

LCQ3: Hong Kong residents living on Mainland

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (February 23):

Question:

It is learnt that quite a number of Hong Kong residents have gone to the Mainland to develop and live their lives. The Chief Executive indicated in the 2020 Policy Address that the Central Government supports the implementation, by the end of 2020, of 24 policy measures for promoting the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area), so as to facilitate Hong Kong residents to pursue development, take up employment and reside in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area. Such measures cover tax concessions, facilitation of property purchase, and support for young entrepreneurs. Regarding the provision of support for Hong Kong residents living on the Mainland, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the latest implementation situation of the aforesaid 24 policy measures and the number of beneficiaries;

(2) whether it has grasped the basic information about those Hong Kong residents who are currently living or working on the Mainland; if so, of their (i) number, (ii) age distribution, (iii) family status and (iv) occupation, together with a tabulated breakdown by city; if not, how the Government provides them with appropriate support;

(3) whether it knows the current number of mutual aid organizations for Hong Kong people set up on the Mainland; whether the Government has liaised with such organizations; if so, of the details; if not, whether it would step up the liaison work; and

(4) given that at present the Mainland Offices of the Hong Kong Government (Mainland Offices) provide support to Hong Kong residents who are on the Mainland, of the number of requests for assistance received last year from Hong Kong people by the Mainland Offices, with a breakdown by type of issues pertaining to the requests for assistance?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted relevant policy bureaux, our reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Andrew Lam is as follows:

(1) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has all along been taking forward the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area) proactively in accordance with the directions set out in the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The Leading Group for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (the Leading Group), which is chaired by Vice Premier of the State Council Han Zheng, is a top-level institution of the Central Authorities for taking forward the development of the Greater Bay Area. The vast majority of the 24 policy measures announced after the two meetings of the Leading Group in 2019 have been implemented by now. They include tax concessions; facilitation of property purchase; support for young entrepreneurs; cross-boundary remittance of science and technology funding; liberalisation of legal, insurance and construction-related professional services; the use of Hong Kong-registered drugs and common medical devices in designated Hong Kong-owned healthcare institutions in the Greater Bay Area; and Cross-Boundary Wealth Management Connect. All of these measures support Hong Kong residents and professionals who wish to live, work or start their businesses in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area.

Since their announcement, the 24 policy measures, which covers a wide range of areas, have been implemented successfully. Key achievements include:

On financial services, the Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect was formally launched in September 2021, enabling residents in Hong Kong, Macao and the nine municipalities in Guangdong Province to carry out cross-boundary investment in wealth management products distributed by banks in the Greater Bay Area directly. It is conducive to the facilitation of cross-boundary investment by individual residents of the Greater Bay Area. Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect has been well-received by the market since its implementation. As of the end of 2021, cross-boundary funds remittances (including Hong Kong and Macao) totalled over RMB400 million. Moreover, the HKSAR Government established a dedicated regulatory regime for insurance-linked securities (ILS) and launched the Pilot ILS Grant Scheme, facilitating the issuance of the first catastrophe bond in Hong Kong in October 2021.

On innovation and technology (I&T), the HKSAR Government and the Shenzhen Municipal Government are jointly developing the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Cooperation Zone (Cooperation Zone) at full steam. Under the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy, the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park (HSITP) in the Lok Ma Chau Loop and the areas around Lok Ma Chau/San Tin will be consolidated to form the San Tin Technopole, which, together with the Shenzhen I&T Zone, will form the Cooperation Zone which is approximately 540 hectares. Before the completion of the first batch of buildings in the HSITP from the end of 2024 onwards, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation will kick-start the establishment of the Shenzhen branch of the Hong Kong Science Park in the Shenzhen I&T Zone, and the "Greater Bay Area InnoAcademy" and "Greater Bay Area InnoExpress" are expected to commence operation within this year. In order to attract talent and enterprises to develop in the Cooperation Zone, the two governments had launched a joint policy package last year to implement measures conducive to the flow of talent, scientific research

resources, business development, and so forth.

On the cross-boundary remittance of research and development (R&D) funding from the Mainland to Hong Kong, since 2019, the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) as well as Mainland provinces and municipalities have approved over RMB440 million of R&D funding, in which RMB260 million came from Guangdong Province and its municipalities, for Hong Kong's universities and R&D institutions to conduct R&D projects or set up laboratories. In addition, the Central Government announced at the end of 2019 the policy measure of relaxing the limitation on exporting Mainland human genetic resources to Hong Kong. So far, four Mainland branches established by Hong Kong's universities have been confirmed by MOST as having met the specified requirements as pilot units for exporting human genetic resources to Hong Kong independently for research purposes.

On support for young people starting their businesses in Hong Kong and the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, the HKSAR Government has launched two funding schemes, namely the Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship) and the Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes at Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes), providing entrepreneurial support and incubation services to young people. The Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship supports 16 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to organise youth entrepreneurship projects, providing capital subsidy to about 230 youth start-ups (involving more than 800 Hong Kong young entrepreneurs) and rendering entrepreneurial support and incubation services to about 4 000 young entrepreneurs. Funded NGOs have started rolling out their youth entrepreneurship projects and the response has thus far been positive. Subject to the latest situation of the pandemic, the funded organisations will gradually assist young entrepreneurs in settling in innovative and entrepreneurial bases in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area. The Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes supports 15 NGOs to organise short-term experiential projects at innovative and entrepreneurial bases in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, with a view to deepening Hong Kong young people's understanding of such entrepreneurial bases, as well as the relevant policies and support measures on innovation and entrepreneurship. About 700 young people will benefit from these programmes.

