

LCQ1: Taking forward patriotic education

Following is a question by Dr the Hon So Cheung-wing and a reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (December 11):

Question:

Established in April this year, the Working Group on Patriotic Education (the Working Group) harnesses collective wisdom, contributes insights and takes actions in respect of the work strategies, directions and plans for holistic implementation of patriotic education. On taking forward patriotic education, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as it is learnt that many galleries and exhibitions organised on the own initiative of community groups with an affection for the country and Hong Kong are crafted with ingenuity, skilfully blending patriotic education with exhibition contents and art, whether the Government has compiled statistics on the current total number of community-operated galleries for patriotic exhibitions in Hong Kong; whether the Working Group has specific plans to foster concerted efforts between government departments and non-governmental organisations in making good use of the valuable patriotic education resources in the community; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that the Working Group has set up an electronic mailbox to invite all sectors of the community to offer views and suggestions for more effective implementation of patriotic education, of the total number of valid views and suggestions received by the Working Group so far, and whether it has accordingly adjusted and refined its existing plans or launched new plans; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it knows the total numbers of schools, teachers and students participating in the activities of the Patriotic Education Centre since its establishment, and whether the Government has made recommendations on improvements to such activities?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Education Bureau (EDB), a consolidated reply in response to the questions raised by Dr the Hon So Cheung-wing is as follows:

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government attaches great importance to the promotion of patriotic education and endeavours to build mainstream values in Hong Kong characterised by patriotism with affection for our country and Hong Kong and in conformity with the principle

of "one country, two systems". The Chief Executive has put forward various initiatives related to patriotic education in this year's and last year's Policy Address, including establishing the Working Group on Patriotic Education (the Working Group) under the Constitution and Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration; organising activities in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance in the coming year; organising, by the EDB, a range of joint school and cross sectoral activities under the "Love Our Home, Treasure Our Country 3.0" series, continuing to enhance Chinese History and national geography education in primary and secondary schools, as well as enriching patriotism and history elements in Mainland exchange programmes; and etc.. As such, we hope to take the all out and all direction approach to vigorously promote the spirit of patriotism and cultivate an enhanced patriotic atmosphere in society, enabling patriotism to take root in Hong Kong as well as in people's minds.

Since its establishment in April this year, the Working Group has taken forward the relevant work in a proactive manner and proposed various short, medium and long-term policy measures in relation to patriotic education having regard to the actual circumstances of Hong Kong. The Working Group also understands that patriotic education is a matter of connection with people's heart and a task that requires ongoing effort, and should be conducted through a soft and heart-moving approach. At the same time, to achieve success in implementing patriotic education, apart from the Government's effort, it is vital to have active and collective participation of all sectors of the community and the general public.

To unite and strengthen efforts for promotion of patriotic education, since its establishment, the Working Group has taken the initiative to conduct research and studies by inviting all sectors of the community to offer suggestions on how to effectively promote patriotic education. We have received very enthusiastic responses. The Secretariat of the Working Group received a total of over 300 comments and suggestions, covering areas such as school education, Chinese culture, Chinese history, national development, use of media for promotion, education on history of the War of Resistance, and proactive facilitation of co-operation with the community groups. The relevant views and suggestions have been passed to the four sub-groups under the Working Group and relevant government departments for study and consideration. Based on the feasible suggestions, we will propose policy measures for consideration by the Working Group in due course.

In addition to widely soliciting opinions, the Government places great importance on patriotic education activities organised by community groups, including the development of patriotic education resources such as exhibition halls. To observe the related facilities and show support, members of the Working Group paid visits to various local patriotic education bases and exhibition centres. In July this year, the Working Group visited two community-operated facilities, namely the Hong Kong Sha Tau Kok Anti-Japanese War Memorial Hall (the Law's House) and the exhibition hall for Hong Kong patriotic education in Wing Ping Tsuen, San Tin. The exhibition facilities displayed a number of artefacts on patriotic education and the history of the

War of Resistance, facilitating members of the public to enhance their understanding of the country and foster the love for our motherland and Hong Kong. The Working Group also visited the National Security Exhibition Gallery at the Hong Kong Museum of History in October this year. The next step for the Working Group will be to continue with its site visits, including visits to the Patriotic Education Centre of the Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers and the Youth Development and National Education Base managed by the Hong Kong Army Cadets Association in Tsing Yi.

In fact, Hong Kong has rich patriotic education resources, including the Hong Kong Museum of History, the Hong Kong Palace Museum, the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum as well as the Hong Kong Science Museum, where a wealth of patriotic educational materials on Chinese history, national achievements, fine traditions of Chinese culture, and the wartime journey of Hong Kong are displayed, and thematic exhibitions are organised from time to time. For example, the "Glorious Voyage: Splendid Achievements of the People's Republic of China in Its 75 Years" Exhibition Series has been held at the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Science Museum since September 27, illustrating the struggle that our country had been through and its perseverance for its extraordinary achievements in advancement over the past three-quarters of a century from a variety of perspectives.

Apart from the museums and exhibitions mentioned above, there are quite a number of landmarks and relics with historical value in Hong Kong, which can be leveraged to enrich the content and experience of patriotic education. Examples include Lion Rock Historic Walk, Shing Mun War Relics Trail and Luk Keng War Relics Trail, as well as the Memorial Monuments for Martyrs during World War II at Wu Kau Tang and Tsam Chuk Wan constructed to honour members of an anti-Japanese guerrilla force called the "Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column", and local civilians who sacrificed themselves to defend Hong Kong against the Japanese invaders. These two monuments have been incorporated into the "List of State Facilities and Sites Marking the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression" published by the State Council, highlighting their significant patriotic educational value.

The Government highly encourages the community to promote patriotic education together and continue to develop various patriotic education resources, including education bases, exhibition halls and historic sites, or patriotic figures and heroic deeds, etc. The Working Group will actively study how to consolidate community efforts and make the best use of such valuable patriotic education resources, so as to comprehensively take forward the promotion of patriotic education in a diversified manner.

As for the Patriotic Education Centre (the Centre) established by the Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers, the Centre has been actively echoing the effort of the HKSAR Government in promoting national education by organising activities such as educational visits and teacher professional development since its establishment in 2022. According to the information provided by the Centre, since its commencement of operation in September

2022, as of November 2024, about 330 schools and 70 organisations joined the national studies activities of the Centre, with a total attendance of about 27 600. Besides, the Centre organised over 150 on-site seminars at schools with an attendance of about 15 000 teachers and students in total.

In addition to the activities organised by the Centre on its own initiative, the EDB commissioned the Centre through established procedures to provide Onsite Enrichment Seminars on National Security Education for primary and secondary schools implementing the local curriculum. From March to the end of August 2024, the Centre provided onsite seminars for over 3 400 teachers from 64 secondary schools, receiving positive feedback. With reference to teachers' feedback, the EDB has continued to make suggestions with a view to improving the design of the activities. Besides, the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education subvented by the EDB collaborated with the Centre to organise programmes relating to diplomacy for the gifted, and provided suggestions suited to the learning needs of gifted students when developing the content of the programmes.