

LCQ12: Sister school scheme

Following is a question by the Hon Lillian Kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

Under the Sister School Scheme (the Scheme), many schools in Hong Kong have formed sister school pairs (SSPs) with schools in Mainland cities. Through exchanges and co-operation, SSPs have deepened students' understanding of Mainland and Hong Kong cultures, and promoted advancement in the quality of education. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the current number of SSPs formed between Hong Kong and Mainland schools, together with a tabulated breakdown by type of schools (i.e. secondary, primary and special schools) and finance type (i.e. public, Direct Subsidy Scheme and private);

(2) of the number of schools which successfully applied for the grant under the Scheme in each of the past 10 years, as well as the number and types of activities organised by the schools with the approved grant; and

(3) whether it will consider extending the scope of the grant under the Scheme to include international schools; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Education Bureau (EDB) has launched the Sister School Scheme (the Scheme) since 2004 to encourage Hong Kong schools to form sister school pairs with their Mainland counterparts, with a view to broadening students' horizons and enhancing their sense of national identity. The Scheme has served as a platform for professional interflows, through which schools in both places can conduct rich and multi-faceted exchanges at school management, teacher and student levels etc, to enhance mutual understanding and achieve mutual advancement in quality of education. The EDB has been actively promoting the Scheme and providing local publicly-funded schools with additional resources and professional support.

Our reply to the questions raised by Hon Lillian Kwok is as follows:

(1) To expand the network of sister schools, the Chief Executive announced in his Policy Address delivered in 2022 that the EDB would, on the basis of having about 780 publicly-funded schools in Hong Kong that had already formed over 2 100 sister school pairs with their Mainland counterparts at the very

time, increase the number of Hong Kong schools which would be participating in the Scheme by 10 per cent to around 860 by the end of 2023. The above target had been achieved. According to the information submitted by schools, as of May 2024, a total of 935 afore-mentioned local schools had formed 2 933 sister school pairs with their Mainland counterparts. Relevant breakdowns are set out in the table below:

School type	No. of local schools that have formed sister school pairs (Note 1)			No. of sister school pairs
	Public sector schools (Note 2)	Direct Subsidy Scheme schools	Total	
Secondary	366	57	423	1 406
Primary	434	20	454	1 411
Special	58	Not applicable	58	116

Note 1: As the Grant for the Sister School Scheme does not cover local private schools, the relevant figures are not available.

Note 2: Public sector schools comprise government, aided and caput schools.

(2) To support local schools on planning and conducting exchange activities with their sister schools in the Mainland, since the 2018/19 school year, the EDB has been providing a recurrent grant and professional support to local public sector schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools (including special schools) that have formed sister schools with their Mainland counterparts. The grant is set at about \$163,000 per school for the 2023/24 school year. The total numbers of schools provided with the grant from the EDB and the expenditures involved in the previous school years, broken down by school year, are set out in the table below:

School year	Total no. of schools applied for and provided with the grant (Note 3)	Expenditure of the grant (\$ million)
2018/19	634	93.25
2019/20	662	102.42
2020/21	665	103.72
2021/22	727	112.83
2022/23	830	129.31

Note 3: Only the number of schools that applied for the grant is shown. Some schools have formed sister school pairs with their Mainland counterparts but did not apply for the grant.

The EDB renders assistance for local schools to establish sister schools with their Mainland counterparts, as well as providing them with professional support. For example, the EDB co-ordinates pairing-up arrangements, organises exchange activities, conducts school visits, holds sharing sessions regularly to disseminate good practices of exchanges among sister schools, and commissions service contractor(s) to provide schools with advice and support in relation to the arrangements on exchange activities. These efforts seek to promote more in-depth and multi-angle professional exchanges and multi-faceted collaboration, with a view to enhancing the quality and quantity of sister school exchanges, and hence facilitating cultural exchange and increasing teachers and students' knowledge and understanding of the Mainland.

