

LCQ2: Clansmen Culture Promotion Scheme

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a reply by the Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, in the Legislative Council today (November 6):

Question:

The Government has earlier on launched a three-year "Clansmen Culture Promotion Scheme" (the Scheme), under which a total funding of \$30 million has been earmarked for application by clansmen associations to organise activities promoting hometown culture. It has been reported that the Scheme has received overwhelming responses, and that the Home Affairs Department received 213 applications from 110 clansmen associations this year, of which 39 were approved with funding of about \$10 million. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective themes of the funded hometown cultural activities; whether it has estimated the number of participants in such activities; if so, of the details;
- (2) whether it will expand the scope of the subsidy under the Scheme to assist clansmen associations in organizing more activities of different types, so as to promote the vast and profound Chinese culture and enhance public understanding of the latest developments in various provinces and municipalities of the motherland; and
- (3) whether it will extend the implementation period of the Scheme or even regularise it; whether it will introduce more schemes to help promote clansmen culture; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Clansmen associations have a long history in Hong Kong, most of which were established by their ancestors who came to Hong Kong in the early days for development and then settled in, with a view to uniting and serving their fellow clansmen as well as promoting solidarity and mutual support amongst them. The associations play a bridging role between their fellow clansmen and hometowns. They have brought the culture of their hometowns to Hong Kong, enabling different hometown cultures and customs to converge here and make Hong Kong unique.

Being steadfast patriots supporting the country and Hong Kong, clansmen associations have effectively forged cohesion among clansmen who love the country, Hong Kong and their hometowns through their vast social networks and

unique geographical backgrounds. They provide resolute support for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government in implementing "one country, two systems", promoting the development of Hong Kong, and fostering social harmony and stability. They are reliable and staunch partners of the HKSAR Government and a constructive force driving Hong Kong's development.

Clansmen associations have been supporting the work of the HKSAR Government in many areas. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, clansmen associations volunteered to donate supplies and mobilise fellow clansmen to collaborate with the Government in fighting the epidemic. On the improvement of the electoral system of Hong Kong, clansmen associations' active support and participation helped ensure that the principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong" was fully implemented. Clansmen associations also strongly supported the improving of district governance, the election of District Councils and the formation of Care Teams.

In terms of activities, clansmen associations have been organising various clansmen cultural promotion, caring and exchange programmes to promote exchanges and co-operation between Hong Kong and the Mainland in different aspects, with a view to enhancing mutual communication and deepening the friendship between the people as well as fostering the inheritance of fine traditional Chinese culture.

To deepen the public's understanding of and sense of belonging to their hometowns, thereby fostering the spirit of loving the motherland, Hong Kong and their hometowns; as well as to recognise and strengthen the longstanding efforts of patriotic clansmen associations, the Chief Executive announced in his 2023 Policy Address the launch of the "Clansmen Culture Promotion Scheme" (the Scheme) for a period of three years. In the three consecutive financial years starting from 2024-25, an annual provision of \$10 million (i.e. totalling \$30 million) is earmarked for application by clansmen associations to subsidise their organisation of activities to promote and preserve hometown culture, unite clansmen in Hong Kong and facilitate exchanges between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) began accepting funding applications for the 2024-25 financial year under the Scheme in April this year. Within a one-month application period, a total of 213 applications from 110 clansmen associations were received. By the end of May, the HAD completed the vetting process and approved 39 applications, taking into consideration factors such as the reputation and experience of the applying organisations, as well as the content of their activities and plans. The total amount of subsidy granted is about \$10 million.

In response to the questions raised by the Hon Jimmy Ng, the replies are as follows:

(1) A wide variety of projects were approved in the first year of the Scheme, which included activities for promoting hometown culture and heritage (e.g. hometown markets, cultural festivals), uniting fellow clansmen in Hong Kong (e.g. home visits, organising volunteer work) and promoting exchanges between

Hong Kong and the Mainland (e.g. parent-child heritage tours, youth exchange programmes). From early June to end-October 2024, a total of 20 approved projects were completed, with over 220 000 people participated.

