

CE's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address" to LegCo (10)

Attracting Talents

Building up a Talent Pool

149. Confronted with the challenges brought by a rapidly ageing population and a declining fertility rate, Hong Kong will face a bottleneck in manpower supply. As a small economy, Hong Kong cannot meet the needs of economic development simply by nurturing local talents. We need to attract non-local talents more proactively to enrich our talent pool, promote high-end economic development and seize the development opportunities as provided under the 14th Five-Year Plan and in the GBA.

Quality Migrant Admission Scheme

150. Following the Government's announcement last year to double the annual quota under the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme to 2,000 in an attempt to expand the talent pool of Hong Kong, over 1,700 talents from more than a dozen of countries and regions were approved with a quota. I have decided to double the annual quota of the Scheme to 4,000 to attract talents from all over the world to work in Hong Kong.

Talent List

151. The first Talent List of Hong Kong was promulgated by the Government in 2018. Upon the completion of a review recently, we decide to add the new professions of "financial professionals in compliance in asset management" and "professionals in Environmental, Social and Governance" to the list. We will also expand the scope of some existing professions to include experts of "medical and healthcare sciences", "microelectronics", "integrated circuit design" and "arts technology" and refine the requirements on legal and dispute resolution professionals, with a view to complementing Hong Kong's future policy direction to develop the key areas of finance, I&T, arts and culture, as well as dispute resolution services. In addition, through the network of our ETOs and Mainland Offices, we will assist relevant bureaux in attracting talents to work in Hong Kong.

Financial Services Talents

152. As an international financial centre with mutual access to the Mainland's capital market, Hong Kong has a huge demand for financial services personnel. The Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau will collaborate with the EDB and the LWB to explore the development of professional qualification standards under the Qualifications Framework for the Fintech sector, so as to provide a clearer and recognised professional development

pathway for employers and practitioners in the industry. Meanwhile, more courses related to finance will be included in the list of reimbursable courses under the Continuing Education Fund to attract more talents to join the industry.

Legal Talents

153. The DoJ will introduce a range of measures to attract and retain top legal talents, such as relaxing the qualification requirements in handling international commercial disputes and clarifying the types of supporting documents required for transactional lawyers. Moreover, the DoJ will regularise the pilot scheme introduced in June last year to allow eligible non-Hong Kong residents to participate in arbitral proceedings in Hong Kong as visitors on a short-term basis, without the need to obtain employment visas beforehand. The scheme will strengthen Hong Kong's position as an international centre for legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region.

Intellectual Property Talents

154. Fostering the IP manpower capacity of private enterprises is the key to developing Hong Kong into an IP trading centre. Therefore, the IPD will enhance and organise more training courses under the IP Manager Scheme, with a view to assisting SMEs to build up their manpower resources in IP protection, management and commercialisation.

Research Talents

155. In recent years, the Government has been sparing no effort in expanding the I&T talent pool. For example, the Global STEM Professorship Scheme proposed in my Policy Address last year is a huge success. Over 40 distinguished scholars and their research teams from eight economies recruited in the first tranche are gradually arriving Hong Kong. We will continue to implement the Scheme to attract more renowned I&T scholars and their research teams to Hong Kong such that our local universities will scale new heights in I&T research and development activities.

156. To encourage the UGC-funded universities to flexibly deploy resources to nurture more research talents in support of their research activities, the over-enrolment ceiling of UGC-funded research postgraduate (RPg) programme students will be further relaxed from 70% to 100%. Meanwhile, we have already invited the UGC to assess the supply of and demand for UGC-funded RPg places and consider the feasibility of increasing the number of funded places.

Aviation Talents

157. The HKIAA was established in 2016 with the aim of nurturing aviation management talents for Hong Kong and the region. Apart from actively collaborating with organisations including local educational and vocational institutions and the International Civil Aviation Organization in offering related training, the HKIAA also partners with the National School of Civil

Aviation of France to co-organise the Advanced Master Programme in Air Transport Management, which has successfully attracted students from Hong Kong and the Belt and Road countries. Approval has been given by the Ministry of Education for senior management in the Mainland's aviation sector to enrol in the Advanced Master Programme starting from next year.