All along, schools arrange exchange activities (such as school visits, student activities, seminars, teaching demonstrations, lesson evaluation, video conferencing and experience sharing) with their sister schools at student, teacher and school management levels based on their school-based development needs. Schools may publish information of their sister schools and exchange activities on their websites or through other channels. As schools are not required to provide us with details of all their exchange activities, the relevant information on the number and types of exchange activities is not available.

The modes of sister school exchange activities are multi-faceted. Apart from visits to sister schools in the Mainland, online exchanges can be organised for schools to learn from each other and share their experiences and insights at school management, teacher and student levels. Sister schools are encouraged to draw on good practices and develop online exchanges as an ongoing effort, so as to facilitate real-time interaction and sharing among students and teachers, while actively arranging on-site exchange activities for the same to gain first-hand exposure to local culture and an understanding of our motherland.

(3) At present, the Grant for the Sister School Scheme (the Grant) does not cover private schools (including international schools). Private schools are self-financing, market-driven and autonomous in their operation. They have to bear all operating expenses and the Government does not provide them with any recurrent subsidy. Therefore, it is not suitable to extend the Grant to private schools. The EDB will continue to encourage private schools (including international schools) to promote students' understanding of Chinese history and culture to broaden their horizons having regard to school-based circumstances and needs.

Looking ahead, the EDB will continue to encourage local schools to participate in the Scheme, including providing schools with professional support through diversified modes as well as collection and dissemination of good practices, so as to encourage more exchanges between local schools and their Mainland counterparts under the Scheme.

LCQ13: Promotional work on Safeguarding National Security Ordinance

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Kennedy Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

The Department of Justice stated earlier that it would explain and promote the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO) to local and international communities in collaboration with relevant policy bureaux and enhance the understanding of SNSO among the public and different sectors of the community through various channels in a timely manner. Regarding the promotional work on SNSO, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that SNSO has taken effect for three months, of the relevant work undertaken by the Government to promote and explain SNSO to overseas countries, and whether the Government has at present a team dedicated to promoting SNSO to overseas countries; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that some foreign media and politicians have made unfounded and misleading or scaremongering reports and remarks about SNSO, and it has been reported that a resigned overseas non-permanent judge of the Court of Final Appeal has recently written in foreign press to criticise Hong Kong's legislation on national security, how the relevant policy bureaux evaluate the impacts of the aforesaid reports and remarks on the image of Hong Kong's rule of law, and the corresponding countermeasures that have been taken; and

(3) of the specific operation of the work undertaken by relevant policy bureaux to explain and promote SNSO to local and international communities (including the government departments and the resources involved), and whether consideration will be given to working with the business sector to promote the positive messages regarding SNSO in another way of communication, and conducting the explanation work by means such as written articles and promotional clips; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO) (6 of 2024) took effect upon gazettal on March 23, 2024. As the Chief Executive had stated in public after the SNSO came into effect, the Government of the Hong Kong

Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) will discharge the duties prescribed in the SNSO, which include the continued efforts to effectively explain the SNSO and to conduct the relevant public education work. One of the key focuses of the work is to enable the overseas community and the local business sector to understand that the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKNSL) and the SNSO, being compatible with and complementary to each other, have jointly established a comprehensive and effective legal system for safeguarding national security, cultivating for all sectors a more secure, liberal, open and expectable business environment which is fundamental to safeguarding the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong.

My reply to the three parts of the question raised by Member is as follows:

(1) and (3) Regarding the explanatory work overseas, the HKSAR Government will effectively carry out explanatory and publicity work at the international level through overseas visits by government officials and capitalising on the network of overseas Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs). During the overseas visits, the HKSAR government officials will proactively explain the actual situation of the HKSAR and highlight the institutional strengths and financial competitiveness of Hong Kong as an international financial and business hub. For instance, the Deputy Secretary for Justice attended the 55th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on March 20 as a member of the Chinese delegation in Geneva, Switzerland, and spoke on the legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law. He pointed out that each and every sovereign state has an inherent right to enact laws to safeguard its national security, refuted the double standards of relevant countries, and emphasised that the SNSO specifies that the rights and freedoms enshrined in the provisions of the two international covenants on human rights as applied to Hong Kong, are to be protected in accordance with the law. The Deputy Secretary for Justice also took the initiative to meet with certain individuals and media of the international community who were concerned about the SNSO before and after the meeting to clarify some inaccurate remarks and twisted facts about the SNSO. In April, the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury visited the United States to explain to the business and academic sectors thereat Hong Kong's latest development in financial services, and to point out that under the protection of the HKNSL and the SNSO, Hong Kong is capable to offer investors a secure and stable environment. In addition, the Security Bureau has continued to maintain close contact with the ETOs and provided them with reference information and publicity materials to facilitate their explanation to the overseas political and business sectors regarding the content of the SNSO and the actual situation in Hong Kong in their daily operation and on suitable occasions. The ETOs have been closely monitoring the comments made by local individuals and media in their host countries on the affairs of Hong Kong and made prompt clarifications. The ETOs have also met with the relevant media and taken the initiative to write to them to rebut biased reports on Hong Kong to set the record straight. The ETOs will continue to explain the actual situation of Hong Kong to the relevant stakeholders and tell good stories of Hong Kong.

To counter the malicious attacks and smears by external forces, the HKSAR Government has specifically established the Response and Rebuttal Team led by the Secretary for Security at the beginning of the legislative exercise of the SNSO with the primary aim of providing timely rebuttals against smears. Exemplary results have been achieved. After the SNSO came into effect, external forces have, from time to time, smeared and made misleading remarks on the HKNSL, the SNSO and the HKSAR's work on safeguarding national security. Leveraging the experience of the Response and Rebuttal Team, the HKSAR Government will continue to deal with unjustified smears and make clarifications and rebuttals in a prompt and forceful manner.

Besides, since the beginning of the legislative exercise of the SNSO, the HKSAR Government has proactively reached out to the foreign chambers of commerce and consulates in Hong Kong to explain to them the content of the SNSO, with a view to reflecting the actual situation of Hong Kong to the international community through them. In this regard, the Department of Justice held the National Security Legal Forum (Legal Forum) themed "Looking Back and Ahead, New Dawn for Development" on June 8 this year to explain in depth how the SNSO comprehensively and effectively safeguards national security in Hong Kong in accordance with the rule of law principle, while at the same time fully respects and protects human rights. It also brought out that the extra-territorial effect of the prohibited acts and relevant offences is squarely in line with the principles of international law, the international practice and the common practices in various countries and regions. The Legal Forum attracted about 1 000 guests and participants, including a number of consular officers and representatives of foreign chambers of commerce.

As regards publicity targeting the local business sector, since the SNSO came into effect upon gazettal, principal officials including the Secretary for Justice, the Deputy Secretary for Justice and the Secretary for Security have been explaining its content on various occasions. They have reached out to different sectors of the community, attended various media interviews, and attended a number of talks and seminars on national security organised by political parties, societies, chambers of commerce, etc, to enhance the understanding of the SNSO among different sectors. On the National Security Education Day (April 15) of this year, the HKSAR Government invited the Trade Development Council and the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce to participate in a seminar titled "Security is a pre-requisite for development: The remarkable implication of the passage of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance", with a view to informing the business sector of how the SNSO could further strengthen international trade development and create positive impacts on the business environment under the "dual legislation and dual enforcement mechanism".

Looking ahead, the HKSAR Government will continue to collaborate with different stakeholders (including the business sector) to understand the concerns of various sectors on the implementation of the SNSO and take forward the publicity work through various means such as publication of articles and promotional videos.

(2) The rule of law in Hong Kong is strong and robust, and withstands the

test of time. The judicial system of the HKSAR is safeguarded by the Basic Law. According to Articles 2, 19 and 85 of the Basic Law, the HKSAR shall be vested with independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication; the courts shall exercise judicial power independently, free from any interference. Everyone charged with a criminal offence has the right to a fair hearing. All judges and judicial officers abide by the Judicial Oath and administer justice strictly in accordance with the evidence and all applicable laws, without fear or favour, self-interest or deceit.

