shall act in accordance with his own discretion in determining whether to undertake, continue or discontinue an investigation.

On the other hand, The Ombudsman usually does not investigate complaints about actions taken fully in line with a policy which is made with proper authority following a due process. When performing his duties under the Ordinance, The Ombudsman will generally define policy as a principle or statement of intent of a department or organisation to guide its decisions and actions. The process of policy-making typically involves problem identification, options generation, analysis, consultation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation, etc. The authorities concerned will cautiously consider what is in the public interest, weigh the options, analyse stakeholder opinion, set priorities and allocate resources. In this light, it would generally be inappropriate for The Ombudsman to make retrospective judgement on the appropriateness of a policy after it has been made.

The Ombudsman has been vigilant in assessing complaints about policies. Research will be conducted in accordance with the Ordinance and The Ombudsman's powers to find out whether the due process was followed or whether maladministration was involved in the policy-making process.

(3) When seeking a review, a complainant is required to furnish The Ombudsman in writing with justifications and supporting information. The Ombudsman will re-examine the case in detail and where necessary seek further information or comments from the departments or organisations under complaint. The Ombudsman

himself will make a final decision on whether the original conclusion should be upheld or varied.

According to the Ordinance, where The Ombudsman considers that there may be sufficient grounds to make a report that may criticise or adversely affect any officer, department, organisation or person, he shall give them an opportunity to be heard.

Investigations are conducted by investigation officers hired and assigned by The Ombudsman. However, they do not have the authority to make a decision on whether a complaint is substantiated or not. The decision rests with The Ombudsman. For efficiency, a review of the evidence will usually be carried out by the original investigation officers because they are familiar with the facts of the case and the practices and procedures of the departments or organisations involved. That said, The Ombudsman may consider assigning a review to other investigation officers at the complainant's request, but the review process may take longer to complete. In any case, review decisions rest with The Ombudsman himself.

Auctions of traditional vehicle registration marks to be held on July 13 and 14

The Transport Department (TD) today (June 26) announced that two auctions of traditional vehicle registration marks will be held on July 13 (Saturday) and 14 (Sunday) in Meeting Room S421, L4, Old Wing, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai.

"A total of 350 vehicle registration marks will be put up for public sale at each auction. The lists of marks have been uploaded to the department's website, www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_registration_mark/index.html," a department spokesman said.

Applicants who have paid a deposit of $1,000 to reserve a mark for auction should also participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price of $1,000). Otherwise, the mark concerned may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

People who wish to participate in the bidding at the auction should take note of the following important points:

(1) Successful bidders are required to produce the following documents for completion of registration and payment procedures immediately after the successful bidding:

(i) the identity document of the successful bidder;
(ii) the identity document of the purchaser if it is different from the successful bidder;
(iii) a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation if the purchaser is a body corporate; and
(iv) a crossed cheque made payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR". (For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed.)
Successful bidders can also pay through the Easy Pay System (EPS). Payment by post-dated cheques, cash or other methods will not be accepted.

(2) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through EPS or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of Registration Mark immediately after the bidding. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the memorandum will not be permitted.

(3) A vehicle registration mark can only be assigned to a motor vehicle which is registered in the name of the purchaser. The Certificate of Incorporation must be produced immediately by the purchaser if a vehicle registration mark purchased is to be registered under the name of a body corporate.

(4) Special registration marks are non-transferable. Where the ownership of a motor vehicle with a special registration mark is transferred, the allocation of the special registration mark shall be cancelled.

(5) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the registration mark to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the registration mark within 12 months, allocation of the mark will be cancelled and arranged for re-allocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction of Traditional Vehicle Registration Marks, which can be downloaded from the department's website, www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_registration_mark/tvrm_auction/index.html.