On support for construction-related professional services entering the Mainland market, the relevant measures have been implemented through the Agreement Concerning Amendment to the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement Agreement on Trade in Services signed on November 21, 2019, which took effect from June 1, 2020. In addition, the HKSAR Government, together with the Mainland Authorities, has formulated a new measure to allow architectural and engineering consultant enterprises on the HKSAR Government's approved lists, as well as professionals registered with relevant registration boards in Hong Kong, to be able to provide services in nine Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area directly through a simple registration system. This measure covers five professional disciplines,

namely architecture, engineering, surveying, planning and landscape architecture. Thus far 58 enterprises and 260 professionals have completed their registration.

On legal services, in August 2019, Guangdong Province implemented further liberalisation measures for partnership associations set up between Hong Kong and Mainland law firms in Guangdong Province, including the removal of the minimum capital injection ratio of 30 per cent by Hong Kong partner firms; allowing partnership associations to employ Mainland and Hong Kong lawyers directly in their own name; and to handle and undertake administrative procedure legal work. As of January 2022, 12 partnership associations have been set up in the Greater Bay Area. The Central Government also agreed to allow Hong Kong legal practitioners to be retained as legal consultants by one to three Mainland law firms simultaneously, and to replace the approval requirements for the employment of legal consultants with filing procedures. Another important milestone was the inaugural Greater Bay Area Legal Professional Examination held in July 2021, with over 650 Hong Kong legal practitioners enrolled in the examination. The examination results were also released in September 2021. After completing intensive training and passing the assessment by the Guangdong Lawyers Association, Hong Kong solicitors and barristers who have passed the examination can apply to the Department of Justice of Guangdong Province for the relevant lawyer's practice certificates and provide legal services in the nine Mainland municipalities of the Greater Bay Area on specified civil and commercial matters to which Mainland laws apply. The second examination will be held in June 2022.

On healthcare, the trial of the measure of using Hong Kong registered drugs and medical devices used in Hong Kong public hospitals in the Greater Bay Area at the University of Hong Kong Shenzhen Hospital was completed successfully. As of the end of January 2022, 13 drugs and three medical devices are allowed to be used in five hospitals in Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Zhuhai and Zhongshan as approved by the Health Commission of Guangdong Province. The HKSAR Government is seeking to expand the directory of applicable drugs and medical devices as soon as possible, and extend the policy to cover more healthcare institutions in the Greater Bay Area that meet relevant requirements.

Looking ahead, the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, combined with the support provided to Hong Kong by the National 14th Five-Year Plan, will undoubtedly expand Hong Kong's scope for development significantly. Hong Kong enjoys the unique strengths of "One Country, Two Systems". The HKSAR Government will continue to proactively take forward the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area to seek and create even more new opportunities for Hong Kong in areas such as economic, social and livelihood development.

(2) Since 2016, the Census and Statistics Department has been making use of the movement records of Hong Kong permanent residents to compile and release the estimation of "Hong Kong residents usually staying in the Guangdong Province" (that is Hong Kong permanent residents who have stayed in Guangdong

Province for six months and above cumulatively during the six months before and after the reference time-point). The relevant statistics for 2019 and 2020 by sex and age group are set out at the Annex. The HKSAR Government will consider collecting other relevant figures on specific topics in due course having regard to its operational needs.

(3) Many Hong Kong residents and students on the Mainland have set up groups for mutual assistance and exchange. The Mainland Offices of the HKSAR Government (Mainland Offices) attach great importance to maintaining close liaison with various associations of Hong Kong residents. Such efforts include joining hands with these associations to organise events from time to time, and assisting Hong Kong people on the Mainland to reflect their opinions and requests to the Mainland authorities for follow-up. Over the past few months, the HKSAR Government has organised consultation sessions for the Policy Address and Budget with associations of Hong Kong residents on the Mainland through the Mainland Offices in order to more fully understand the views and requests of Hong Kong residents on the Mainland.

(4) In 2021, the numbers of requests for assistance received by the five Mainland Offices, with breakdown by nature, are set out in the table below:

Mainland Office	Assistance cases which are related to immigration and personal safety matters	Other assistance cases*
Beijing Office	32	22
Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Guangdong	468	87
Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Chengdu	24	6
Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Shanghai	34	5
Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Wuhan	23	13
Total	581	133

*Excluding general enquiries.

The Mainland Offices had rendered practicable assistance to the assistance seekers having regard to the actual circumstances.

In respect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the assistance and support rendered by the Mainland Offices to Hong Kong residents on the Mainland included disseminating information on the Mainland's latest anti-pandemic measures (for example, vaccination for Hong Kong people on the Mainland), handling related enquiries, and conveying concerns about compulsory quarantine measures to the relevant Mainland authorities, and so forth.