As regards a recent article published by a former Non-Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal, which contained utterly wrong remarks on the rule of law and the independent judicial power of the HKSAR, the HKSAR Government promptly issued a written statement containing detailed response in the early hours of June 11. The Chief Executive also made response at the media session before the Executive Council meeting on the same day. Subsequently, the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Secretary for Justice also stressed that the rule of law, the judicial system as well as the independent judicial power and final adjudication of the HKSAR are based on the institutional safeguards of the Basic Law and are the fruits of the collaborative efforts of the judiciary and the legal profession in Hong Kong over the years, which cannot be altered by the stance of any individuals.

Announcement of fifth batch of recognised medical qualifications under Medical Registration Ordinance

In accordance with the Medical Registration Ordinance (MRO), the Registrar of Medical Practitioners (i.e. the Director of Health) announced today (June 26) the fifth batch of 28 medical qualifications (see Annex 1) recognised by the Special Registration Committee (SRC).

The list of the fifth batch of recognised medical qualifications will be gazetted on June 28 and take effect on the same day. It will be submitted to the Legislative Council for negative vetting on July 3. Together with the first four batches of recognised medical qualifications announced (see Annex 2), the SRC has so far recommended a total of 128 medical qualifications for recognition.

The MRO provides that non-locally trained doctors who possess recognised medical qualifications, subject to their fulfilment of certain criteria, may apply for special registration to practise in the public healthcare institutions in Hong Kong (i.e. the Hospital Authority, the Department of Health, the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong). After serving for a certain period, obtaining recognised specialist

qualifications and passing the assessment, they will be granted full registration to practise in Hong Kong. For non-locally trained medical graduates who possess recognised medical qualifications but have yet to undergo internship outside Hong Kong, subject to their fulfilment of the relevant criteria, they may take the Licensing Examination of the Medical Council of Hong Kong (MCHK) in order to apply for special registration to practise in the public healthcare institutions in Hong Kong. They may also obtain full registration after meeting the requirements applicable to all special registration doctors.

The SRC under the MCHK is responsible for determining the list of recognised medical qualifications upon reviewing the programmes offered by non-local medical schools with quality comparable to those provided by the two medical schools in Hong Kong and submitting the list to the Registrar of Medical Practitioners for promulgation. The SRC will continue with the assessment of other non-local medical programmes that fulfil the stipulated criteria in order to determine the next batch of recognised medical qualifications.

When determining the list of recognised medical qualifications, the SRC will consider and recommend a medical qualification that fulfils the following criteria:

- (a) that is at the level of degree or higher;
- (b) that is awarded by a body broadly comparable to any local university awarding medical qualifications in terms of international rankings; and
- (c) that is broadly comparable to the medical qualifications awarded by any local university in terms of:
 - (i) the curriculum of the programmes leading to the medical qualifications;
 - (ii) the medium of instruction of the programmes; and
 - (iii) any other aspects the SRC considers appropriate.

[LCQ22: Enhancing the efficiency of travellers' immigration clearance at Luohu](#)

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Dennis Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

It has been reported that the Shenzhen Municipal Government has recently stated that it is planning to redevelop the Luohu Port and hopes to collaborate with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to

bring the MTR East Rail Line (ERL) into Luohu and implement "co-location arrangement" at the Luohu Port. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the average time taken for travellers to cross the Luohu Port in each of the past three years;

(2) given that in reply to my question on April 10 this year, the Government pointed out that in planning for the redevelopment of existing boundary control points (BCPs) and the development of new BCPs in the future, the Government would actively explore the adoption of new clearance mode to enhance passenger clearance efficiency, including implementing the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode in new land BCP projects, whether the Government will discuss with the relevant Mainland authorities the implementation of the said mode at the redeveloped Luohu Port to enhance the efficiency of travellers' immigration clearance;

(3) whether it has projected the amount of time savings for travellers crossing the Luohu Port after completion of its redevelopment; and

