

## LCQ21: Food Truck Pilot Scheme

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, in the Legislative Council today (January 26):

Question:

The Government recently announced the decision to end the Food Truck Pilot Scheme (the Scheme) in June this year, after a comprehensive evaluation of its effectiveness. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective gross revenues earned by the operators of food trucks (the operators) in each rotation cycle since the launch of the Scheme;
- (2) of the respective gross revenues earned by the operators in designated operating venues and new operating venues, in each of the past three years;
- (3) of the respective highest, lowest and median gross revenues earned by the operators, in each of the past three years;
- (4) of the average or median revenue earned by the operators in operating at various self-identified events;
- (5) whether it has examined the reasons for the poor business performance of the operators; if so, of the outcome; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (6) whether it will consider allowing the operators to choose whether or not to continue the operation of their food trucks; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Food Truck Pilot Scheme (the Scheme) was launched on February 3, 2017. It was stated that the Scheme would be operated on a pilot basis with the objective of promoting food trucks as a tourism project. Since the implementation of the Scheme, the Government has been continuously refining the Scheme and has extended it twice to February 2022. The Scheme has been running for almost five years. Food trucks have been fully tested and their operation and development are unable to achieve the policy objective. The Government has decided to end the Scheme, but will extend it for about four months until June 1, 2022, to allow sufficient time for the operators to make corresponding arrangements.

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan is as follows:

(1) Since the commencement of the Scheme in February 2017 up till now, food trucks have completed almost 16 Rotation Cycles (Note 1), with each lasting for 16 weeks. Fifteen food trucks started their business at different times between February and December 2017. Upon the withdrawal of three food trucks in 2019, 2020 and 2021, there are currently 12 food trucks under the Scheme.

The gross revenue of food trucks at each Rotation Cycle is presented in the table below:

Rotation Cycle		Gross revenue of all food trucks (\$ million)
1	February to June 2017	8.92
2	June to October 2017	6.06
3	October 2017 to February 2018	8.38
4	February to May 2018	6.64
5	May to September 2018	4.79
6	September 2018 to January 2019	5.47
7	January to April 2019	4.87
8	April to August 2019	3.12
9	August to December 2019	1.72
10	December 2019 to March 2020	0.91
11	March to July 2020	0.17
12	July to November 2020	0.35
13	November 2020 to February 2021	0.95
14	March to June 2021	1.15
15	June to October 2021	1.01
16	October 2021 to February 2022 (up to early January 2022)	1.77
	Total:	56.28

(2) In the past three years, the gross revenue of food trucks at designated operating venues and new operating venues is presented in the table below:

Operating venues	Gross revenue of all food trucks (\$ million)		
	2019	2020 (Note 2)	2021 (Note 2)
(A) Designated venues			

Hong Kong Disneyland	6.26	0.31	1.2
Tsim Sha Tsui Art Square	0.98	0.05	0.14
Tsim Sha Tsui Salisbury Garden	0.66	0.01	0
Ocean Park	0.56	0.01	0.01
Golden Bauhinia Square	0.24	0	0
Wong Tai Sin Square	0.01	0	0
Central Harbourfront Event Space	0.03	0	0
Energizing Kowloon East Venue 1	0.01	0.12	0
(A) Subtotal:	8.75	0.5	1.35
(B) New venues			
West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) (Note 3)	Not yet joined the Scheme	0.61	2.6
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	0.33	0	0
AsiaWorld Expo (AWE) (Note 4)	0	Withdrawn from the Scheme	Withdrawn from the Scheme
Hong Kong Science Museum	0.02	0	0
Hong Kong Science Park (SP) (Note 5)	0	0	0
Jockey Club HKFA Football Training Centre (HKFTC) (Note 6)	0.05	0.04	0.01
Tai Po Waterfront Park (TPWP) (Note 7)	0.01	Withdrawn from the Scheme	Withdrawn from the Scheme
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port (HZMB HKP) (Note 8)	0.01	0	Withdrawn from the Scheme
(B) Subtotal:	0.42	0.65	2.61
(A)+(B) Total:	9.17	1.15	3.96

(3) In the past three years, the highest, lowest and median revenue among the operating food trucks is presented in the table below:

Number of operating food trucks	2019	2020	2021
	15	8	7
	Gross revenue of operating food trucks (\$ million)		
Highest	1.17	0.45	1.51
Lowest	0.09	0.01	0.05
Median	0.75	0.09	0.67

(4) Self-identified events varied in the number of event days, as well as the combination and number of participating food trucks. From June 2017 to early January 2022, all applications made by operators for their operation in 109 self-identified events were approved. The gross revenue generated in all self-identified events was \$5.17 million.

