

LCQ3: Promoting the development of the film industry

Following is a question by the Hon Vincent Cheng and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Raistlin Lau, in the Legislative Council today (June 12):

Question:

It has been reported that following the splash made recently by the film "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In" at the Cannes Film Festival, the morale of the film industry has been greatly boosted. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as there are views pointing out that "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In" has enjoyed the opportunity to triumph beyond Hong Kong only because it is invested by private enterprises with a production budget as high as \$300 million, whereas most Hong Kong films, especially those subsidized by the Film Development Fund (FDF), are low-budget productions with varied box-office numbers, whether the authorities will consider enhancing the funding schemes under the FDF, such as raising the amount of financing that each film can receive under the Film Production Financing Scheme (FPFS), enhancing the training subsidies for prospective film directors and scriptwriters, or introducing other enhancement measures; if so, of the details, and whether they will consult the film industry;

(2) of the amounts of public funds used for the various schemes under the FDF (including the FPFS, the First Feature Film Initiative, and the Scriptwriting Incubation Programme) and set out, by title of subsidized film, the amounts of subsidies under FDF, the amounts of investment from private enterprises, and the box-office takings; whether it has assessed the effectiveness of various schemes; and

(3) apart from participating in the international film festivals as well as launching the Film Financing Scheme for Mainland Market and the Hong Kong-Europe-Asian Film Collaboration Funding Scheme recently, of the other deployments put in place by the authorities to enable Hong Kong films to tap into the markets in other places and generate economic benefits, including whether they will support the release of Hong Kong films in other places?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the Hon Vincent Cheng's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The Government has been supporting the development of the Hong Kong film industry through the Film Development Fund (FDF) along four

strategic directions, namely, nurturing talent, enhancing local production, expanding markets and building audience. The Government reviews the operation of the FDF and the scope of funding from time to time in response to the development needs of the film industry.

In order to encourage the film industry to enhance Hong Kong film production, the Government introduced the Film Production Financing Scheme (FPFS) in 2007 to provide Government finance to small and medium-budgeted film productions. The recommended financing ratio is determined based on the score obtained by the film project, which ranges from 20 to 40 per cent of the production budget, with a cap of \$9 million. The Government further launched the Film Production Financing Scheme – Relaxation Plan (Relaxation Plan) in 2020, taking into account the challenges faced by the industry due to the epidemic at that time, the mechanism was enhanced and the actual financing amount was increased. Each approved film project would receive a maximum financing ratio, which is 40 per cent of the production budget or \$9 million, whichever is less. This measure was well received by the film industry. Having regard to the positive feedback from the sector, the deadline for application under the Relaxation Plan has been further extended for one year to January 14, 2025. The Government will consolidate the experiences from implementation of the relaxation measures so as to enhance the scheme. Taking into account the significance of sustainable projects in promoting the development of Hong Kong films, we will continue to reach out to the film sector to gauge their views on the financing/funding ceiling for considering further enhancements to the current mechanism.

The FDF has also been committed to nurturing talents. The First Feature Film Initiative (FFFI) was launched in 2013 with the aim to providing funding to support new directors and their film production teams to make their first feature films on a commercial basis, with an aim of nurturing talents for the film industry. The FFFI identifies new talents through competitions. The winning new directors and their film production teams will receive funding from FDF to make their first feature films. The FDF also launched the Directors' Succession Scheme in July 2020. It invites veteran directors to partner with young directors to co-produce local films in the spirit of mentorship, with a view to encouraging directors to groom young talents and enhancing the quantity of quality local film productions. In addition, Scriptwriting Incubation Programme under the FDF aims at identifying and nurturing local screenwriting talent to help incubate quality screenplays, thereby enhancing the quality of Hong Kong film productions. The FDF also supports other film-related talent nurture programmes, such as the Screenwriting Apprenticeship Programme, which aims to provide talents for different positions in film production, thereby improving the quality of films.

In response to the rise of online social platforms and streaming platforms, the Content Development Scheme for Streaming Platforms was launched under the FDF in 2023. Teams are recruited through a competition under this Scheme to develop content for streaming platform series, thereby nurturing cross-sectoral production teams for streaming platforms and facilitating the film industry to enter new distribution markets by creating

quality streaming content.