LCQ8: Prevention of road subsidence incidents

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Lau and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

It has been reported that during the onslaught of tropical cyclone Maliksi on Hong Kong early this month, road subsidence measuring around eight metres by twelve metres in area and around four metres in depth occurred at the junction of Hai Tan Street and Kweilin Street in Sham Shui Po. It has been preliminarily assessed by the Government that one of the causes of the road subsidence incident may be soil erosion intensified by the heavy rains early this month. In addition, a number of road subsidence incidents also occurred in Hong Kong when the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal was in force on September 8 last year, arousing wide public concern. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information in respect of the road subsidence reports received by the Government in each of the past three years: (i) the number of reports, (ii) the locations of the incidents, (iii) the causes of road subsidence, (iv) the damage, (v) the numbers of persons or underground facilities affected, and (vi) the remedial and follow-up measures taken;

(2) whether the Government has carried out regular inspections of the underneath of roads across the territory over the past three years to prevent sudden occurrence of road subsidence; if so, of (i) the number of inspections in each year, (ii) the inspection locations, (iii) the inspection results, and (iv) the situations of the follow-up actions taken on the roads with underground distress; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as it has been preliminarily assessed that the road subsidence incident early this month was caused by soil erosion intensified by heavy rains, and rainstorms have become increasingly frequent amid extreme weather in recent years, of the measures taken by the Government to prevent sudden occurrence of road subsidence;
(4) in respect of road construction in new development areas (e.g. the Northern Metropolis), of the measures put in place by the Government to strengthen the condition of the underneath of roads and underground conduits, so as to minimise road subsidence caused by soil erosion or water mains bursts amid extreme weather; and

(5) whether it has studied if there are early signs of road subsidence and educated members of the public about the actions they should take when unusual settlement of road surfaces is noticed?

Reply:

President,

Generally speaking, obvious depression of road surface (i.e. road subsidence) is related to the loss of underground soil and water, which makes it difficult for the road surface to support the weight of passing vehicles. According to the records of the Highways Department (HyD), the main causes of loss of soil and water include: (a) damage to underground pipes (e.g. water mains and drainage pipes), resulting in soil and water flowing into the pipes through cracks and being carried away; and (b) improper handling of

foundation works in nearby roads (in particular those involving deep excavation and lowering of groundwater level), resulting in soil and water of the road base flowing into the excavation area of the works. In addition, if the fill materials are not properly backfilled and compacted after road excavation works, the road surface may subside as a result of settlement of the underlying soil after being driven over by vehicles. If the road base is in normal condition, rainstorms per se will not cause road subsidence.

In consultation with the Development Bureau and relevant departments, my reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Lau is as follows:

(1) According to records, the HyD received a total of 52 cases of road subsidence on public roads between 2021 and 2023. The relevant departments had duly reinstated the damaged road surfaces, underground pipework facilities (e.g. water mains, drainage pipes, gas pipes, electricity cables, etc) and other related facilities (e.g. railings, traffic signs, etc) involved after the incidents. Most of the cases in which the HyD assisted in the reinstatement of road surfaces were completed within two days. Among the 52 cases of road subsidence mentioned above, 39 cases (about 75 per cent) were confirmed to have been caused by damaged underground pipework facilities or underground works of roads in the vicinity after investigation. Details of the cases are set out in the Annex.

(2) to (4) The HyD attaches great importance to the repair and maintenance of public roads and ancillary road facilities under its purview. It regularly deploys staff to inspect all public roads in Hong Kong and carries out road repair and maintenance works in a timely manner, as well as stepping up the inspection before the typhoon and rainy seasons every year in order to keep the roads in good condition.

If the HyD identifies during inspection or receives reports of signs of subsidence on the road surface, it will immediately cordon off the affected road section and inspect the area in the vicinity of the scene. At the same time, the HyD will, where necessary, examine the road structure through excavation of trench pits, and carry out the necessary repair works in conjunction with the relevant departments in accordance with the actual situation as soon as possible, so as to safeguard the safety of road users. The HyD will also, on a case-by-case basis, use indirect non-excavation methods (e.g. ground penetrating radar) to assist in the initial inspection of the underground structures within a short period of time, so as to collect reference information for analysis and assessment. The HyD will continue to keep in view the latest technological developments and introduce suitable innovative techniques in a timely manner to effectively investigate underground structures.

In constructing new roads, works departments will continue to properly fill and adequately compact all fill materials underneath the roads in accordance with the standards set out in the General Specification for Civil Engineering Works published by the Government, so as to prevent settlement of soil underneath the roads or in the vicinity of the underground pipework facilities and at the same time ensure that the underground pipes are

properly laid. For roads in newly reclaimed areas, the Government will specify the relevant reclamation methods in the reclamation contracts, and the contractors are required to comply with the relevant engineering standards in carrying out such works. Engineers are also required to make corresponding design considerations for the construction of pipes underneath the reclaimed land during the detailed design stage, so as to prevent loss of soil and water caused by bursting of underground pipes in the event of possible residual normal settlement of the reclaimed land in the future.