(5) In the 2015 Budget, the Government put forward its plan to study the introduction of food trucks. The Scheme has been positioned as a tourism promotion project and implemented in the form of a pilot scheme. The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) and the Tourism Commission (TC) of the CEDB have, within their policy framework, all along been offering support to food truck operation and refining the Scheme so as to expand the business opportunities and operation flexibility of food trucks. Such work includes:

- (i) Exploring new operating venues continuously and introducing eight new operating venues in addition to the original eight designated venues;
- (ii) Relaxing restrictions by offering a more flexible operation schedule so as to facilitate the operators to secure operation locations and trading periods with more business opportunities, including allowing food trucks to operate in different venues at day time and night time, bid for available vacant pitches either by drawing lots or on a first-come-first-served basis, and swap trading periods of the same venue with other operators;
- (iii) Taking suggestions of the operators to identify new operating venues;
- (iv) Expanding the mode of operation by allowing food trucks to participate in self-identified events which are open to the public, with publicity packages and appropriate licences. Since the commencement of the Scheme, operators have applied for operation in 109 self-identified events and all applications were approved; and
- (v) Reducing the operating costs of operators substantially by allowing them to opt whether to operate at individual venues and pay rental fees for operation days only.

In addition, in view of the impact of the riots in 2019 and the epidemic brought to the operation of food trucks, the Government has launched a series of helping measures for food trucks, including waiving all licence fees and first vehicle examination fees for food trucks, providing a one-off subsidy

of \$80,000 to operators, offering 75 per cent rental concession at government venues, and facilitating rental reduction of 30 per cent and 20 per cent for food truck venues at the two theme parks respectively.

Apart from policy support, the business performance of food trucks, being a commercially operated project, also hinges upon the operating conditions and strategy of the operators. However, the business development of food trucks was not satisfactory. The performance of the Scheme in general was better only at the initial stage after the Scheme was implemented in 2017 but it deteriorated continuously in the subsequent two years. Three of the 15 food trucks have already withdrawn from the Scheme, and currently among the remaining 12 food trucks, only half maintain relatively regular operation. As for the current 12 operating venues, only three have frequent food truck operation.

Food trucks as a tourism facility in Hong Kong are facing a number of operation challenges. The competition of catering industry in Hong Kong is keen. In order to maintain a fair business environment, food trucks are required to operate at designated locations and maintain certain distance from nearby catering outlets. In addition, locations of food truck pitches should not cause obstruction to any road users and there should be electricity and other support services provided by the venue management for food trucks. The operation of food truck business is also very much subject to the weather conditions.

Food trucks are operated on a commercial basis and they are to attract customers by their own characteristics. The Scheme has been running for almost five years. The CEDB and the TC have been providing various support to food truck operation, and refining and extending the Scheme on a number of occasions, such as exploring new operating venues, offering a more flexible operation schedule, expanding the mode of operation and reducing the operating costs substantially, etc. The business development of food trucks being a tourism promotion facility was still not satisfactory.

(6) Upon the conclusion of the Scheme, operators are required to surrender their Food Factory Licence and Special Purpose Vehicle (Food Processor) Licence to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Transport Department respectively. It will be food truck operators' commercial decision whether they will continue running their businesses in other modes of catering businesses after the conclusion of the Scheme. If they so decide, they are required to follow the FEHD's existing procedures to apply for an appropriate licence.

Note 1: Food trucks will move from one designated operating venue to another at a bi-weekly interval and complete a rotation cycle of all designated venues in 16 weeks.

Note 2: Since the outbreak of the epidemic in early 2020, some operating venues were closed from time to time due to social distancing measures.

Note 3: WKCD provided two locations for food truck operation from June 19, 2020 to August 31, 2020. It increased the number of locations to three on September 5, 2020 and further increased it to six on May 18, 2021.

Note 4: AWE provided two pitches for food truck operation when suitable events were held at the venue from May 20, 2017 to February 2, 2019. It withdrew from the Scheme in the light of its development plan.

Note 5: SP provided one pitch for food truck operation when suitable events were held at the venue from June 6, 2017 to February 2, 2021. It withdrew from the Scheme on resources consideration.