To date, over 100 emerging directors and producers were engaged in some 100 films funded under the FDF, which have won more than 160 local and international awards. Many of the Government financed films in recent years, for example, "A Guilty Conscience", "Mama's Affair", "Chilli Laugh Story", "Time Still Turns the Pages", "Hong Kong Family", "A Light Never Goes Out" and "Lost Love", etc have achieved good box office. More than 3 500 job opportunities were also created by the projects funded under the Film Production Financing Scheme. The Government will evaluate the effectiveness of the schemes from various aspects, including the numbers of talents nurtured, job opportunities created, box office receipts, as well as local and international awards attained. The Government reviews the schemes according to the development needs of the film industry from time to time.

The projects funded under the schemes of the FDF are shown at Annex. The amount of investment by private companies is a kind of commercial information, thus it is not appropriate for the Government to disclose such information.

(3) In order to further subsidise Hong Kong films to explore overseas markets, the Government has actively launched a number of new schemes under the FDF in the past two years. Following the launch of the Hong Kong-Asian Film Collaboration Funding Scheme in 2023, the Film Financing Scheme for Mainland Market was launched in May this year to support Hong Kong film companies and the Mainland cultural enterprises to invest in and promote the productions of Hong Kong directors. This will also help boost the chance of Hong Kong films for release in the Mainland market. The Government will also expand the original Hong Kong-Asian Film Collaboration Funding Scheme to the Hong Kong-Europe-Asian Film Collaboration Funding Scheme, which will subsidise film projects co-produced by filmmakers from European and Asian countries to produce films featuring Hong Kong, European and Asian cultures. This would help promising Hong Kong filmmakers broaden their regional cultural horizons, draw inspiration from film productions of other countries and have better understanding of the market demands of other countries. These schemes have just been launched, and some are just entering the assessment stage. We will take the work forward as soon as possible so that the projects can be released and the effectiveness of the schemes can be evaluated.

The Government has been actively organising and subsidising screenings of Hong Kong films in Mainland and overseas international film festivals and cities in recent years so that audiences from around the world can watch Hong Kong films and know about the unique charms about Hong Kong from these films. Through the support of the FDF, the Government and film-related groups have organised Hong Kong film screenings at many overseas film festivals and cities. Among them, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices in the overseas have sponsored screenings of Hong Kong films at different international film festivals since 2023. Create Hong Kong also organised Hong Kong film screening in more than 30 cities from 2022 to 2024 to promote the works of the new Hong Kong directors/actors. The above activities aim to increase the exposure and popularity of Hong Kong films and build audience. Some of the films of the new directors have been given local distribution opportunities

after being screened, and the results are encouraging. In addition, the FDF also subsidises promotional activities for individual films at major international film festivals to increase publicity effects and distribution opportunities. Create Hong Kong will collaborate with the Hong Kong Film Development Council to study and consider providing further support for the overseas distribution of Hong Kong films.

LCQ1: Recycling domestic food waste

Following is a question by the Hon Dennis Leung and a reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (June 12):

Question:

According to the report "Monitoring of Solid Waste in Hong Kong" by the Environmental Protection Department, food waste accounted for 34 per cent of domestic waste in 2022. There are views that the Government should step up domestic food waste recycling in a step-by-step manner having regard to the waste collection situation of various types of housing. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as there are views that the limited capacity and the frequent overflowing of the food waste smart recycling bins (FWSRBs) under the Smart Food Waste Recycling Programme (Public Rental Housing) are not conducive to developing a habit of food waste recycling among residents, whether the authorities will expedite the achievement of the target of "one FWSRB for each block" in public housing estates under the Housing Department and the Hong Kong Housing Society; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that and the difficulties involved;

