

# Budget Speech by the Financial Secretary (10)

## Quality Living

148. Apart from large-scale infrastructure projects, I also care about developing a quality city for our citizens, including enhancing the facilities in our highly popular country parks, hiking trails, recreational facilities and harbourfront facilities. I will allocate more resources to the relevant projects.

## Improve Country Parks

149. I will set aside \$500 million to carry out enhancement works on facilities in some country parks, such as providing recreational elements like additional lookout points, treetop adventure and glamping sites, improving toilet facilities and barbeque and picnic sites, and revitalising some wartime relics by converting them into open museums so as to enrich visitors' experience and enjoyment at the countryside. The new facilities will adopt low-carbon and green design that integrates with its natural surroundings. The needs of all age groups and people with or without physical disabilities will be catered for. The new facilities will be rolled out gradually in the coming two to three years for public enjoyment. Meanwhile, I have also earmarked \$55 million for the Tourism Commission to work with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to take forward the second phase of the enhancement programme for ten popular hiking trails in country parks that have potential for tourism in the coming five years, with a view to enriching leisure experience of the public and visitors.

## Upgrade Recreational Facilities

150. The Government has launched a five-year plan to modify more than 170 public play spaces managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) across the territory since 2019 with a view to providing children's play equipment which incorporate more elements of fun, creativity and challenge. To cater for people's diverse needs for fitness equipment, the LCSD will install some novel outdoor fitness equipment as appropriate when constructing new parks or renovating existing ones, such as the Yat Ming Road Park in North District which is near completion and the Butterfly Beach Park in Tuen Mun.

151. Football has long been one of the most popular sports. The Kai Tak Sports Park, scheduled for completion in 2023, will provide, among others, two main stadiums for hosting both international and local football matches. The Five-year Plan for Sports and Recreational Facilities also includes the construction or reconstruction of 12 football pitches, including the redevelopment of Yuen Long Stadium.

152. I will earmark \$318 million to implement a five-year plan for upgrading over 70 football pitches under the management of LCSD, including substantially increasing the number of 5-a-side football pitches meeting international standards, exploring the possibility of expanding the existing football pitches into standard 11-a-side turf pitches and expediting the replacement of artificial turf on football pitches. Relevant national sports associations and their affiliates, district football groups, schools and other organisations will have more up-to-standard football pitches to organise football training programmes and football matches in the future. The general public, in particular young people, will have more opportunities to play football regularly and develop their potential, thereby contributing to the long-term development of football in Hong Kong.

#### Enhance Harbourfront

153. I have earlier earmarked a total of \$6.5 billion for harbourfront enhancement. We have completed six kilometres of harbourfront promenades over the past three years or so for public enjoyment. The 20 kilometres-plus Victoria Harbourfront promenades have now become popular leisure spots. This year, we will seek funding from the LegCo for commencing the construction works of two major projects, namely the Boardwalk underneath the Island Eastern Corridor and the harbourfront park at Eastern Street North in Sai Ying Pun. An incremental approach will continue to be adopted so that the harbourfront sites can be opened as early as possible for public enjoyment.

#### Strengthen Healthcare System

##### Healthcare Facilities and Manpower

154. The HA will press ahead with the implementation of the first 10-year Hospital Development Plan (HDP) and the planning of the second 10-year HDP. The HA will review the design of hospital projects under the two 10-year HDPs taking into account the experience in combating COVID-19 and incorporate required provisions for two to three general wards in each selected hospital, so that they can be readily converted into Tier-2 isolation wards when the need arises.

155. To strengthen professional healthcare training, around \$1.9 billion has been allocated to the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in the past two financial years for carrying out short-term renovation works and facility enhancement as well as studies and medium and long-term works projects to increase their teaching facilities. The Government will continue to work with the universities to upgrade and increase healthcare-related teaching facilities.

156. Healthcare workers play a pivotal role in our fight against the epidemic. The last Budget earmarked funding to support the HA in providing sufficient manpower for the public healthcare system and easing the pressure on healthcare workers. The measures are being taken forward.

##### Primary Healthcare

157. Following the commencement of service of the first District Health Centre (DHC) in Kwai Tsing District, I earmarked \$650 million recurrent expenditure for setting up DHCs in six other districts last year. Two of them in Sham Shui Po and Wong Tai Sin target to commence operation within the coming two years. Last year, I also allocated about \$600 million for setting up "DHC Expresses" in the remaining 11 districts which are expected to commence service progressively within this year.

#### Development of Chinese Medicine

158. The Government will award the service deed for the Chinese Medicine Hospital in Tseung Kwan O in the middle of this year, and construction works are expected to be completed in 2025. Since last year, the Government has also allocated more resources to the 18 Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres, with a view to continuously enhancing the remuneration package of and training for Chinese medicine practitioners. Moreover, the Government promotes the development of Chinese medicine in Hong Kong through a dedicated fund of \$500 million.

#### Mental Health Services

159. The Government will provide additional recurrent funding of around \$147 million to enhance child and adolescent psychiatric, community psychiatric and psychogeriatric services of the HA, and support the enhanced service of Kwai Chung Hospital upon its redevelopment. It was earlier announced that a sum of \$300 million will be used for strengthening support for people in need in the community as well as enhancing public awareness of the importance of mental health.

#### Caring and Inclusion

160. The Government will provide an extra 1 500 subsidised elderly home care service places this year, involving an annual expenditure of about \$150 million. The Government is also taking forward 66 new projects, providing about 8 800 residential care places and about 2 800 subsidised day care service places for the elderly in the coming few years.

161. The Government has substantially increased the resources allocated to rehabilitation services in recent years. The number of places for on-site pre-school rehabilitation services has been increased by 1 000 to 8 000 in the current school year and is expected to further increase to 10 000 in 2022/23 school year.

162. The Labour Department launched the Racial Diversity Employment Programme last year to enable NGOs to provide one-stop employment services for ethnic minority job seekers through a case management approach. Over 500 ethnic minority job seekers are expected to participate in the first two years of the programme.

163. The revenue for the Lotteries Fund has dropped substantially due to the epidemic. I will make an injection of \$1.1 billion to ensure that development projects in respect of much-needed social welfare services

premises (particularly major facilities for elderly and rehabilitation services) can proceed as scheduled and that the feasibility studies and detailed design work for such projects will not be affected.

(To be continued.)