Note 6: HKFTC provides two pitches for food truck operation on Saturdays and Sundays since December 7, 2019.

Note 7: TPWP provided one pitch for food truck operation from July 22, 2019 to September 30, 2019 to cover the service gap when its kiosk and restaurant were temporarily closed.

Note 8: HZMB HKP provided one pitch for food truck operation from July 8, 2019 to July 31, 2020. It withdrew from the Scheme on account of carrying out site works.

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## LCQ9: Talents in the architectural, surveying, planning and landscape sectors

â€‹Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (January 26):

Question:

â€‹There are comments that with the Government proposing to take forward a number of major development projects such as the Northern Metropolis and the reclamation project of the Lantau Tomorrow Vision, it is expected that Hong Kong's demand for professional architectural, surveying, planning and landscape (ASPL) services will increase significantly in the coming 10 to 20 years. Nevertheless, the number of places offered by local universities to train the relevant professional and skilled talents has not increased for many years, and there is even a downward trend in the number of places for some of the relevant disciplines. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of places for training professional and skilled ASPL talents in each of the past five years and the coming three years, with a breakdown by the tertiary institution providing such training and by discipline;

(2) whether the Government and the relevant authorities (including the University Grants Committee and various tertiary institutions) have assessed Hong Kong's demand for professional and skilled ASPL talents in the coming 10 to 20 years; if so, of the outcome; if not, whether they will conduct an

assessment expeditiously, and how the Government ensures that there is an adequate supply of relevant talents to take forward the aforesaid development projects;

(3) whether it will consult the sectors, including the relevant professional associations, developers and contractors, on matters relating to the supply and demand as well as the training of professional and skilled ASPL talents; and

(4) whether it will, by means of allocating additional funding and setting student number targets, etc. to spur the various tertiary institutions to suitably increase the places for training professional and skilled ASPL talents; if so, of the specific plans and implementation timetables; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

To meet the demand for construction professional services arising from the upcoming major infrastructure development, the Government, together with post-secondary education institutions, the Construction Industry Council (CIC) and other training institutions as well as the construction industry, will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach in ensuring an adequate supply of talents, including enhancement of training; government support through the Construction Innovation and Technology Fund in promoting the use of innovation and technology to enhance the overall productivity of the construction industry.

Regarding the four parts of the question raised by the Hon Tse Wai-chuen, upon consultation with the Education Bureau and the Labour and Welfare Bureau we provide a co-ordinated reply as follows:

(1) For training of professional and skilled talents for the ASPL disciplines in Hong Kong, the actual intake of relevant undergraduate and taught postgraduate (TPg) programmes funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) in the academic years from 2017/18 to 2021/22 are set out in Annex 1.

As regards other ASPL related non-UGC-funded full-time locally-accredited sub-degree, first-year-first-degree, top-up degree, and TPg programmes, the actual intake in the academic years from 2017/18 to 2020/21 are set out in Annex 2.

(2) The CIC regularly conducts manpower forecast for the construction industry, including projected demand and supply for professionals, skilled talents and workers. The CIC is updating the relevant forecast. Initial feedback from industry stakeholders on the manpower supply and demand situation gauged by the CIC recently reveals a keen demand in certain disciplines of professionals and skilled talents.

CIC would, with due regard to the update on manpower forecast, liaise with relevant government policy bureaux, various post-secondary education

institutions and training institutions with an aim to jointly provide sufficient training for the professionals and skilled talents required by the construction industry.

Apart from training, we actively promote the industry to adopt innovative technologies to enhance the overall productivity of the construction industry through the \$1 billion Construction Innovation and Technology Fund (CITF) to meet the future manpower demand. In operation for more than three years, the CITF has gradually achieved notable effect. By the end of 2021, the CITF has approved more than \$570 million, subsidising over 830 enterprises to adopt the Modular Integrated Construction, Building Information Modeling and other advanced construction technologies, and about 11 000 technology related training places for construction professionals, skilled talents and other practitioners.

(3) Government policy bureaux would keep in touch with the relevant industry organisations to understand the manpower demand situation of their respective sectors. Through the CIC, the Development Bureau would regularly communicate with professional institutions, trade associations, contractors' associations and trade unions related to the construction industry to understand the development needs, the manpower supply and demand and training needs for various professionals and skilled talents. The CIC would also gauge the views of various industry stakeholders in the process of conducting manpower forecast.

