

Disaster Relief Fund approves grants to provide relief in disaster-stricken Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and Northeast China

With the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and Northeast China recently hit by severe rainstorms and floods, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (August 14) approved under the Disaster Relief Fund nine disaster relief applications, amounting to total grants of about \$65 million, from nine organisations.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "The HKSAR Government expresses its deep sympathy to the Mainland compatriots affected by the disaster, and maintains close contact with various rescue organisations regarding the disaster situation and related relief support. The severe rainstorms and floods have resulted in serious casualties and property losses, thereby calling for urgent disaster relief work. The HKSAR Government has promptly processed the disaster relief funding applications from nine organisations under the Disaster Relief Fund in consultation with the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee, and informed the organisations concerned of the in-principle approval given for grants totalling about \$65 million to offer help in terms of relief items, etc, to the Mainland compatriots affected by the disaster."

A list of the organisations with the approved grants is in the Annex. The HKSAR Government will maintain close liaison with the organisations concerned to monitor the progress of their implementation of relief projects, so as to help the people affected resume a normal life as soon as possible. The organisations concerned are required to submit evaluation reports and audited accounts on the use of the grants to the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee after completing the relief projects.

The spokesman said, "The grants demonstrate the close relationship between Hong Kong and Mainland people and the spirit of mutual help. The HKSAR Government hopes that the grants will provide appropriate assistance for the Mainland compatriots affected, and help the disaster-stricken areas overcome difficulties and proceed with post-disaster reconstruction."

The spokesman stressed, "The HKSAR Government, together with the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee, will continue to closely monitor the disaster situation and related rescue work, and later process any applications from other organisations to help the people affected by the disaster in a timely manner."

The Disaster Relief Fund was established on December 1, 1993, in accordance with the Public Finance Ordinance. It provides the Government with

a mechanism to respond to appeals for humanitarian aid in relief of disasters that occur outside Hong Kong.