(2) as it is learnt that under the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Smart Recycling Bins in Private Housing Estates, the participation period for private housing courts is 28 months, and the FWSRBs allocated to them have to be returned at the end of the participation period, which has aroused concern about the sustainability of the Pilot Scheme, whether the authorities have plans to enhance the Pilot Scheme, so as to avoid the occurrence of a window period for the work of food waste recycling in private housing courts; if not, of the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it has plans to install additional food waste recycling facilities extensively in rural areas and districts with a high concentration of "three-nil" buildings, so as to help residents in such areas and districts to develop a habit of food waste recycling; if not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Currently, about 11 000 tonnes of municipal solid waste are generated in Hong Kong per day, of which around 30 per cent is food waste. Of the total amount of food waste, about 70 per cent are domestic food waste. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) continues to expand the food waste collection network, with the number of collection points set up at public and private premises that generate larger quantities of food waste having increased substantially from around 170 in mid-2022 to over 1 100 at present. Currently, the amount of food waste recycled in Hong Kong is increasing progressively, with an average daily recovery of around 270 tonnes in May this year, representing an increase of about 60 per cent compared to last year. On domestic food waste collection, the EPD has installed food waste smart recycling bins (FWSRBs) in over 90 per cent of the public rental housing (PRH) estates across the territory. It is expected that FWSRBs will be installed in all PRH estates in Hong Kong by July this year, which is one month ahead of the original schedule. In the coming year, the EPD will further enhance various domestic food waste collection measures by doubling the number of FWSRBs in PRH estates and private housing estates, setting up 100 food waste recycling spots, and establishing food waste recycling points at about 100 refuse collection points (RCPs) for use by the general public and restaurants. The reply to the question raised by the Hon Dennis Leung is as follows:

(1) The EPD, in collaboration with the Housing Department (HD) and the Hong Kong Housing Society (HS), launched the Trial Scheme on Food Waste Collection in PRH Estates in late October 2022. The FWSRBs equipped with overflow prevention and odour abatement devices are used to collect food waste to maintain environmental hygiene, and GREEN\$ rewards are provided to encourage residents' participation. The EPD has so far installed a total of 698 FWSRBs in over 90 per cent (i.e. 197) of PRH estates across the territory. The EPD is expected to complete the installation of over 700 FWSRBs in 213 PRH estates (a total of approximately 1 500 blocks) in Hong Kong by July.

The FWSRBs adopted by the EPD are equipped with functions such as weight sensors and fill level sensors. When the inner bin reaches 70 per cent of its capacity, the system will automatically send a phone message reminding the cleansing staff to replace the inner bin. To support the implementation of the food waste collection programme in PRH estates, the EPD has provided additional resources to the HD for strengthening its manpower to enhance cleansing services in all participating PRH estates, including the replacement of inner bins fully loaded with food waste. To further expedite the replacement of inner bins, the EPD has established a new alert system. When there are abnormal operations with the FWSRBs, the system will automatically send messages to the management staff of the estate management office and its cleansing contractor, notifying the relevant teams for immediate follow-up. The EPD will also closely monitor the situation through the big data platform.

Currently, the EPD is in discussion with the HD and the HS concerning

the preparatory work for installing additional FWSRBs in PRH estates with higher usage. It is expected that, before the fourth quarter of this year, additional FWSRBs will be provided at 55 participating PRH estates which have implemented the scheme with high usage. Moreover, the EPD will gradually increase the number of FWSRBs in PRH estates, with the goal of achieving "one FWSRB per PRH block" within two years.

(2) For private housing, the EPD supports the installation of FWSRBs in private residential buildings for collecting food waste through the Recycling Fund and the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF). At the end of last year, the EPD also collaborated with the Environmental Campaign Committee to roll out the Pilot Scheme on FWSRBs in Private Housing Estates under which FWSRBs are provided for free, with installation and maintenance services covered, to private housing estates with over 1 000 households for a two-year period. The EPD is considering optimising the existing scheme to cover private housing estates with fewer than 1 000 households. In the financial year of 2024-25, we expect that over 400 FWSRBs will be put into service in private housing estates. To avoid any service vacuum, the EPD will also continue to support food waste recycling in relevant private residential buildings after the completion of the funded projects.