(4) Under the current triennial planning mechanism of the UGC-funded universities, Education Bureau would only determine the approved student number targets by university and study level. Apart from the education and healthcare disciplines, it does not specify the student number targets for individual disciplines nor programmes. Universities enjoy substantial autonomy to flexibly deploy their recurrent grants, which are allocated in the form of a block grant, to determine the programmes to be offered and the allocation of student places among different disciplines, including those related to ASPL. The current mechanism ensures that universities may make use of their funding flexibly and respond to the different sectors' demand for talents in a timely manner.

In the course of the triennium planning exercises, the Development Bureau has reflected the industry's higher education demand for professionals and skilled talents in the next few years, including the consideration that the expenditure of capital works programme will maintain at a high level thus creating a continuous demand for talents in the relevant disciplines including ASPL and engineering. UGC-funded universities will review their existing programmes, introduce new ones and retire obsolete ones with reference to the advice on manpower demand for specific sectors provided by relevant bureaux/departments as well as the future trends of the society. This is to ensure that the higher education sector could continuously nurture talents for Hong Kong's development.

As regards the self-financing post-secondary education sector, under the principle of institutional autonomy, self-financing institutions similarly



have the flexibility to develop programmes that meet market needs and adjust the intake places of relevant programmes.

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## Crowd safety management measures and special traffic arrangements for Mong Kok Flower Market Road area

Police will implement crowd safety management measures and special traffic arrangements at Mong Kok Flower Market Road area between January 27 (Thursday) and February 1 (Tuesday), 2022 to ensure smooth traffic flow and public safety. Police reminded members of the public to observe regulations on the prohibition of group gatherings and wearing of masks in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### A. Crowd safety management measures

A large number of people is expected to visit the Flower Market area before the Lunar New Year. Depending on actual crowd condition, the Police will implement crowd management measures in the area including Flower Market Road, Yuen Ngai Street, Yuen Po Street and the adjacent Prince Edward Road West service road, Sai Yee Street, Fa Yuen Street and Playing Field Road. Members of the public are advised to exercise tolerance and patience and take heed of instructions of the Police on site.

### B. Road closure and traffic diversions

The following roads will be closed from 8am on January 27 until 8am on February 1:

- Flower Market Road;
- Yuen Ngai Street;
- Yuen Po Street; and
- Prince Edward Road West service road.

Vehicles with valid permit can access the above roads daily from 00.01am to 5pm for loading/unloading.

During the road closure period, traffic along westbound Prince Edward Road West cannot turn right to northbound Sai Yee Street. Affected vehicles will be diverted via northbound Tung Choi Street, Playing Field Road / Boundary Street, Fa Yuen Street, and Prince Edward Road West service road.

Subject to the prevailing traffic situation, the following roads will be closed from 8am on January 27 or anytime when necessary until 8am on February 1:

- Sai Yee Street between Prince Edward Road West and Boundary Street;
- Fa Yuen Street between Prince Edward Road West and Boundary Street;
- Playing Field Road between Tung Choi Street and Sai Yee Street; and
- Prince Edward Road West service road between Nathan Road and Sai Yee Street.

Traffic along westbound Prince Edward Road West near junction of Nathan Road cannot make U-turn to Prince Edward Road West service road during the period.

#### C. Suspension of parking spaces

The parking spaces at the following locations will be suspended from 8am on January 27 until 8am on February 1:

- The metered parking spaces on Fa Yuen Street between Prince Edward Road West service road and Boundary Street;
- The meter parking spaces on Tung Choi Street between Prince Edward Road West service road and Boundary Street;
- The meter parking spaces on Playing Field Road between Tung Choi Street and Sai Yee Street;
- The motorcycle parking spaces on Tung Choi Street near Playing Field Road;
- The motorcycle parking spaces on Playing Field Road between Fa Yuen Street and Tung Choi Street;
- The motorcycles parking spaces under Prince Edward Road West flyover between Tung Choi Street and Sai Yee Street; and
- The disabled parking spaces on Fa Yuen Street near Boundary Street.

The disabled parking spaces on Playing Field Road near Tung Choi Street will be suspended from 8am on January 31 until 8am on February 1.

Vehicles found illegally parked within the precinct of the special traffic arrangements will be ticketed or towed away without prior warning.

Actual implementation of the traffic arrangements will be made depending on traffic and crowd conditions in the area. Motorists are advised to exercise tolerance and patience and take heed of instructions of the Police on site.