Arts and Culture Talents

158. Talents are the key to arts and cultural excellence. We will put more emphasis on nurturing talents in different artistic and creative fields such as arts administration, arts technology and script writing. In respect of Cantonese opera, we will provide training for young talents and support the continued professional development of practitioners. As for the film industry, we will nurture budding directors and scriptwriting talents through the Film Development Fund.

Facilitating Flow of Talents within the GBA

159. To enhance the two-way flow of talents within the GBA and respond proactively to the aspirations of the international chambers of commerce in Hong Kong for the facilitation of non-Chinese Hong Kong residents to travel to the Mainland cities of the GBA, I have put forward concrete proposals to the Central Government. I learnt that relevant Central Authorities would actively consider facilitating the flow of talents between Guangdong and Hong Kong, especially the relevant arrangements which will facilitate non-Chinese nationals residing in Hong Kong to travel to the Mainland cities of the GBA for business, research, exchanges and visits, etc. To this end, they have agreed to discuss the matter with the HKSAR Government by the end of this year. These efforts will enhance Hong Kong's attractiveness to foreign businesses and overseas talents.

Connecting with Young People

160. Over the past two years, Hong Kong has faced severe challenges, prompting us to rethink the positioning and focus of our youth work. On the one hand, we should establish more effective channels to gauge the views of young people of different backgrounds in order to better meet their needs in areas such as education, career pursuits, housing, upward mobility and development of their potential. On the other hand, we need to put more emphasis on nurturing young people's positive thinking to help them develop positive values, and enable them to become a new generation with a sense of responsibility, and with an aspiration and willingness to strive for the future of our country and of Hong Kong. In this connection, I will invite the Youth Development Commission to explore ways to enrich its existing programmes and launch new funding initiatives. For the Policy Address public consultation this year, I have arranged three special sessions to meet with students and young people and listened to their views in person. I hope there will be more exchange opportunities following the delivery of this Policy Address.

161. The Central Government also cares about our young people. The 14th Five-Year Plan mentions facilitating the young people of Hong Kong and

Macao to study, work and start businesses in the Mainland cities of the GBA, and establishing a brand of quality exchanges among the young people of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. Recently, the Central Authorities and relevant municipal governments have also introduced measures to support the development of Hong Kong young people in the Mainland, including support for the Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the GBA and the GBA Youth Employment Scheme as stated in my Policy Address last year, as well as support for enhancing various Mainland internship and exchange programmes.

162. To encourage young people to participate in policy discussion, we have regularised the Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth (MSSY), under which young people aged between 18 and 35 are recruited on a regular basis to participate in government advisory committees. Up till now, around 440 posts are held by about 270 young people who have been appointed to ASBs through the MSSY. The overall ratio of appointed youth members in ASBs has increased from 7.8% at the end of 2017 to currently 14.8%, gradually reaching the target of 15% set by the current-term Government.

IX. Emerging from the Epidemic

163. While we have ambitious plans to deliver, our top priority right now remains clear, i.e. we have to do our best to control the epidemic for the community, so that normal cross-boundary flow of people can be resumed as early as possible. Looking back, in our fight against the epidemic over the past 21 months, I and my colleagues, as well as the HA and our expert teams have strictly implemented, with scientific justifications, the strategy of guarding against the importation of cases and the resurgence of local infections. Thanks to the staunch support of the general public, we have weathered four waves of surging cases, and have aptly adjusted our anti-epidemic strategy in light of experience. This strategy has proven effective as Hong Kong's figures on confirmed and fatal cases are among the lowest in the world. For a city as compact as Hong Kong and with the magnitude of flow of people and goods, every Hong Kong citizen should be given credit for this achievement. I would like to express my sincere thanks to each and every one who has joined the fight against the epidemic, be they from the civil service, the healthcare and residential care sectors or other trades. Their commitment and dedication have enabled society to maintain normal operation as far as practicable amid the epidemic. What is more, on behalf of the HKSAR, I have to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Central Government for its care and support for our anti-epidemic work.