(3) The EPD has already installed FWSRBs at four GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities (including GREEN@SHAM SHUI PO, GREEN@EASTERN, GREEN@SAI KUNG and GREEN@SHA TIN) in proximity to residential areas for the use of residents who live in buildings without sufficient space to install food waste recycling bins (such as "three-nil" buildings). The first public food waste collection point set up at the wet market of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) also commenced operation at Lockhart Road Wet Market in April this year. In the coming year, the EPD will set up about 100 food waste recycling spots in various districts to provide night-time food waste collection services in the form of kerbside collection booths at fixed time and locations. Moreover, food waste recycling points will also be set up at about 100 RCPs of the FEHD for the use of nearby residents and restaurants. We will continue to explore the possibility of setting up more public food waste recycling points at suitable premises to provide more convenient recycling outlets for the public.

To promote food waste recycling in rural areas, in addition to the provision of traditional covered food waste recycling bins by the EPD, the ECF also subsidises the installation of FWSRBs and food waste pre-treatment facilities known as "Food TranSmarter" in rural villages. In addition, the EPD briefed the New Territories Heung Yee Kuk and Tuen Mun Rural Committee on the details of relevant food waste collection services in November last year and May this year respectively, and called for active participation from the rural committees and village representatives. If village representatives are interested in setting up food waste recycling bins at nearby RCPs in rural areas, the EPD will assist in exploring its feasibility with the FEHD.

Thank you, President.

LCQ15: Measures to attract new capital to Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Jeffrey Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, in the Legislative Council today (June 12):

Question:

To further enrich the talent pool, attract more new capital to Hong Kong, and strengthen the development of the asset and wealth management, financial and related professional service sectors in Hong Kong, the Government introduced the new Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (the new CIES) in March this year. Under the scheme, persons who intend to invest in Hong Kong and their dependants (including spouses and unmarried and dependent children aged under 18 years) can apply for entry to stay in Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of enquiries and applications received so far under the new CIES; in respect of the applications received, a breakdown of the figures and percentages by age and nationality of the applicants and whether they are applying for entry to Hong Kong with their dependants;

(2) of the current number of applications which have passed the Net Asset Assessment, and the latest progress in the vetting and approval of such applications; and

(3) as it is learnt that some banks have recently launched integrated dedicated services targeting applicants of the new CIES to help them capture local investment opportunities through the provision of various tailor-made asset allocation solutions, whether the Government will collaborate with the relevant organisations to provide one-stop services, including enquiry, consultation, application and subsequent follow-up, to the applicants of the new CIES, with a view to enhancing the competitiveness and effectiveness of the new CIES in attracting new capital to Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) and the Immigration Department (ImmD), the consolidated reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (New CIES) has been

launched for application from March 1, 2024, with the aim to further enrich the talent pool and attract new capital to Hong Kong. InvestHK is responsible for assessing whether the applications fulfill the financial requirements, and the ImmD is responsible for assessing the applications for visa/entry permit and extension of stay, etc.

Since the launch of the New CIES on March 1 up to end-May, InvestHK received over 3 000 enquiries (mainly from the potential applicants and service providers) and received over 250 applications. The Net Asset Assessment for over 100 applications was approved. The ImmD granted "approval-in-principle" for over 40 applications, enabling the applicants to enter Hong Kong as visitors for not more than 180 days and make the committed investment during the period. Details of the age, nationality, and dependants of the applicants and the assessment of the applications are set out in Annex.

(3) To facilitate the financial services industry's better understanding of the details of the New CIES, InvestHK has organised a series of briefings for around 2 000 participants from various industry sectors, covering the banking, securities, funds and insurance sectors as well as the professional bodies of the accounting and legal sectors. Industry stakeholders generally welcome the launch of the New CIES. In particular, service providers for high-net-worth individuals or family offices are positive towards their business prospects brought by the New CIES.

InvestHK will continue to maintain close communication with the industry and stakeholders to enhance their understanding of the scheme details. In 2024-25, InvestHK will launch extensive publicity to target client groups through the Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses as well as the Talents and Investment Promotion Divisions (which base in the Economic and Trade Offices around the globe), and plans to further promote the New CIES to industry practitioners such as private banks, lawyers and accounting firms through the Private Wealth Management Association in the third quarter of 2024, thereby enhancing their awareness of the New CIES. InvestHK is also planning to promote the New CIES as well as Hong Kong's competitiveness and unique advantages as a family office hub by means of physical events and online seminars in the Mainland and overseas places.

