

# LCQ21: The Square Kilometre Array Project

Following is a question by the Hon Elizabeth Quat and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, in the Legislative Council today (June 9):

Question:

The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Project is an international astronomy science project, with the objective to build the world's largest aperture synthesis radio telescope array and operate it for 50 years, which will provide a major opportunity for mankind to understand the universe. "The Square Kilometre Array Observatory" (SKAO), an international intergovernmental organisation established by a number of countries, is responsible for the implementation of the SKA Project. Following the ratification of the Convention establishing the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (the Convention) by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in April this year, China has become an official member of SKAO. On the other hand, the Chinese Government has announced that the Convention is not applicable to Hong Kong for the time being. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has assessed and consulted local academics how Hong Kong's participation in the SKA Project may benefit the local academia's research in areas such as astronomy, physics, frontier science as well as innovation and technology; if so, of the outcome; if not, whether it will expeditiously conduct such an assessment;

(2) whether it has estimated the resources that Hong Kong needs to deploy for participating in the SKA Project; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will make such an estimation; and

(3) whether it has plans to discuss with the Central Authorities the application of the Convention to Hong Kong, so that Hong Kong may participate in the SKA Project; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

According to information from the website of the Square Kilometre Array Project (SKA Project), the SKA Project plans to build radio telescopes in Australia and South Africa, and conduct scientific researches on issues such as the formation and evolution of stars and galaxies, cosmic magnetism, nature of gravity and life beyond Earth.

As instructed by the Chief Secretary for Administration, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau would reply to the question on behalf of the Administration as follows:

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region did not conduct assessments on the issues described in the question, and also has no plan to conduct such assessments.

The Convention establishing the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (Convention) is not applicable to Hong Kong. The Government has no plan to request the application of the Convention to Hong Kong.