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## [LCQ16: Coping with fifth wave of epidemic](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Kennedy Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (January 26):

Question:

Earlier on, some aircrew members brought the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) into the community causing community transmission, and recently there are also cases with unknown sources of infection. Some experts have pointed out that the fifth wave of the epidemic has already commenced. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Government will expand the "vaccine bubble" scheme on the 24th of next month to include all catering business and scheduled premises, as well as schools and some government cultural and leisure facilities, whether it has anticipated (i) the extent to which the COVID-19 vaccination rate will be raised as a result, and (ii) the situation of community infection before the implementation of the said measure; whether it will examine recovering the medical costs for providing treatments to those infected persons who are unvaccinated without medical grounds, upon implementation of the measure;

(2) of the anticipated impact that the fifth wave of the epidemic has on the resumption of normal traveller clearance between Hong Kong and the Mainland; whether it will hold meetings again with the Mainland experts group to discuss traveller clearance issues; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as some experts have pointed out that herd immunity will be achieved only when more than 80 per cent of the population has completed the third-dose vaccination, but at present only about 70 per cent of Hong Kong's population has completed two doses of vaccination, while less than 10 per cent has received the third-dose vaccination, whether the Government will consider implementing a mandatory vaccination policy so that Hong Kong may achieve herd immunity as soon as possible; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted relevant bureaux, our reply to different parts of the question raised by the Hon Kennedy Wong is as follows:

(1) The Government has continuously adjusted social distancing measures in view of the development of COVID-19 epidemic situation. Starting from the second half of December 2021, the Omicron variant has replaced the Delta variant to be the dominant mutant strain with a significant increase in Hong Kong's imported/import-related positive cases. Transmission in the community has also occurred with three clusters originating from imported cases of the Omicron variant. On January 23 and 24, 2022, the numbers of newly reported cases of local infection were 125 and 98 respectively. In view of the higher transmissibility of the Omicron variant with Hong Kong recording cases of the Delta variant, the Government has conducted epidemiological investigations to targeted clusters in the community promptly. Close contacts are also isolated and large-scale testing operations have taken place with a view to

controlling the epidemic situation.

In response to the rapidly changing epidemic situation in January with the highly transmissible Omicron variant spreading to community, the Government has tightened social distancing measures in line with the most stringent level adopted during the third and fourth wave from January 7. Through discouraging members of the public from going out and gathering unnecessarily, it aims to curb the spread of the virus in the community. After considering the latest epidemic situation, the Chief Executive announced on January 14 that the current social distancing measures will be maintained until February 3 with a view to keeping the epidemic under control and cutting the transmission chains.

Depending on the latest development of COVID-19 epidemic situation and subject to the epidemic situation being under control, the Government will relax the operating restrictions of catering premises and scheduled premises in a gradual and orderly manner by expanding the "vaccine bubble" measures, which requires staff of relevant premises and/or visiting members of the public to be vaccinated with a view to increasing the overall vaccination rate in Hong Kong. This serves to reduce transmission risk and safeguard public health, build a protective shield for the community and help resume normal daily lives as soon as possible.

COVID-19 vaccination is highly effective in preventing serious illness and death and provides effective protection for recipients, avoiding serious complications or even death. A reduction in cases of serious illness due to COVID-19 would help avoid overstressing the public healthcare system with the outbreak. Therefore, the Government appeals to members of the public who have yet to receive vaccination, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, to get vaccinated as soon as possible for self-protection and for the society as a whole.

It has been the policy of the Government to provide public healthcare services to eligible persons at highly subsidised rates to ensure that no one will be denied adequate medical care due to lack of means. At this stage, the Government has no intention to recover medical costs on a cost-recovery basis from COVID-19 patients who are unvaccinated without medical grounds. Encouraging vaccination for all under the "vaccine bubble" remains the key component in Hong Kong's overall anti-epidemic strategy against COVID-19 which in turns protect public health and our public healthcare system.

(2) With the staunch support by the Central Government, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSAR Government) has made steady progress in the resumption of quarantine-free travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong with a lot of preparatory work being done, including multiple meetings on Mainland and Hong Kong anti-epidemic work and visit by Mainland expert delegation. The HKSAR Government will continue to adopt a "preventing the importation of cases and the spreading of the virus in the community" anti-epidemic strategy and achieve dynamic "zero infection". The HKSAR Government strives to cut the mutant strain transmission chains in the community as quickly as possible, aiming to achieve no local infection in 14 consecutive

days. At the same time, through the continuous increase in vaccination rate, favourable conditions can be created for quarantine-free travel.