(4) as it has been reported that the Luohu District's Three-year Action Plan for the Development of a Shenzhen-Hong Kong Integrated Development Demonstration Zone for Attracting Global Resources has unequivocally stated that Shenzhen and Hong Kong will join hands to develop a co-operative demonstration park in Lot B1 of the transit land adjacent to the Luohu Port, whether the Government has estimated the benefits to be brought to the lot's development by bringing ERL into Luohu?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Transport and Logistics Bureau, my reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Dennis Lam is as follows:

(1) Except for the service suspension period during the COVID-19 pandemic, in each of the past three years (2021, 2022 and 2023), the Lo Wu Control Point was able to complete immigration clearance for Hong Kong residents and visitors within 15 minutes and 30 minutes respectively.

(2) to (4) Having a long history, the Lo Wu Port has connected Hong Kong and Shenzhen since the 1900s. It has always been one of the busiest land boundary control points (BCPs) with the highest number of inbound and outbound passengers. In 2023, the daily average of passengers trips nearly reached 138 000. The passenger terminal buildings of Hong Kong and Shenzhen at the port are built within their respective boundary along the Shenzhen River and are connected by a pedestrian bridge. This allows passengers from the two places to complete departure clearance at one side and then walk to the passenger terminal building of the other side via the pedestrian bridge in order to conduct arrival clearance. The port has been very popular among passengers since it is connected to the central part of Shenzhen and is well-connected by public transport, being served by railways of both Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government understands from the Shenzhen side that their relevant authorities will soon carry out modification works for the Luohu Port on the Shenzhen side. The modification works aim to "eliminate safety hazards, improve the port's functions, and upgrade the inspection facilities", with a view to further enhancing the port's clearance capability as well as its image as a gateway to the city, and facilitating travellers' clearance. The scope of works is limited to the Shenzhen side only and does not include the extension of MTR East Rail Line (ERL) into Luohu district of Shenzhen side.

As the modification works of the Shenzhen side will not involve the operation of the Lo Wu Control Point of the Hong Kong side, it is envisaged that upon the completion of works, the time required for immigration clearance at the Lo Wu Control Point of the Hong Kong side will not be affected.

In planning for the redevelopment of existing BCPs and the development of new BCPs in the future, the HKSAR Government will actively explore the adoption of new clearance mode to enhance passenger clearance efficiency, including implementing the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode in new land BCPs projects. Issues involved in changing the clearance mode of existing BCPs are far more complicated than implementing new clearance mode at new BCPs, and the related works must be carried out on the premise that the BCPs' existing operations will not be affected. It is therefore necessary for the HKSAR Government and relevant Mainland authorities to make careful planning to ensure that the port design, boundary arrangements, facilities layout, passenger flow, and other ancillary facilities can accommodate the operation of the new clearance mode before its implementation could be considered.

Although Shenzhen is about to carry out modification works for the Luohu Port, the works will not bring about changes in the overall facilities layout and passenger clearance route (i.e. Hong Kong and Shenzhen to have their own passenger terminal buildings within their respective boundary along the Shenzhen River and the two buildings to be connected by a pedestrian bridge). Therefore, after the modification of the Port in Shenzhen, the current clearance mode will continue, instead of adopting the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode. Besides, the HKSAR Government noted that the Shenzhen side has no plan to extend the MTR ERL into the Luohu district of Shenzhen.

LCQ9: Combating frauds involving

deepfake

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Tan Yueheng and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

A study has reportedly found that the number of scams involving deepfake in Hong Kong in the first quarter of this year has scored a 10-fold increase year-on-year, which is among the highest in the Asia-Pacific region, and the rate of deepfake identity fraud involving the fintech industry in Hong Kong is the highest in the Asia-Pacific region. On the other hand, some members of the public are worried that there is no way to guard against law-breakers who have in recent years successfully committed frauds by making use of deepfake technology to create highly realistic faces and voices. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of proactive investigations conducted and reports received by the Government in each of the past three years in respect of fraudulent activities using deepfake technology, and set out for each case the type of fraud and amount of money involved; the detection rate of such cases;

(2) whether it has assessed the effectiveness of the measures introduced by the Government to combat fraud cases involving deepfake-generated false information; and

(3) of the measures in place to enhance the regulation of the application of deepfake technology, and what new measures are in place to step up efforts to combat the dissemination of disinformation on the Internet and social media?