LCQ7: Public toilets provided along the New Territories Cycle Track Network

Following is a question by the Hon Steven Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council

today (June 12):

Question:

It is learnt that the Tuen Mun to Ma On Shan backbone section of the New Territories Cycle Track Network is about 60 kilometres long, and it takes more than six hours to complete the entire route by cycling. Regarding public toilets provided along the cycle track network, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number, locations and facilities of public toilets provided along the aforesaid cycle track network; how the Government assesses the demand of cyclists and residents in the vicinity of the cycle track network (especially villagers) for such public toilets;

(2) given that as shown on the map and according to site visits conducted by the staff of my office, the distances between public toilets (not temporary public toilets) along the cycle track network vary, whether it has compiled statistics on the respective average and farthest distances between each public toilets, as well as the corresponding travel time needed by walking and cycling;

(3) whether temporary public toilets have been provided along the cycle track network; if so, of the specific number and locations of such toilets;

(4) as the staff of my office are given to understand, temporary public toilets in a number of villages along the cycle track network have been provided in-situ for more than five years, whether it has assessed if such a situation reflects the long-term need of such temporary public toilets (e.g. whether it has compiled statistics on the number and locations of temporary public toilets which have been provided in-situ for more than five years in Ting Kok Road, whether it has received views or applications from the residents concerned for converting such temporary public toilets into permanent ones, as well as the corresponding ways and progress of handling such views and applications); and

(5) as there are views that while temporary public toilets can provide an interim solution to the problem faced by members of the public due to the shortage of toilet facilities, the design of some temporary public toilets gives rise to odour and hygiene problems and poses potential safety hazards, whether the authorities will consider expeditiously converting temporary public toilets along the cycle track network into permanent ones; if so, of the locations and number of additional permanent public toilets to be provided; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government strives to implement the New Territories Cycle Track Network (NTCTN) in stages, with an aim of connecting the cycle tracks in the

New Territories East and West. Currently, the Tuen Mun to Ma On Shan backbone section of about 60 kilometres, the section from Tsuen Wan Riviera Park to Bayview Garden of about two km, and the branching off section of cycle track in Sam Mun Tsai in Tai Po of about one km, are open for public use. To facilitate the enjoyment of cyclists, the Government provides ancillary facilities along the cycle tracks, including cycling entry/exit hubs near public transport interchanges to provide bicycle parking spaces, bicycle rental and repairs kiosks, practising areas, first aid stations or information kiosks, as well as resting stations and public toilets at suitable locations. Public toilets along the NTCTN are mainly managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), while those in the parks and recreational facilities along the route are managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and those in the Wetland Park and country parks along the route are managed by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD).

In response to the Hon Steven Ho's question, having consulted the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the FEHD, the LCSD, the AFCD and the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), the Development Bureau's consolidated reply is as follows:

(1) When planning for the provision of public toilets, the Government will consider the number of existing nearby public toilets, utilisation data, land requirements, feasibility, as well as the opinions and requests of nearby residents, local community and District Councils. The public can locate public toilets available along the NTCTN through the "HKeMobility" app. In the course of planning and design for the NTCTN, the CEDD consulted and obtained support from relevant District Councils and cycling groups regarding the number, locations and facilities of the newly provided public toilets. Apart from about 100 existing public toilets in the vicinity of the NTCTN, the CEDD has provided a total of eight public toilets stated below at cycling entry/exit hubs and suitable resting stations. These public toilets are in use and handed over to the FEHD for management.

Serial No.	District	Name and location of Public Toilets
1	Tuen Mun	Siu Hong Public Toilet Siu Hong Court near Ng Lau Road (located at the Tuen Mun Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)
2	Yuen Long	Tin Fuk Road Public Toilet Tin Fuk Road, Tin Shui Wai (located at the Tin Shui Wai Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)
3	Yuen Long	Small Traders New Village (1) Public Toilet Long Wo Road, Yuen Long (located at the Yuen Long Town Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)