(3) The COVID-19 epidemic is still rampant across the globe and vaccination is the best measure and hope for Hong Kong and the world to ride out the epidemic. The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme led by the Government was launched in late February last year. As at January 24, about 5.26 million people had received the first dose vaccine, accounting for over 78.1 per cent of the population aged 12 or above. Over 810 000 people had received the third dose vaccine.

To combat the epidemic, the Government has been strongly appealing to and encouraging the public to get vaccinated, with a view to protecting the community by increasing the vaccination rate in Hong Kong. The Government is also committed to providing a variety of vaccination channels to enable members of the public to receive vaccination conveniently. Recently, the public's willingness to get vaccinated has increased. The Government immediately increased the vaccination capacity and provided more vaccination channels. In total, the Government currently has 14 Community Vaccination Centres; 13 COVID-19 Vaccination Stations located at public hospitals; two mobile vaccination stations shuttling between various housing estates and locations; 25 general out-patient clinics of the Hospital Authority; more than 1 000 private doctors or clinics; and 26 service locations operated by private healthcare institutions. The number of monthly doses that can be administered exceeds 1.3 million. From January 18 to 24, over 40 000 doses were administered daily on average, including an average of some 16 000 people receiving the first dose, and an average of some 20 000 people receiving the third dose.

For elderly persons whose vaccination rate has been persistently low, the Government proactively encourages them to speed up vaccination and have introduced a basket of facilitating measures, including handing out same-day tickets at Community Vaccination Centres only to eligible persons aged 60 or above, and providing vaccination for elders at the 15 Elderly Health Centres under the Department of Health. Also, District Health Centres (DHC) and DHC Expresses at various districts strive to assist those in need, especially the elderly, in making appointments for vaccination. At the same time, they collaborate with network doctors to render outreach vaccination services. Furthermore, since October 25, 2021, the Social Welfare Department has implemented the Assess and Vaccinate Programme at residential care homes (RCHs) around Hong Kong (including residential care homes for the elderly and persons with disabilities). Arrangements are made for unvaccinated residents to have health assessments by Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs) arranged by the RCHs or vaccination teams arranged by the Government. Upon confirmation that a resident is suitable for receiving vaccination, and that his/her family members do not clearly oppose vaccination and confirmed that they understand the risks posed to the resident, other residents and staff of the RCH by the resident not being vaccinated, the Sinovac vaccine would be administered to the resident by VMOs or vaccination teams under the informed consent of the resident or his/her legal guardian, so as to give early protection to him/her and other residents as well as staff of RCHs. During

the period, VMOs or vaccination teams also provide health talks/health consultation to residents and their families in need so that they can better understand the vaccine effectiveness to allay their concerns. Compared with the start of January, the vaccination rate of the elderly has increased. Close to 58 per cent of those aged 70 to 79 have received the first dose vaccine, and the vaccination rate of those aged 80 and above has also increased to close to 30 per cent. On the other hand, the Government has also expanded the eligibility age to cover children aged five to 11 so that they can also benefit from the protection of vaccines.

To guard against the threat posed by the mutant virus strains with high transmissibility to the Hong Kong community, the Government will continue to encourage persons who have yet to receive COVID-19 vaccination to get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection. Eligible persons should also receive a third dose vaccine as soon as possible to enhance protection and build a protective barrier in the community. As mentioned above, expanding the "vaccine bubble" measures will help spur members of the public to get vaccinated. Based on the current steadily rising vaccination rate, the Government is confident that the vaccination rate of 80 per cent or higher can be achieved in the short term. The Government will also closely monitor the development of the epidemic situation both globally and locally, the vaccination progress in Hong Kong, as well as the recommendations of the World Health Organization and overseas regulatory authorities on COVID-19 vaccines. After balancing relevant factors, the Government will consider implementing further measures to boost the vaccination rate in Hong Kong. The Government does not preclude the implementation of any possible measures.

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## **Import of poultry meat and products from areas in Germany suspended**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 26) that in view of notifications from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Augsburg District and Rhön-Grabfeld District in the State of Bayern and Havelland District in the State of Brandenburg in Germany, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above-mentioned areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 430 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 800,000 poultry eggs from Germany in the first nine months of last year.

"The CFS has contacted the German authority over the issues and will

closely monitor information issued by the OIE and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.