Reply:

President,

Deception is a serious offence. Deepfake refers to the use of deep learning (namely a technique of artificial intelligence (AI)) to synthesise images for the purpose of creating falsified images. In recent years, the Police have noticed a new online deception tactic that involves the use of deepfake technology to impersonate government officials or celebrities for promoting suspicious investment products in fraudulent messages and videos. The Police will continue to enhance public awareness and combat all types of fraud through stepped-up law enforcement measures, including those against deepfake deception, publicity and education, intelligence analysis, cross-boundary collaboration, as well as collaboration with sectors that have a higher chance of being affected by deepfake deception (such as advertisers and website operators).

In consultation with the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, the reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Tan Yueheng is as follows:

(1) In view of the emergence of new modus operandi involving deepfake technology in recent years, the Police have maintained separate statistics on this type of fraud since 2023. Up to May 31, 2024, the Police have received three cases relating to deepfake technology, which occurred in August 2023, January 2024 and May 2024 respectively. The first case has been successfully detected and the remaining two cases are still under investigation.

The first case was detected after the Police's proactive intelligence-led investigation. In August 2023, the Police smashed a local fraud syndicate in an operation code-named Smashscam. The syndicate was suspected of stealing others' identities and using an AI face-swapping programme to apply for loans online from finance companies between September 2022 and July 2023, involving money amounting to HK\$200,000. Subsequently in August 2023, the Police arrested a total of nine persons, including the mastermind of the syndicate, for the suspected offence of "conspiracy to defraud". This is the first detected case involving AI face-swapping.

In end-January 2024, the Police received one fraud case involving the use of deepfake technology to fabricate a pre-recorded video conference. The informant received a phishing email from a fraudster, who impersonated the Chief Financial Officer of the informant's head office in the United Kingdom (UK) and invited the informant into a group video conference for some alleged confidential transactions. As instructed, the informant eventually gave authorisation to transfer funds to five local bank accounts and suffered a loss of about HK\$200 million. After investigation, the Police believed that the pre-recorded video conference was generated using downloaded online public video clips and voices of the impersonated officer. Since the meeting was pre-recorded, there was actually no interaction between the informant and the fraudster. After making the instruction to the informant, the fraudster ended the meeting under some pretext and then continued with the payment transfer instructions using instant messaging software. The case is still under Police investigation.

On May 20, 2024, a staff member of a multinational trade company received a WhatsApp message from a fraudster, who impersonated the Chief Financial Officer of the head office in the UK, and they took part in a video conference for nearly 30 minutes. During the meeting, the "fake boss" instructed the staff member to transfer nearly HK\$4 million to a local bank account. According to Police investigation, it is believed that the suspect had used online public videos as materials for alteration using deepfake technology, and then played the altered content at the video conference to mislead the victim into making money transfers. Police investigation is ongoing.

In addition, since November 1, 2023, the Police have started to maintain statistical figures of cases identified or reports received in respect of online deepfake video clips. As at May 31, 2024, a total of 21 online deepfake video clips involving impersonation of government officials or

celebrities were identified by or reported to the Police. Two of them were identified as a result of proactive investigations and 19 cases were reported by members of the public. Of the 21 videos, 20 were identified between November 2023 and January 2024 and the remaining one in March 2024. At the request of the Police, the online or social media platforms concerned had already removed those 21 videos to prevent the public from being defrauded. So far, the Police have not received any reports involving members of the public being defrauded as a direct result of these deepfake video clips.

(2) In response to various challenges posed to cyber policing by AI such as deepfake technology, the Police have been exchanging intelligence with the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), law enforcement agencies of different jurisdictions and the AI industry. The Police have also been keeping track of the latest modus operandi and criminal trends worldwide, which included the application of deepfake technology.