4	North	Ho Sheung Heung Public Toilet (III) At Side of Cycle Track, Ho Sheung Heung Pai Fung Road, Sheung Shui (located at the Sheung Shui Sheung Yue River Resting Station)
5	North	Shek Wu Hui Public Toilet San Wan Road, Sheung Shui (located at the Sheung Shui Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)
6	Sha Tin	University Station Public Toilet Chak Cheung Street, Sha Tin (located at the University Station Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)
7	Tsuen Wan	Hoi Hing Road Public Toilet Cycle Track, Hoi Hing Road, Tsuen Wan (located at the Tsuen Wan Waterfront Cycling Entry/Exit Hub)
8	Tai Po	Sam Mun Tsai Road Public Toilet Sam Mun Tsai Road, Tai Po (located at the Sam Mun Tsai Resting Station)

Note: All public toilets are equipped with accessible toilets

(2) Based on the abovementioned considerations in planning for the provision of public toilets, the distribution along the route varies and they are not rigidly provided at a fixed interval. Based on the total length of 63 km and about 100 public toilets along the route of the cycle track, the average distance between public toilets is about 0.6 km. The farthest distance between two public toilets is about seven km, which are located between Yuen Long Town Cycling Entry/Exit Hub and Mai Po Tsuen. Calculated from the midpoint of these two public toilets, the journey of the nearest public toilet is about 3.5 km which requires not more than 20 minutes to cycle (about 50 minutes for cyclists who choose to walk under special circumstances). Currently temporary toilets are provided by the FEHD at Pok Wai South Road for that section, so that users can reach a toilet with half the time required.

(3) For temporary public toilets in the villages along the cycle track network, there are currently temporary toilets provided by the FEHD at three locations, including Pok Wai South Road in Yuen Long, Ting Kok Road near Ting Kok Tsuen and near Tung Tsz Road in Tai Po, as well as temporary toilets provided by the AFCD at three locations in Long Valley Ecological Park near to the cycle track.

(4) and (5) The FEHD and the AFCD inspect temporary toilets and arrange their service contractors to regularly clean them and repair damaged facilities so as to ensure the hygiene and normal operation of the toilets. The FEHD and the AFCD will also arrange staff to follow up upon receipt of complaint(s).

The FEHD and the AFCD will review the provision of temporary toilets on

need basis, and based on considerations such as utilisation data, land requirements, feasibility, as well as the opinions of nearby residents, local community and District Councils, etc., propose and explore with relevant Government departments the need and feasibility of converting temporary public toilets to permanent public toilets. Considering these factors, the FEHD and the AFCD currently have no plan to convert those temporary toilets mentioned in part (3) above to permanent public toilets.

[LCQ17: Bringing regulated food into Hong Kong](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (June 12):

Question:

In accordance with the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK), it is an offence to bring any game, meat, poultry or eggs (regulated food) into Hong Kong without health certificate issued by an issuing entity of the place of origin and/or without prior written permission granted by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. However, it has been reported that many members of the public have brought regulated food into Hong Kong from the Mainland or overseas in violation of the regulations, and there are even activities of cross-boundary purchase of such food by agents. The Government has pointed out that such food may come from unknown sources and may not be under regulatory control, making it difficult to guarantee the safety of consumption, and also such regulated food is often exposed to environments with unsatisfactory temperatures or hygiene during transportation, largely increasing food safety risks. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of cases of members of the public bringing regulated food into Hong Kong in violation of the regulations and, among them, the number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted in each month of the past two years;

(2) of the maximum, general and minimum penalties imposed on the convicted persons in the prosecution cases mentioned in (1);

(3) as there is a suggestion that officers at various boundary control points can make extensive use of equipment such as X-ray machines to enhance the inspection of items brought by arrivals and on inbound vehicles, whether the authorities will consider the suggestion; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) of the number of cases in the past two years in which members of the public were found, with the assistance of quarantine detector dogs, to have brought regulated food into Hong Kong in violation of the regulations; whether the authorities have plans to increase the number of quarantine detector dogs and their duty time; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) in respect of activities of cross-boundary purchase of regulated food by agents (including placing orders using social network groups and then making self-pickup from local retail stores/consolidation points or direct delivery of the goods), whether the authorities have taken targeted actions to prevent the relevant activities from posing food safety risks to members of the public; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(6) as some meat stalls in the Mainland have claimed that their pork can be brought through customs as long as it is vacuum-packed, whether the authorities have followed up in this regard; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(7) as there are views pointing out that uncooked seafood and aquatic food are also high-risk food, whether the Government will consider listing them as regulated food; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(8) of the authorities' specific plans or measures in place to reduce the number of cases of members of the public bringing regulated food into Hong Kong in violation of the regulations?

