

LC: Speech by CS in presenting Government Minute in response to Report No. 75 of Public Accounts Committee

Following is the speech (translated from Chinese) by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, in presenting the Government Minute (GM) in response to Report No. 75 of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in the Legislative Council (LegCo) today (May 26):

President,

Laid on the table today is the GM responding to Report No. 75 of the PAC presented to the LegCo on February 24, 2021.

I welcome the Report of the PAC and am sincerely grateful for the time and efforts devoted by the Chairman of the PAC, the Hon Abraham Shek, and members of the PAC on it. The Government accepts the PAC's various recommendations and sets out in detail in the GM the specific responses of the relevant bureaux and departments. The Report of the PAC provides recommendations on areas in relation to the following seven chapters in Report No. 75 of the Director of Audit:

- (a) Acquisition and management of collection items in public museums;
- (b) Energy efficiency and conservation in government buildings;
- (c) Funding schemes for conservation of built heritage managed by the Development Bureau;
- (d) Hong Kong Tourism Board: Corporate governance and administrative issues;
- (e) Hong Kong Tourism Board: Efforts in promoting tourism;
- (f) Management of Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme by the Buildings Department; and
- (g) Provision of humanitarian assistance to non-refoulement claimants by the Social Welfare Department.

I would like to highlight the key measures taken and progress made by the relevant government departments and organisations in response to the recommendations.

Acquisition and management of collection items in public museums

On the acquisition and management of collection items in public museums, the Hong Kong Museum of History, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive have put in place measures to improve the processing of accession of collection items, including streamlining the accessioning information and procedures, engaging additional manpower, and reporting accessioning progress on a monthly basis. These measures expedite the accession of collection items and enhance monitoring, with a view to

completing relevant work within or ahead of schedule.

In response to the shortage of museum storage space, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) plans to build the Heritage Conservation and Resource Centre for conservation of museum collection items at a central location, and to organise exhibitions as well as public education and academic activities and more. The project received support of the District Council in February this year. The LCSD will submit the funding application for the main construction works to LegCo in due course.

Energy efficiency and conservation in government buildings

Regarding energy efficiency and conservation in government buildings, the Environment Bureau, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) and the Architectural Services Department have taken measures to follow up on the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Audit Commission and the PAC. For instance, the EMSD has applied the experience gained in implementing the 2015-20 electricity saving target and the findings in the Audit Report when taking forward its work relating to green energy. The EMSD has also issued guidelines on normalisation of energy consumption and will keep track of the measures implemented by bureaux and departments to help them achieve the Green Energy Target. Relevant departments have stepped up the management of energy saving projects and rolled out other measures as recommended by the Audit Commission and the PAC, such as including more government buildings in the retro-commissioning plan.

Funding schemes for conservation of built heritage managed by the Development Bureau

On the funding schemes for conservation of built heritage, the Development Bureau (DEVB) has so far launched six batches of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (Revitalisation Scheme), covering 22 government-owned historic buildings. Ten of these projects are in operation. These projects revitalise and reuse historic buildings for other purposes, such as a hostel, a café, training facilities and a Chinese medical clinic. Through these projects, not only are the historic buildings preserved and put to good use, but they are also given a new lease of life. Members of the public are welcome to visit and appreciate these historic buildings. By February 2021, over 7.2 million visitors had visited the revitalised buildings under Batches I to III of the Revitalisation Scheme.

The DEVB reviews various aspects of the Revitalisation Scheme from time to time and has introduced improvement measures. They include enhancement of the Guide to Application, simplifying the application procedures, refining the assessment process, and organising workshops/experience sharing sessions for interested organisations.

The DEVB will continue to explore measures to further enhance the Revitalisation Scheme, taking into account recommendations in the Audit Report, management experience from the implementation of the Scheme, the operating situation of the non-profit-making organisations, and other factors.

Hong Kong Tourism Board: Corporate governance and administrative issues and
Hong Kong Tourism Board: Efforts in promoting tourism

As for the governance and promotion work of the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), the Government attaches great importance to the corporate governance of the HKTB as a statutory body. Good corporate governance is crucial to the HKTB's efficient and effective operation, as well as the discharge of its pivotal role in supporting the recovery of Hong Kong's tourism industry after the epidemic subsides and driving the long-term development of the tourism sector in Hong Kong.

As the responsible bureau for tourism development, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau is proactively following up on the implementation of recommendations made by the Audit Commission on corporate governance and administrative issues, including appointing more young people to the Board of the HKTB, entering into a Memorandum of Administrative Arrangements with the HKTB and setting up a mechanism of handling unspent additional funding for the HKTB. In addition, the HKTB has started a review on its pay structure, and has formulated detailed guidelines concerning the meeting procedures and arrangements for its Board and committees, including handling of declaration of interest in meetings and submission of declaration of interest forms.

In respect of tourism promotion, the HKTB has implemented the Audit Commission's recommendations in relation to organisation of mega events and their performance evaluation, such as conducting a review on the existing indicators for assessing the performance of mega events. In addition, the HKTB has implemented the recommendations on marketing activities and the Quality Tourism Services (QTS) Scheme, including carrying out a full revamp of the HKTB's website and tightening the control over the display of the QTS decals and the use of the QTS logo. After the epidemic, the HKTB will launch a new round of the Funding Support for Small-sized Meeting, Incentive and Convention Groups. To ensure optimal use of public resources, the Government will continue to follow up with the HKTB in implementing the Audit Commission's recommendations.

Management of Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme by the Buildings
Department

President, on mandatory building inspection, the Buildings Department (BD) has taken proactive action to follow up on the comments made by the PAC and the Audit Commission on the management of the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme and will implement the recommendations as far as practicable.

The BD will regularly review the number of target buildings covered by the Scheme each year as well as the implementation and effectiveness of the Scheme. In doing so, it will take into account operation experience, the market situation, and feedback from stakeholders and members of the community. In parallel, the BD will continue to optimise its efficiency by streamlining the operational procedures, with a view to stepping up the pace of the implementation of the Scheme. The BD will also closely monitor the compliance situation of notices issued under the Scheme and step up

prosecution against non-compliance. The DEVB will strengthen its policy steer and provide resources to support the BD to ensure successful implementation of the Scheme.

Timely and proper repair and maintenance of buildings is the primary responsibility of owners and is in the interest of owners and occupiers. Enforcement aside, the Government has been providing support to needy owners, such as through different assistance schemes and stepping up publicity efforts, to enhance public awareness on building maintenance.

Provision of humanitarian assistance to non-refoulement claimants by the Social Welfare Department

With regard to the provision of humanitarian assistance to non-refoulement claimants, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has commenced its work in this area in 2006. In keeping with the needs of the users, the services provided (in terms of service components, requirements and the mode of delivery) have been evolving. There are over 10 000 service users at present. The SWD will continue to exercise proper financial control and monitor the services provided closely to ensure the provision of efficient and cost-effective services by the service contractors, and prudent use of public funds.

As regards the Audit Commission's recommendations, the SWD has immediately requested the service contractor and food contractor to formulate and put in place a series of improvement measures for enhancing cost-effectiveness and service quality. In addition, the SWD has requested contractors to provide statistical reports in a timely manner for monitoring, reminded them to step up assessment and follow-up action to prevent misuse or abuse of the humanitarian assistance, and enhanced the monitoring of the overall effectiveness of services provided.

President, I would like to thank the Chairman of the PAC, the Hon Abraham Shek, and members of the PAC again for their efforts and guidance. The bureaux, departments and organisations concerned will strictly adhere to the suggestions and responses in the GM and implement improvement measures as soon as possible.

Thank you, President.