[LCQ5: Developing artificial intelligence](#)

     Following is a question by the Hon Duncan Chiu and a reply by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, in the Legislative Council today (January 31):

Question:

     It is learnt that in recent years, various countries in the world have been vigorously promoting the development of artificial intelligence (AI), including the promulgation of the Development Plan on the New Generation of Artificial Intelligence by the country in 2017, as well as the promulgation of the Singapore National AI Strategy 2.0 and the updated National Strategy for the Development of Artificial Intelligence by Singapore and Russia respectively at the end of last year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has conducted an in-depth analysis and study on the AI development strategies of the Mainland and other countries as well as their impacts on Hong Kong; if so, of the results and corresponding measures, including whether it will formulate an overall plan and strategy for AI development in Hong Kong, and conduct regular reviews and updates; if so, of the specific objectives and implementation timetable of the relevant plan and strategy, as well as supporting measures and deployments in aspects such as the overall manpower demand, technological development, digital infrastructures, policies, laws and regulations, as well as standards and systems;

(2) whether it has comprehensively assessed if the current supply of human resources, digital infrastructures, laws and regulations, etc of AI in Hong Kong can meet the needs of its future AI development; if it has, of the outcomes, and how it addresses the inadequacies; and

(3) whether it will assist and support various trades and industries (in particular micro, small and medium-enterprises) in Hong Kong in a holistic manner, including how they will measure and enhance the level of awareness and mastery of AI technologies of their employees, so as to embrace the opportunities and challenges in the new era of AI development?

Reply:

President,

     The Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Development Blueprint (I&T Blueprint) promulgated in end-2022 proposes priority development of artificial intelligence (AI) and data science industries. Policies, infrastructure, technology and talents, etc are interlinked and indispensable elements of fostering the local AI development. In response to the Hon Duncan

Chiu's question, my consolidated reply in consultation with relevant policy bureaux is as follows:

The Government has been adopting all-round strategy to develop the AI ecosystem on various fronts, with review and enhancement from time to time. In terms of policies, guidelines and regulations, the Government has formulated the Ethical AI Framework, which was updated last year to provide clearer guidelines to government departments on their development of applications with the use of AI-related technologies (including generative AI). The above guidelines are published online for reference by the industry.

Furthermore, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (PCPD) published in 2021 the Guidance on the Ethical Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence to help organisations devise appropriate AI strategy and management models, conduct risk assessments and make oversight arrangements etc, so as to promote industries' development and use of AI systems under the premises of privacy protection and observing internationally recognised values and principles.

The Policy Statement on Facilitating Data Flow and Safeguarding Data Security in Hong Kong issued last year also sets out specific action items to facilitate data flow and strengthen data security protection in order to better co-ordinate the development and security of AI.

As for the infrastructures, Cyberport is making preparation for the establishment of the AI Supercomputing Centre , with a view to supporting the strong local demand for computing power, enhance Hong Kong's research and development (R&D) capabilities in various fields, and promote industrial development. The Government also puts in place facilitation measures to promote data centre development.

Paying heed to the guiding directions of the I&T Blueprint and leveraging Hong Kong's solid foundation of AI researches, we are committed to talent cultivation, resource matching, strengthening research capabilities, acceleration of result transformation, advancing industrial development, etc, and have thus nurtured a number of renowned AI scholars and enterprises. In view of the development in AI technology, the AIR@InnoHK research cluster which focuses on AI and robotic technologies under the InnoHK initiative has established last year a new generative AI R&D centre.

A growing number of industries are applying AI technologies. Relevant policy bureaux and departments have been providing talent education, retraining and skill upgrading to their responsible industries to strengthen the local population's understanding and grasp of AI technologies and align with the latest manpower requirements. The Government is also dedicated to enlarging the talent pool for innovation and technology (I&T). For examples, the Research Talent Hub, the Technology Talent Admission Scheme and the Talent List are all aimed at nurturing and attracting tech talents, including AI specialists from home and elsewhere.

In the meantime, the Government assists different sectors via various measures and subsidy schemes to upgrade and transform through adoption of

technology to improve productivity and competitiveness. Among them, the Technology Voucher Programme supports local enterprises/organisations and welcomes applications from different sector in using technological services and solutions (including AI technologies).

We note the evolving trend of AI technology, and the relevant policies and solutions formulated by other economies. We are closely monitoring the relevant developments and will take timely follow-up actions to ensure that our planning and strategic responses suit Hong Kong's circumstances.

For example, we have commissioned the InnoHK research centre specialised in generative AI to study and suggest appropriate rules and guidelines on the accuracy, responsibility and information security of the generative AI technology and its application.

In view of the copyright issues arising from the rapid development of AI technology, the Government will conduct a consultation this year to explore further enhancement of the relevant protections provided by the Copyright Ordinance.

The Government is carrying out a new round of Manpower Projection to gauge the manpower requirements for major industries (including I&T industry) in the coming five years. Key findings are expected to be available in the third quarter of 2024 and a full report will be released in early 2025 at the earliest. This would help facilitate our human resources planning related to AI.

In sum, to embrace the various opportunities and challenges arising from AI technology, we will keep a positive and open mind to explore and formulate the required responses to promote the AI development in Hong Kong, alongside timely enhancement to the overall strategies, so as to integrate and strike a balance between AI development and appropriate regulation.