Reply:

President,

Pursuant to the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK), each consignment of imported game, meat, poultry and eggs (regulated food), whether for personal use or not, must be accompanied by a health certificate issued by the issuing entity of the place of origin or written permission from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). In addition, under the Import and Export Ordinance (Cap. 60), each consignment of imported meat and poultry is required to apply for an import licence from the FEHD.

The reply to the various parts of the question is set out below:

(1) Regarding the bringing of regulated food into Hong Kong by inbound passengers from the Mainland or overseas, the number of cases referred by the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) to the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the FEHD, and the number of prosecutions instituted by the CFS under Cap. 132AK in the past two years are set out below:

Month	2022		2023		2024 (Up to April 30)	
	No. of non-compliance cases	No. of prosecutions	No. of non-compliance cases	No. of prosecutions	No. of non-compliance cases	No. of prosecutions
Jan	20	22	19	23	111	124
Feb	1	1	74	85	79	93
Mar	3	3	85	106	119	141
Apr	9	10	100	118	122	145
May	13	16	98	116		
Jun	19	22	81	89		
Jul	17	22	72	84		
Aug	18	21	81	97		
Sep	11	15	89	104		
Oct	22	29	95	115		
Nov	15	17	91	108		
Dec	13	17	62	72		
Total	161	195	947	1 117	431	503

(2) From 2022 till now, the fines imposed for violation against the regulations under Cap. 132 AK are as follows:

	2022	2023	2024 (Up to April 30)
Maximum fine amount	\$4,500	\$4,000	\$3,000
Minimum fine amount	\$300	\$150	\$200
Average fine amount	\$911	\$1,046	\$933

(3) The C&ED has all along been applying risk management and intelligence exchange and analysis to combat various types of smuggling activities. Such measures include monitoring and inspecting passengers, cargoes and conveyances at various immigration control points. To enhance detection capability and clearance efficiency, the C&ED has been actively introducing and applying various types of advanced inspection equipment, including automatic X-ray detector and computerised scanning system, etc. The C&ED will closely monitor the situation of smuggling activities and continue to strengthen intelligence exchange and joint operations with the Mainland and other law enforcement agencies, so as to adjust its enforcement strategy in the light of the ever-changing smuggling situation.

(4) The existing seven Quarantine Detector Dogs (QDDs) of the CFS are mainly deployed at land boundary control points (BCPs) to assist in enforcing the regulations under Cap. 132AK. In 2022-23, the CFS detected a total of 398 suspected violation cases with the assistance of QDDs. The CFS would timely

adjust the QDDs' duty hours to cope with the operational needs.

(5), (6) and (8) The CFS is committed to combating the entry of illegal food into Hong Kong. It has been maintaining close liaison and exchanging intelligence with other law enforcement departments, including the C&ED, and conducting joint blitz operations at various BCPs, as well as arranging QDDs to assist the law enforcement officers at land BCPs in their duties to combat illegal importation of food. The CFS will continue to collect intelligence and evidence through various channels and also deploy law enforcement actions based on the actual situation to crack down on the sales of regulated food through cross-boundary purchase. Regulated foods such as meat, poultry and eggs will not be exempted from the regulations under Cap. 60 and Cap. 132AK even if they are vacuum-packed.

In addition, the CFS will also continue strengthening the publicity and education at various control points and remind the public through various channels (e.g. websites, posters, leaflets and social media) that unless a health certificate issued by the relevant authorities and import permission are provided, it is illegal to bring regulated foods such as meat, poultry and eggs into Hong Kong from the Mainland or overseas.

(7) All food for sale in Hong Kong must comply with relevant food safety standards, such as those regarding veterinary drug residues and metallic contamination. Besides, according to the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X), any person who sells restricted food (including fresh, chilled or frozen shellfish, as well as sashimi and oysters consumed at raw state) as specified in Schedule 2 to the Regulation requires the written permission of the FEHD. We will continue to review various relevant food safety legislations, including considering the need to strengthen regulations on the import of higher-risk aquatic products.