To combat different technology crimes, the Police set up the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) in December 2022. Led by the Director of Crime and Security and comprising 12 experts and leaders from the technology sector, the CPAP seeks to look into risks of crime and fraud involving AI (including deepfake technology) and to enhance public awareness on the potential risks of AI. The Police will continue to step up co-operation with stakeholders of relevant sectors, and will jointly explore and formulate effective measures to combat relevant crimes.

Regarding strengthening of professional competence, the Police have been organising internal training from time to time to enrich colleagues' knowledge on deepfake technology and its related cybercrimes. Related equipment will also be upgraded on a timely basis to achieve greater capability in combatting different types of cybercrimes.

On publicity and education, the Police have been working on various fronts to educate members of the public about the general concepts of AI as well as the fraudsters' latest modus operandi, so as to prevent the public from falling into traps. The Police also hold press conferences from time to time to explain common tricks of fraudsters, and demonstrate how fraudsters use deepfake technology to conduct video conferencing. Through its Facebook page and the CyberDefender website, the Police have been disseminating information about the latest crime situation and anti-deception advice related to deepfake technology.

In fact, the AI powered deepfake technology utilised by fraudsters is not infallible. On various occasions, the Police have called on the public to stay alert to fraud at all times and reminded them to verify the authenticity of videos with different methods so as to avoid falling into deepfake traps. These methods include:

- 1) requesting the person to make certain movements in front of the camera, such as turning their head up, down, left or right, and then observe whether there is any abnormality of the person's image on the screen;

(2) using the content of the conversation to test the authenticity of the other party;

(3) staying alert and verifying with a phone call when a relative or a friend makes a request for remittance via a video or an audio recording; and

(4) avoiding answering unknown video calls and, in case of doubt, utilising the Scameter and Scameter+ or calling the Anti Scam Helpline 18222 for enquiry.

The Police have also been conducting online patrols and enforcement actions from time to time to proactively combat various cybercrimes. To minimise the chances of the public's access to suspicious fraudulent online advertisements, video clips or posts (including those involving the use of deepfake technology), the Police will swiftly request relevant advertisers and website operators to remove them in cases where they are identified. In fact, all the 21 deepfake video clips mentioned above have been removed promptly to prevent members of the public from falling victims to deception. So far, the Police have not received any reports involving members of the public being defrauded as a direct result of these deepfake video clips.

We will not let down our guard. The Police will continue to monitor closely the various new modus operandi of deception and continue to combat fraud cases, including those involving the use of deepfake technology, through the various channels mentioned above.

(3) We note that the pace of AI development and its popularity vary in different regions, and the impact of AI technology on various industries and sectors are not entirely the same. Different regions and organisations have started to look into various measures in light of the latest development in order to cope with the implications and challenges brought by AI, while striking a balance between promoting technology innovation and ensuring compliance of relevant requirements.

As regards combatting the dissemination of false information on the Internet and social media, the Internet is not an unreal world that is beyond the law. Under the existing legislation in Hong Kong, most of the laws enacted to prevent crimes in the real world are applicable to the online world. There are various provisions in place under the existing legal framework to deal with the dissemination of untrue or inappropriate information. For instance, the Crimes (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 introduced the offences of publication or threatened publication of intimate images without consent. The offence is also applicable to intimate images that have been altered (including that altered by AI technology).

In addition, a sub-committee was set up under the Law Reform Commission (LRC) in 2019 to commence a study on cybercrime. At the first stage, a public consultation exercise on cyber-dependent crimes (e.g., illegal access to programme or data) was completed in October 2022. For the next stage, the sub-committee will study cyber-enabled crimes, i.e., traditional crimes which can be increased in scale or reach by the use of computers, computer networks

or other forms of information and communications technology (e.g., offences such as setting up a phishing website). The Government will closely monitor the progress of the LRC's study as well as its final recommendations, and review the legislation in due course.