For specific events, for example, the "Clansmen Associations Hometown Market Carnival" jointly organised by 28 clansmen associations at Victoria Park for five days in early June attracted approximately 200 000 visitors. The "Min-Kong Youth Maritime Silk Road Cultural Exchange Tour" and the "Hong Kong-Macao Youth Zhejiang Tour" organised by the Hong Kong Federation of Fujian Associations and the United Zhejiang Residents Associations respectively in July were participated by a total of about 1 000 young people to promote youth exchange between Hong Kong and the Mainland. The Federation of HK Guangxi Community Organisations and the Hong Kong Federation of Hainan Community Organisations held the "Cultural Celebration for National Day" and the "Hainan and Kowloon City Brilliant Night" carnivals in September respectively, engaging over 10 000 participants in promoting hometown culture. In September and October, the Federation of Hong Kong Beijing Organisations organised the "Thank You for Being There – Hand in Hand to Warm Hearts" event, where volunteer teams formed by its fellow clansmen visited grassroots families of about 1 000 people. From September to December, the Federation of Hong Kong Guangdong Community Organisations is conducting the "Guangdong Intangible Cultural Heritage in Schools" programme to host cultural workshops in various primary and secondary schools. It is expected that nearly 1 000 students and parents will be engaged.

(2) The scope of projects subsidised under the Scheme is wide. Any locally registered clansmen associations with good reputation and track record; which have all along been committed to promoting hometown culture and fostering exchanges between Hong Kong and hometowns in order to promote the spirit of loving the motherland, Hong Kong and hometowns; and with experience in organising relevant activities, are eligible to apply for subsidy under the Scheme. The subsidy can be used for funding various types of relevant activities such as those for promoting and preserving hometown culture, uniting clansmen in Hong Kong and facilitating exchanges between Hong Kong and the Mainland. There is no restriction on the form of the activities, as long as they are non-profit-making in nature and in line with the objectives of the Scheme.

Apart from the Scheme, the HAD and the 18 District Offices have been collaborating with clansmen associations and various district organisations from time to time to foster community building, while promoting Chinese culture and enhancing public understanding of the country. For example, the HAD co-organised with 28 provincial clansmen associations the "Bazaar Carnival in celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China" (the Bazaar) from October 25 to 29 at Sha Tin Park. It provided a total of 75 market stalls offering a wide variety of local snacks, specialties and traditional crafts, showcasing the unique culinary and cultural traditions of different provinces and cities. The Bazaar also staged diverse cultural performances such as traditional ethnic dances, acrobatics, folk songs, as well as free screenings of patriotic-themed movies and cultural introductions of various provinces, enabling the

public to experience the diverse and colourful Chinese culture from all corners of the country. The five-day Bazaar attracted about 180 000 visitors, with the value of total sales estimated to be more than \$4.6 million, highlighting the Government's close collaboration with clansmen associations to further promote patriotic sentiments and love for Hong Kong in the community.

Besides, clansmen associations also apply for funding support through the on-going Community Involvement Programme implemented by the HAD to organise different projects such as festivals with local characteristics, hometown cultural carnivals and traditional cultural performances to promote district harmony. Some clansmen associations also actively participate in the "Funding Scheme for Youth Exchange in the Mainland" implemented by the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau to apply for funding to organise youth exchange tours to the Mainland, supporting young people to broaden their horizons, deepen their understanding of the country and seize the national development opportunities.

(3) In the first quarter of 2025, funding application under the Scheme for the financial year 2025-26 will be launched, with the focus on uniting clansmen in Hong Kong. The HAD will provide funding support for clansmen associations to organise various activities aiming at promoting patriotic education and fostering the spirit of loving the country, Hong Kong and the hometowns. The HAD will timely review the effectiveness and arrangements of the Scheme before the completion of the three-year programme, and will continue to maintain close contact and collaboration with clansmen associations. They have our support in organising all sorts of activities related to hometown culture promotion and patriotic education, and in collaborating with the HKSAR Government to promote the mainstream values of loving the motherland and Hong Kong that are in line with the core principles of "one country, two systems".

Thank you, President.