

LCQ7: Subvented organisations' work on publicising national awareness

Following is a question by the Hon Stanley Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (July 5):

Question:

There are views that some organisations subvented by the Government such as schools, social welfare organisations, environmental groups as well as cultural and performing arts groups did not discharge their responsibilities to proactively publicise national awareness and tell China's story well in the past, and they even took part in supporting black-clad violence during the riots. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has formulated guidelines requiring various statutory bodies and non-governmental organisations (including but not limited to schools, social welfare organisations, environmental groups as well as cultural and performing arts groups) and projects which receive recurrent subventions from the Government to carry out the following work and set performance indicators for such work:

(i) displaying the national flag solemnly on major festivals, such as the National Day and the anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, in accordance with the guidelines;

(ii) providing staff members, service users and the public with national education and books on national affairs, as well as conducting appropriate written assessments on the relevant work of staff members for keeping in their personnel files, which will serve as one of the reference criteria for promotion; and

(iii) showing in the introductions of such organisations or projects the wording of "subvented by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China";

if it has, of the number, percentage and names of organisations which have complied with the guidelines, and whether the relevant work have met the targets; if it has not, the reasons for that, and when the Government will formulate the relevant guidelines and performance indicators; and

(2) whether it has immediately terminated the provision of subventions for organisations or projects which have deliberately violated the aforesaid requirements or failed to meet the targets, and demanded the organisations or the responsible persons of the projects concerned to return the subventions to the Government from the date of the deliberate violation or failure to meet the targets; if so, of the number and names of the organisations or projects concerned; if not, the reasons for that, and how the Government will hold the organisations or the responsible persons of the projects concerned accountable?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted relevant bureaux and departments, the consolidated reply to Hon Stanley Ng's question is as follows:

Displaying the national flag on major festive days

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been encouraging members of the public and organisations (including subvented organisations) to use the national flag and its design properly on appropriate occasions, with a view to expressing their patriotic feelings.

According to the "Stipulations for the Display and Use of the National Flag and National Emblem and the Regional Flag and Regional Emblem" made by the Chief Executive through gazette notice, the office of the Chief Executive, the Central Government Offices, the Legislative Council, the Court of Final Appeal, the High Court, etc, are required to display the national flag on each working day and key festive days including National Day (October 1) and HKSAR Establishment Day (July 1). As for schools, the Secretary for Education (SED) has given directions pursuant to Article 7A of the National Flag and National Emblem Ordinance, requiring primary and secondary schools (including special schools) to display the national flag on each school day, New Year's Day, HKSAR Establishment Day and National Day, and conduct a national flag raising ceremony weekly and on the abovementioned days or the preceding/following school day of the abovementioned days with the national anthem being played and sung during the ceremony. Post-secondary education institutions must make reference to the directions given by the SED to primary and secondary schools for dealing with matters relating to the daily display of the national flag and the weekly conduct of a national flag raising ceremony. The Education Bureau (EDB) has also strongly advised kindergartens, as far as conditions permit, to follow the requirements of primary and secondary schools on displaying the national flag, and conducting a national flag raising ceremony, so that students can learn about the national flag from an early age.

For social welfare organisations, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) encourages all non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating subvented welfare services to proactively display the national flags and regional flags at the premises of their service units. NGOs are also reminded to abide by relevant stipulations of the National Flag and National Emblem Ordinance and the Regional Flag and Regional Emblem Ordinance. Also, the SWD will continue to encourage concerned NGOs to display the national flags and regional flags at the premises of their service units on major festive days, such as National Day, HKSAR Establishment Day, etc.

Provision of national education to the public and subvented organisations

On promotion of national education to the public, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau has been working closely with the Committee on the Promotion

of Civic Education (CPCE) to promote national education outside schools and in the community through various channels and projects, including publications, webpages and social media pages of the CPCE; producing Announcements in the Public Interest on the national anthem; organising quiz competitions, seminars and Civic Education Exhibition; sponsoring eligible organisations for organising national education promotional activities; and arranging at the Civic Education Resource Centre of the CPCE permanent interactive exhibition area, guided tours, film shows, training programmes, seminars and thematic exhibitions, etc.

The EDB has been adopting a wide array of measures with a "multi-pronged and co-ordinated" approach, which include providing curriculum guides, developing learning and teaching resources, offering training for teachers, and organising life-wide learning activities (including Mainland exchange activities) for students, etc, to support schools in promoting national education within and beyond classroom through whole-school participation, deepening students' understanding of our country and its development as well as strengthening students' sense of national identity and national pride. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, the EDB has enhanced the training programmes for newly-joined teachers and in-service teachers which cover contents about the country's development in education, the Constitution, the Basic Law and the National Security Law, with a view to strengthening teachers' understanding of the country's development and correct understanding of the constitutional status of the HKSAR. Moreover, as announced in the Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address, newly-joined teachers in publicly-funded schools and promoted teachers in public sector schools are required to participate in the Mainland study tours. With full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the EDB has been arranging Mainland study tours for newly-appointed teachers, in-service teachers and promoted teachers so that they can, through direct personal experience, gain deeper understanding of the latest development of our country, the opportunities brought to Hong Kong and how Hong Kong can contribute to our country's development.

Besides, the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and the SWD encourage NGOs to seize opportunities to integrate into the overall development of our country, strengthen professional exchanges of social services between Hong Kong and the Mainland, and actively align with the development of welfare services in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). In the past year, the LWB and the SWD actively encouraged the local social welfare sector to partake in national education, including the organisation of the "Session for the Social Welfare Sector to Learn about, Promote and Implement the Spirit of President Xi's Important Speech", the "Training Workshops on the Spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China for the Local Welfare Sector" as well as the "Starting a New Chapter in Hong Kong Social Welfare Summit" with the Hong Kong Social Welfare Sector Heart to Heart Joint Action. These initiatives aimed to vigorously encourage the local social welfare services to better co-ordinate with development of welfare services in our country, and support the good governance of the HKSAR Government. In addition, the LWB, the SWD and the social welfare sector also promoted integration with our country's development of welfare services

through visits to welfare services in the GBA.

On culture and arts, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau organised activities such as exhibitions, talks and cultural exchanges to enhance public understanding and appreciation of Chinese arts and culture, thereby reinforcing the public's (including the youth's) understanding of the history and development of our nation. Examples include the exhibitions at the Hong Kong Palace Museum and the re-opened Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Each year, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council provides about \$3 million to support local arts groups and artists to perform and participate in major arts festivals in the Mainland, such as the "Meet in Beijing" International Arts Festival, the 1862 Shanghai Fashion Art Centre and the Power Station of Art. Government-funded arts groups also arrange tours in the Mainland and collaborate and exchange with Mainland arts groups. Through these cultural exchange activities with the Mainland, artists can deepen their understanding of our country's development and enhance their awareness and affection about the nation.

Requirement on acknowledgement of sponsorship

In general, the funding and sponsorship programmes under Government bureaux and departments will require the recipient organisations to properly acknowledge the source of government funding through relevant funding conditions. If the recipient organisation fails to comply with the said requirement without a reasonable explanation, the funds granted for the relevant project may be suspended or terminated.