To address the situation of damages of underground water mains and drainage channels which may possibly lead to loss of soil and water of road, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) and Drainage Services Department (DSD) have evaluated the risk of damages for the water mains and drainage channels respectively based on their service life, materials, wear and tear conditions, past record of bursts or leaks, the potential impact to the environment, as well as the impact of bursts or leaks for formulation of rehabilitation and replacement programme using risk-based strategy. Besides, the WSD is establishing approximately 2 400 Water Intelligent Network District Metering Areas within the fresh water distribution networks in the territory which can detect and regulate water pressure in water mains to reduce the risk of water mains bursts or leaks. The WSD will also explore the use of advanced technologies such as sonar survey and fibre optics to monitor the water mains and facilitate early detection of leakage. The DSD conducts regular inspection on the drainage pipes using closed-circuit television surveys to facilitate early repair works for damaged drainage channels. Furthermore, the DSD has applied innovative technologies to improve monitoring effectiveness, such as using sonar detection systems to conduct drainage channel surveys and using a spherical underground pipe inspection robot for condition survey in high water level and turbulent flow environments.

In view of the possible loss of soil and water of road base caused by underground works of roads in the vicinity, before carrying out deep excavation or lowering of groundwater level in the construction works, the contractor is required to submit ground movement monitoring and associated precautionary proposals/plans of preventive measures to the relevant regulatory departments of the construction works to ensure that the relevant works will not adversely affect the adjacent buildings and land, etc. The monitoring and precautionary measures should normally cover buildings, structures, land, streets such as footpaths or carriageways within and in the vicinity of the construction site. The proposals/plans have to be endorsed/approved by the relevant regulatory departments before commencement of the construction works. During the construction period, the contractor is required to submit monitoring data to the project consultant/registered building professionals responsible for the works project, and the relevant regulatory departments and other relevant departments from time to time in order to monitor and ensure that the construction works will not adversely affect the neighboring buildings and land, etc.

In addition, to prevent future subsidence of road surface due to settlement of the underlying soil as a result of improper backfilling and

compaction of fill materials after road excavation works, the road excavation permits issued by the HyD contain relevant clauses requiring the permittees to properly fill and adequately compact all backfilling materials underneath the road in strict accordance with the standards set out in the General Specification for Civil Engineering Works after completion of excavation, and submit relevant test reports upon completion of the works. If the relevant test results indicate that the above backfilling process has not been properly completed, the HyD will require the permittee to rectify the situation as soon as possible.

Relevant government departments will continue to implement the above measures to prevent road subsidence as far as possible.

(5) Generally speaking, it is not easy for the general public to notice the early signs of road subsidence. However, if members of the public notice any damage to the public roads (e.g. the road surface is uneven or slightly subsided), they may contact the HyD through the 1823 Government Hotline. Upon receipt of such reports, the HyD will send its staff to inspect and check the site as soon as possible and arrange for contractors to carry out suitable repairs according to the actual situation, or request the relevant departments, public utility companies or responsible persons of private works to promptly follow up the matter.

LCQ15: Management of water resources

Following is a question by the Hon Yung Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

It has been reported that the Water Supplies Department (WSD) is studying the adjustment of water charges, which has aroused concerns among various sectors of the community. Regarding the management of water resources, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has considered options other than adjusting water charges to improve the operating conditions of the WSD; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the criteria based on which the WSD determines the rate of adjustment of water charges;

(3) of the following information on flushing water in each of the past five years:
(i) the daily per capita flushing water consumption (set out by sea water and fresh water for flushing);

(ii) the respective proportions of the population using sea water and fresh water for flushing;
(iii) the respective costs (per cubic metre) of using sea water and fresh water for flushing;
(iv) the daily per capita unaccounted-for flushing water; and
(v) the expenditures on the construction, expansion, upgrading and maintenance of sea water flushing supply infrastructure and details of the relevant projects;

