

Disaster Relief Fund approves grants to provide relief in disaster-stricken Gansu and Qinghai

In view of the recent 6.2-magnitude earthquake that occurred in Jishishan County, Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu and resulted in serious casualties and infrastructure damage in Gansu and Qinghai, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (December 22) approved under the Disaster Relief Fund five disaster relief applications, amounting to total grants of about \$33 million, from five 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 relief support. The HKSAR Government has promptly processed in consultation with the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee the disaster relief funding applications from five organisations under the Disaster Relief Fund, and informed the organisations concerned of the in-principle approval given for grants totalling about \$33 million."

A list of the organisations with the grants approved is in the Annex. The HKSAR Government will continue close liaison with the organisations 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 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 assistance work, and process any subsequent 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.