

LCQ17: Publicity and education activities of National Ecology Day

Following is a question by the Hon Starry Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (November 1):

Question:

It was decided at the third session of the Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress that August 15 would be designated as the National Ecology Day, and the State would launch ecological civilisation publicity and education activities in various forms. Regarding efforts in support of the National Ecology Day, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it will make full use of various media platforms (including television, newspapers and the Internet) to strengthen publicity for the National Ecology Day; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether it will encourage and support various sectors to organize different forms of thematic activities, including the production of micro movies on environmental protection, street art exhibitions on ecology, eco-tourism using green travel, as well as experiential activities on ecology for parents and children, so as to promote community-wide participation in the National Ecology Day; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) whether it will organise learning activities with the theme of the National Ecology Day in primary and secondary schools (e.g. introducing relevant courses and holding seminars), so as to nurture environmental awareness among students; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) whether it will hold a high-level thematic forum on the day of the National Ecology Day and invite experts to give an in-depth interpretation of the concept of ecological civilisation as well as the contents of the relevant policies, laws and regulations; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Our country has been emphasising that the nature provides the basic conditions for human survival and development, and that harmony between and co-existence of humanity and nature must be placed in a prominent position when planning development, thereby implementing the important concept that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets". The Standing Committee of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) decided earlier this

year to designate August 15 as the National Ecology Day, so as to enhance the public's awareness towards pursuing ecological civilisation and environmental protection. In support of the establishment of the National Ecology Day, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) actively launched a series of publicity and education activities on ecological civilisation. Having consulted the Education Bureau (EDB), the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), a consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Starry Lee is as follows:

The HKSAR Government has promoted the establishment of the National Ecology Day through different channels, including social media platforms, websites and mobile applications of the Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB), the EPD, the AFCD and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as displayed relevant information and posters at their premises or facilities. The RTHK also produced a special interview programme on the National Ecology Day which was featured on "Hong Kong United", as well as broadcasted other television programmes relating to nature conservation, including the "Biodiversity in Hong Kong" series, "Biodiversity in Magazine" series, "Hong Kong Ecologists", and the upcoming natural ecology programme "Hong Kong's Greenery & Biodiversity".

To encourage our society to appreciate the beauty of natural environment and biodiversity of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Wetland Park was opened to the public free of charge on August 15 and October 1 this year, while the AFCD offered eco-guide services for the public at the popular scenic spots in country parks in August and Q4 this year. To enhance the public's awareness and consciousness of the need for action to protect our environment and ecology, the EPD offered special discount for gift redemption or extra points for recycling at GREEN@COMMUNITY's relevant facilities on the National Ecology Day, as well as on October 1 and 2 respectively. We also hosted the National Ecology Day Launching Ceremony on August 15, and invited government officials, representatives of NGOs, academics and professional groups to exchange views on the concepts behind the establishment of the National Ecology Day by the Standing Committee of the 14th NPC, and the HKSAR Government's work in collaboration with different sectors of our society to promote the pursuit of ecological civilisation.

We also encouraged different sectors of our society to organise activities related to the National Ecology Day. Eight NGOs, namely Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, Environmental Association, WWF-Hong Kong, Green Power, the Conservancy Association, the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, Hong Kong Wetlands Conservation Association, and Hong Kong Ocean Park provided a total of 20 free activities and offers on August 15, including free admission, free guided eco-tours, night safari, workshops, seminars and distribution of souvenirs, which received overwhelming response from the public. Various organisations in Hong Kong also continue to organise different activities related to nature conservation and environmental protection for public participation. Details are available on the Hong Kong Biodiversity Information Hub website of the AFCD (bih.gov.hk/en/education-programmes/programmes/index.html), and the website of the Countryside

Conservation Office under the EEB

(www.eeb.gov.hk/en/conservation/ccfs/project-events.html).

As regards education of the National Ecology Day in primary and secondary schools, the EDB has been attaching great importance to environmental education, and all along adopting a multipronged approach within and beyond the classroom to develop students' knowledge, skills, and awareness on environmental protection. The concepts and values related to environmental and sustainable development education have been incorporated into the relevant subjects' curriculum for primary and secondary schools. In end-2021, the EDB released the Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version), and set "adopting a lifestyle that actively practises environmental protection" and "showing concern for global environmental issues and the challenge to sustainable development" as learning goals for primary and secondary school students respectively, with a view to cultivating the students' care about the nature, as well as awareness and sense of responsibility on conserving resources, protecting ecological environment and the common welfare of mankind. The EDB will also encourage schools to introduce the National Ecology Day to students, and make good use of the relevant resources to educate students to develop a habit of environmental protection in daily life. On the other hand, the AFCD regularly organises school visit programmes for kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools, and nurtures students' awareness on caring for nature and environmental protection through interpretation, exhibitions and interactive games. Moreover, the AFCD collaborated with the Education University of Hong Kong to produce a series of Curriculum-based Outdoor Learning Programmes in Country Parks learning and teaching packages, so as to facilitate students' learning in a natural setting. The AFCD will suitably incorporate the theme of the National Ecology Day into these activities, with a view to further enhancing students' and public's understanding on the concepts of ecological civilisation.

In future, the HKSAR Government will continue to co-operate with NGOs to promote the National Ecology Day and ecological civilisation through different forms of public education, publicity and ecological experience activities. In particular, further to holding the National Ecology Day Launching Ceremony this year, the HKSAR Government will consider how to further enrich the activities related to the National Ecology Day in the coming year, and one of the directions is to invite relevant experts to provide in-depth interpretations on the concept of ecological civilisation as well as relevant policies, laws and regulations. We also encourage all sectors of our society to organise activities related to the National Ecology Day in different forms, fostering public participation, and enhancing awareness towards ecological civilisation. Non-profit organisations such as schools, community groups, and environmental protection organisations may also apply for funding from the "Environmental Education and Community Action Projects" under the Environment and Conservation Fund to organise the relevant activities, so as to enhance public awareness and knowledge on environmental protection, encourage the public to take action to improve and protect Hong Kong's environment, and adopt a green and low-carbon lifestyle.