(4) of the following information on the supply and consumption of fresh water:
(i) the daily per capita domestic fresh water consumption in each of the past five years (set out by Dongjiang water and local yield);
(ii) the respective total amounts and proportions of fresh water supplied from Dongjiang and local yield in the past year;
(iii) the respective costs (per cubic metre) of fresh water supplied from Dongjiang and local yield in each of the past five years;
(iv) the respective proportions of the expenditures on purchasing and processing Dongjiang raw water to the cost of fresh water supplied from Dongjiang in each of the past five years; and
(v) the annual quantity of overflow from reservoirs since 2022;

(5) of the following information on unlawful taking of water in each of the past five years:
(i) the respective numbers of reports and complaints received by the Government;
(ii) the number of convicted cases;
(iii) the amount of water involved in those convicted cases where water was unlawfully taken; and
(iv) the amount of fresh water contaminated as a result of unlawful water taking;

(6) since the commissioning of the first stage of the Tseung Kwan O Desalination Plant (TKODP) on December 22 last year, of (i) the actual daily fresh water production capacity of the TKODP, (ii) the proportion of the relevant production capacity to Hong Kong's overall fresh water demand, and (iii) the actual average cost per cubic metre of fresh water produced by the TKODP;

(7) of the total length of water mains in Hong Kong which have been in use for more than 30 years at present; (i) the expenditures on the construction, upgrading and maintenance of water mains and the details of the relevant projects, and (ii) the leakage rate of fresh water mains and the amount of fresh water loss involved, in each of the past five years;

(8) of the number of cases of water mains anomalies detected by WSD's Water Intelligent Network (WIN) and the associated amount of fresh water loss, as well as the number of cases of water mains anomalies misreported by WIN, in each of the past five years; and

(9) whether the Government has plans to further reduce water mains leakage and bring down the cost of fresh water; if so, of the details; if not, the

reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) has all along been committed to providing the public with reliable, adequate and wholesome water. The WSD strives to control cost of water supply through continuous improvement in asset management and use of technology. In addition, the WSD has been implementing the Total Water Management Strategy since 2008. On one hand, it focuses on containing growth of water demand including strengthening water conservation through public education. On the other hand, it supports exploiting new water resources to build resilience in fresh water supply in Hong Kong.

The reply to various parts of the Hon Yung's question are as follows:

(1) The WSD has always been committed to controlling the cost for improving the waterworks operating conditions. An important factor is to reduce the demands for water supply facilities, thereby lowering the operational, maintenance, and depreciation expenses associated with water supply through controlling water consumption. This helps attain improved cost-effectiveness. To achieve this, the WSD has been actively implementing various water-saving measures and promotions. In February this year, a new round of water conservation campaign "Save Water Today for a Sustainable Future" was launched. Through a series of activities, including composing a water-saving theme song, broadcasting of the Government's new Announcements in the Public Interest, organisation of water conservation carnival and online public activities, etc, the WSD aims to raise the public awareness of water conservation and change their water-using habits.

Besides, the WSD has implemented a series of measures to enhance the cost-effectiveness of waterworks facilities, including (i) establishing Water Intelligent Network (WIN) to monitor leakage in the networks and replacing or rehabilitating specific sections of the higher risk water mains, thus reducing the risks of burst or leakage of water mains; (ii) controlling private water main leakage and installing smart water meters to reduce water loss; and (iii) upgrading the WSD's energy management system to cover the entire water supply chain, including collection, storage, transportation and raw water treatment, supply and distribution of fresh water and salt water as well as developing large scale floating solar farm in Hong Kong reservoirs to generate renewable energy, etc, in order to save the energy cost.

To control the cost of water supply more effectively, the WSD is formulating an overall digital transformation roadmap to strengthen its digital infrastructure and establish a system of data management standards, and implement a series of digitalisation projects and measures in phases, including the establishment of the WSD's Central Operation Management Centre, Internet of Things platform, cloud data centre, digital twin and hydraulic model applications, etc, to improve the operational efficiency and stability of water supply, and reduce electricity consumption.