164. Last month, the Chief Secretary for Administration led a delegation of the HKSAR Government to attend a meeting on anti-epidemic work with relevant authorities in the Mainland. During the meeting, the two sides explored in detail matters relating to the gradual and orderly resumption of quarantine-free travel between the two places and assessed the possible risks after resumption of quarantine-free travel. The two sides will further study the related details and strive to hold a second meeting as soon as possible. To resume cross-boundary travel, the support of the public is vital. If you, your family or friends have not got a jab yet, please do not hesitate anymore and get vaccinated as soon as possible to prevent yourself and your family from infection, and help create favourable conditions for

cross-border travel.

X. Closing Remarks: United for a Future

165. Mr President, Honourable Members and fellow citizens, as I sum up the last Policy Address for my five-year term of office, I would like to express a few words that are dear to my heart.

166. I left university and joined the Government 41 years ago. It has always been my belief that, with a vision to serve the community and the readiness to act with a proactive style, I could help build a fairer and more compassionate society for Hong Kong from within the establishment. It has been my honour to participate in the successful return of Hong Kong to the Motherland. Since Reunification, I have worked in different positions to implement "One Country, Two Systems" to ensure the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong. When I assumed office as the Chief Executive of the HKSAR some four years ago, I deeply felt that I was charged with a heavy responsibility. I realised that this would be the greatest honour in my career, and no doubt the biggest challenge in my life.

167. Within two years of taking office, I came under unprecedented pressure due to opposition to the proposed legislative amendments to the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance, the social unrest, the incessant and gross interference in Hong Kong affairs by external forces as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The driving force backing me up in overcoming all these challenges comes from the earnest words of the Central Government that it will always provide staunch support to Hong Kong, my pledge to always stand by the side of the people of Hong Kong when I took office, and the unfailing trust and support of my family. Today, under the double safeguards of national security and the improved electoral system, Hong Kong is back on the right track of "One Country, Two Systems". I am confident that Hong Kong is much stronger than ever, and I am most convinced that Hong Kong can integrate into the overall development of the country and play an irreplaceable role as our country strides towards the second centenary goal of the nation. And of course, I wish that we can nurture a new generation with a sense of national identity and social responsibility as well as an affection for Hong Kong, and pass on the torch to them.

168. The coming year 2022 will mark the important occasion of the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the Motherland. Led by the Chief Secretary for Administration, a committee comprising bureaux and departments has commenced preparatory work for a series of celebration activities, and will liaise with various sectors of the community in due course to jointly organise more exciting events for the public to rejoice in celebration of our return to the Motherland. There have been views that the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR is halfway of the journey that things shall remain "unchanged for 50 years" as enshrined in the Basic Law, and the beginning to the second half of the implementation of "One Country, Two Systems". In my view, however, under the steer of the Central Government and with the co-operation of the HKSAR, we have, through "One Country, Two Systems", improved our legal system and the enforcement mechanisms required for safeguarding national safety, and enhanced our electoral system that

conforms to the constitutional order of the HKSAR. Safeguarded by the Constitution and the Basic Law, "One Country, Two Systems" has already become one of the strengths of the governance system of our country. So long as the HKSAR firmly observes and upholds the principle of "One Country" and fulfils the requirement of "patriots administering Hong Kong", the "Two Systems" will definitely thrive and flourish, and Hong Kong will continue to be cherished by our country. At this new start, the 2021 Policy Address has unfolded a new paradigm and set out a new blueprint. Let us stand united and set off to build a bright future together!