

LCQ2: Strengthening patriotic education

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Lau and a reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (April 10):

Question:

The Patriotic Education Law of the People's Republic of China (Education Law), which took effect on January 1 this year, aims to strengthen patriotic education, as well as inherit and promote the spirit of patriotism. In addition, the 2023 Policy Address has proposed the establishment of a Working Group on Patriotic Education (Working Group) and a Chinese Culture Promotion Office (CCPO) to take forward the relevant education and promotion work. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the Working Group's mode of operation and the details of its activities currently in preparation;

(2) whether CCPO will make good use of the abundant heritage and monument resources in the Northern Metropolis, such as the heritage trail in Sha Tau Kok in commemoration of the War of Resistance and the Cenotaph for Martyrs in Wu Kau Tang, to systematically organise some heritage and monument visits and guided tours of educational significance; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will consider constructing a museum on the history of the Communist Party of China, a museum on the War of Resistance, as well as a dedicated museum that showcases the development and achievements of the country in the Northern Metropolis, and building the Northern Metropolis into a large-scale national education base, so as to better implement the directives and requirements of the Education Law; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with relevant bureaux, the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Kenneth Lau is as follows:

As announced by the Chief Executive in the Policy Address last year, the Government will roll out patriotic education, and a Working Group on Patriotic Education (Working Group) will be established under the Constitution and Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee led by the Chief Secretary for Administration. The Working Group will co-ordinate the work of government departments and non-governmental organisations in taking forward national education and dovetailing with the Patriotic Education Law of the

People's Republic of China (Patriotic Education Law), with a view to enhancing education on our country's history, culture and current affairs on different fronts, thereby promoting patriotism and ensuring its continuity from generation to generation.

Established on April 8, 2024, the Working Group on Patriotic Education comprises the relevant Directors of Bureaux, Heads of Departments, and leaders from the relevant sectors of society. To take forward patriotic education in an all-round manner, the Working Group will focus efforts on various key aspects, including school education; local community; history, politics, economy and culture; and media publicity.

The Chief Secretary for Administration will, through the Working Group, provide steer on the work to promote patriotic education, with a view to integrating patriotic education with national security education and Chinese culture education, stepping up promotion efforts at school and community levels, and making good use of various media platforms for publicity purposes, so as to blend patriotic education with citizens' everyday life and continuous learning. Taking into account, with a holistic approach, the current societal situation and the spirit and relevant content of the Patriotic Education Law, the Working Group will formulate the overall plan and strategy to systematically combine efforts of the Government and the community in enhancing the national awareness and sense of patriotism among various sectors of the community and taking forward patriotic education in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). We are actively making preparations to convene the first meeting of the Working Group as soon as possible. The specific work directions and plans of the Working Group will be announced in due course.

Patriotic education is rich in content, including public education on the history of and Hong Kong's contributions to the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (War of Resistance). The HKSAR Government has been attaching great importance to the history in commemorating the War of Resistance to enhance national confidence and patriotism among the general public. On optimising the use of heritage and monument resources, the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence (MCD) under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) held the "Fight as One: Anti-Japanese Guerrillas" Series Programme in 2023/24, including field visits to the sites of the War of Resistance and war-related historic sites and memorial facilities at Wu Kau Tang and Sha Tau Kok, etc. In future, the Chinese Culture Promotion Office (CCPO) and the MCD under the LCSD will join forces to design and organise guided tours by making use of the historic sites in association with the War of Resistance in the Northern Metropolis, including the Law Uk, currently the Hong Kong Sha Tau Kok Anti-Japanese War Memorial Hall, at Sha Tau Kok that was used by the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column as its base of operations and transportation checkpoint, as well as the Memorial Monument for Martyrs during World War II at Wu Kau Tang. Such guided tours are expected to commence in September this year. Besides the Northern Metropolis, the CCPO and the MCD will also explore the use of historic sites associated with the War of Resistance and related memorial facilities in Sai Kung, Yuen Long and Central Districts to plan further

guided tours to boost the understanding and awareness of the War of Resistance history in the public.

To enhance public understanding of the history of the War of Resistance, the MCD, which will be converted as the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence in September this year, will organise a series of educational and extension programmes related to the War of Resistance for schools and the public to further promote the awareness of the history as well as the significant contributions by the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column during the war.

In addition, the Chief Executive announced in the Policy Address last year that the Government would set up a museum to showcase the development and achievements of our country, covering areas such as its history (including the history of the Chinese Communist Party), politics, economic development and culture. The LCSD is currently working with the Development Bureau and other related departments to explore and identify an ideal site for the new museum. When designing and developing the exhibition contents, the CCPO will consult relevant Mainland authorities or museums, and draw reference from their views and information. We will also consult the opinions of the Legislative Council and various stakeholders on the general planning and future development of museums in Hong Kong.

Regarding the suggestion of building a "national education base" in the Northern Metropolis, we learn that the key functions of the base proposed by the Hon Kenneth Lau include the provision of a national education platform, teacher training, and exchange activities to promote national education, etc. National education and national security education have already incorporated elements and spirit of patriotic education, which form an integral part of school curriculum. The Education Bureau has been adopting a multi-pronged and co-ordinated approach to support and encourage primary and secondary schools to deliver national education and national security education, and dovetail such education with the content of the Patriotic Education Law. Among others, teacher training has been strengthened, such as regularly providing teaching resources on current affairs and history of the country, national affairs education for students has been enhanced, and Chinese culture immersion activities have been organised, with the aim of nurturing students from young as good citizens with a sense of belonging to our country. Besides, various patriotic groups have been staging exhibitions, setting up exhibition venues and organising different forms of activities on their own initiative to support the various sectors in the community in taking forward national education. One example is the Patriotic Education Centre established by the Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers. We will encourage various sectors of the community to better utilise these resources to enrich the content and experience of patriotic education.

As remarked by President Xi Jinping, "patriotism is the core of our national spirit, and is the spiritual bond of the Chinese nation's unity, struggle and self-reliance". Patriotic education is not a matter for an individual person or organisation. It requires the concerted efforts and active participation of various sectors of the community to get it done well.

Truly, unity is strength. The newly established Working Group on Patriotic Education will closely liaise and work with the relevant bureaux and departments to launch a series of patriotic education activities and encourage various sectors of the community to organise pertinent activities on their own initiative, with a view to creating a patriotic atmosphere in a united manner and contributing to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Thank you, Mr President.