(2) The water tariff policy of the Government adopts the principles of "user pays" and "service cost recovery". The WSD reviews the Waterworks Operating Accounts (WOA) and the level of water charges annually in accordance with the established policy and mechanism. Water tariffs have not been adjusted for nearly 30 years since February 1995. The WOA have recorded deficits since 1998/99 and the cost recovery rate of the latest WOA has decreased to a record low of under 80 per cent level. When conducting water tariff review, we will take in account a basket of factors including the policy principles, the public affordability, economic conditions and the performance of the WOA, as well as the views of stakeholders.

(3) (i), (ii) and (iii) Salt water for flushing has been adopted in Hong Kong since the 1950's. Over the years, the WSD has gradually expanded its salt water supply network which, nowadays, has covered about 85 per cent of Hong Kong's population. The WSD will continue to actively encourage consumers covered by the existing salt water supply network to switch to salt water for flushing. The WSD is also actively promoting the use of recycled water for flushing and other non-potable purposes, thereby further increasing the proportion of salt water and recycled water for flushing to over 90 per cent. In the past five years, the per capita annual water consumption and costs of salt water and fresh water for flushing are as follows:

Year	Per capita flushing water consumption (litres/day)		
	Salt water	Fresh water	Total (salt water and fresh water)
2018/19	69.2	24.1	93.3
2019/20	75.0	18.4	93.4
2020/21	77.1	19.9	97.0
2021/22	75.8	20.2	96.0
2022/23	73.0	18.4	91.4

Year	Cost of flushing water consumption ($/cubic metre)	
	Salt water (Note 1)	Fresh water (Note 2)
2018/19	4.3	9.6
2019/20	4.2	9.9
2020/21	4.2	9.8
2021/22	3.9	9.6
2022/23	4.1	9.6

Note 1: Include costs of salt water collection, treatment, distribution and customer services.

Note 2: Include purchase and collection of fresh water, treatment, distribution and customer services.

(iv) and (v) The WSD does not keep records of water loss for flushing. The expenditure on the construction, expansion, upgrading and maintenance of salt water for flushing supply infrastructure and details of the relevant projects are as follows:

Year	Construction, expansion or upgrading (Note)		Maintenance
	Number of relevant projects	Expenditure ($ million)	Expenditure ($ million)
2019/20	258	501.1	84.6
2020/21	285	604.4	85.5
2021/22	310	628.8	96.8
2022/23	301	738.7	105.6
2023/24	384	737.4	126.5

Note: Including Category A and Category D public works projects under the "Replacement and Rehabilitation Programme of Water Mains" and the "Risk-based Improvement Programme of Water Mains" programmes.

(4) (i) The daily per capita domestic fresh water consumption in each of the past five years is as follows:

Year	Per capita domestic fresh water consumption (litres/day)
2018/19	134.1
2019/20	137.5
2020/21	152.6
2021/22	148.1
2022/23	141.7

(ii) In 2023, total water consumption of Hong Kong was 1 068 million cubic metres, of which the supply of water from Dongjiang and local yield were 820 million cubic metres (77 per cent) and 248 million cubic metres (23 per cent) respectively.

(iii) and (iv) The cost of supplying Dongjiang water includes costs of purchasing Dongjiang water, treatment, distribution and customer services. In the past five years, the expenditure on purchasing Dongjiang water accounted for about 55 per cent of the overall average cost of supplying Dongjiang water. The annual costs of Dongjiang water and local yield are as follows:

Year	Dongjiang Water ($ per cubic metre)	Local Yield (Note) ($ per cubic metre)
2018/19	10.6	4.8
2019/20	11.0	5.1
2020/21	11.0	5.1
2021/22	10.9	5.0
2022/23	11.1	5.0

Note: Include costs of raw water collection, treatment, distribution and customer services.

(v) The overflow from impounding reservoirs in Hong Kong occurred in small and medium impounding reservoirs built between the 19th century and the mid-20th century, including Pok Fu Lam Reservoir, Aberdeen Reservoir, Lower Shing Mun Reservoir, Tai Tam Reservoir and Shek Pik Reservoir. As these impounding reservoirs were designed to meet the water demand at that time, they have relatively small storage capacities. They are prone to overflow when the rainwater collected exceeds their capacities during heavy rainstorms. As the above reservoirs are not used to store Dongjiang water, all overflow from impounding reservoirs was natural rainwater instead of imported Dongjiang water.

Under the "Package Deal" approach adopted in the current Dongjiang water supply agreement for purchasing Dongjiang water, the WSD determines the quantity of Dongjiang water to be imported from the Guangdong side on a monthly basis based on actual water demand, thereby effectively reducing the risk of overflow. Nevertheless, the WSD has been taking measures to reduce overflow, such as adjusting the amount of water delivered to water treatment plants from reservoirs to reserve sufficient reservoir capacity to collect rainwater during the rainy season. However, the actual quantity of overflow depends largely on the annual rainfall and its distribution. From 2022 to now, the quantities of overflow of Hong Kong's reservoirs are tabulated below:

Year	Annual quantity of overflow from reservoirs (million cubic metre)
2022	12
2023	47 (Note)
2024 (Up to May)	0

Note: Higher overflow occurred in 2023 was mainly due to extreme rainfall in September 2023.

(5) The information on unlawful taking of water (Note) in each of the past five years is as follows:

Year	Number of report and complaint cases	Convicted cases	
		Case	Unlawful taking of water (cubic metres)
2019	402	102	9 085
2020	316	62	334
2021	351	109	9 728
2022	254	54	15 316
2023	234	36	588

Note: The reports and complaints of unlawful taking of water received by the WSD has been included in the above table. In addition, since it takes time to conduct investigations and collect evidence, the "convicted cases" of a particular year may not necessarily be the "reports and complaints" received in that year.

Common cases of unlawful taking of water include taking water through a fire service for any purpose other than for firefighting (such as car washing) or taking water from water supply system which is not measured by a meter, etc. The risk of potable water contamination caused by such behaviour is relatively low, and the WSD has not found that the above cases have caused potable water contamination.

(6) The first stage of the Tseung Kwan O desalination plant has started to supply potable water since December 22, 2023. The current maximum water production capacity is about 135 000 cubic metres per day. It can supply about 5 per cent of potable water consumption in Hong Kong. The unit production cost of the WSD's desalination is about $13 per cubic metre including depreciation costs, operating costs, distribution costs and customer services expenses.

(7) As at May 2024, the total length of fresh water and salt water main in Hong Kong is about 8 400 kilometres, of which about 2 100 kilometres of water mains are more than 30 years old. To achieve cost-effectiveness, the WSD adopts a "risk-based asset management programme for water mains" by introducing factors such as age of use, materials, past records of bursts or leaks, surrounding environment and consequence resulting from bursts or leaks, for assessing the risk of water mains so as to replace or rehabilitate specific sections of water mains with higher risk progressively with a view to reducing the risks of water main bursts or leaks.

(i) The expenditure on the construction, upgrading and maintenance of water mains and the details of the relevant projects are as follows:

Year	Construction or upgrading		Expenditure on maintenance ($ million)
	Number of relevant projects	Expenditure ($ million)	

2019/20	427	1,365.4	89.5
2020/21	487	1,578.0	96.3
2021/22	562	2,070.0	98.9
2022/23	555	2,023.7	90.6
2023/24	680	1,337.3	109.2

(ii) The leakage rate of fresh water mains and the amount of fresh water loss involved in each of the past five years is as follows:

Year	Water mains leakage rate	Amount of water loss (million cubic metres)
2019	15.2%	150
2020	14.8%	150
2021	14.6%	149
2022	14.4%	148
2023	14.0%	144

(8) In the past five years, no water mains anomaly misreported by the WSD's WIN. The number of cases of water mains anomalies detected by the WIN successfully and the associated amount of fresh water loss recorded are as follows:

Year	Number of anomaly cases of fresh water mains detected by the WIN	Amount of daily water loss (10 000 cubic metres)
2019	400	3.5
2020	520	2.2
2021	660	3.3
2022	880	6.3
2023	1 037	7.5

(9) Overall, in conjunction with the implementation of risk-based water pipe improvement works, the WSD has also been establishing the WIN to successfully identify leaking areas and conduct rapid repairs for leaking water pipes, thus reducing leakage and burst cases. Relevant measures are gradually achieving effective results. In this direction, we strive to achieve the goal of reducing the water pipe leakage rate to less than 10 per cent by 2030.

As mentioned in item (1), the WSD aims to strengthen control and reduce water supply costs through optimising the management and operation of waterworks facilities.