

LCQ9: Supporting exhibition industry

Following is a question by the Hon Yiu Si-wing and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, in the Legislative Council today (July 14):

Question:

At the end of last year, the Government launched the Convention and Exhibition Industry Subsidy Scheme (the Subsidy Scheme) to provide subsidies for organisers of exhibitions and international conventions held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and AsiaWorld-Expo, as well as exhibitors of exhibitions and participants of major conferences organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. In June this year, the Government extended the Subsidy Scheme for six months to June 30 next year. However, some members of the exhibition industry have pointed out that as cross-boundary travels of people have come to a halt due to quarantine measures, there is no definite time for the recovery of the exhibition industry, which has made them feel very anxious. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of exhibitions which were held and subsidised by the Subsidy Scheme and the total amount of subsidies involved; whether it knows the number of visits to such exhibitions, and the respective numbers of countries from which exhibitors and buyers were attracted to participate in such exhibitions (setting out such information in a table by name of exhibition);

(2) whether it knows the number of exhibitions originally scheduled to be held at the aforesaid venues that have been cancelled or postponed due to the epidemic since January 2020, and set out the details of such exhibitions by name of exhibition;

(3) given that the epidemic has subsided, whether the Government will, by drawing reference from its practice of exempting qualified persons in the financial services sectors from the compulsory quarantine requirements, consider relaxing the quarantine measures imposed on overseas and Mainland exhibitors coming to Hong Kong to participate in exhibition events, so that the organisation of various types of exhibitions can resume promptly; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it has, by drawing reference from the practices of overseas countries, adopted measures to encourage the industry to resume organising exhibitions, thereby paving the way for the reactivation of exhibition events; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In February 2020, the HKSAR Government announced the establishment of the \$1,020 million Convention and Exhibition Industry Subsidy Scheme (the Scheme) under the first round of the Anti-epidemic Fund to provide subsidies to the organisers of exhibitions and international conventions at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) and AsiaWorld-Expo (AWE), as well as exhibitors of exhibitions and participants of major conventions organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, so as to encourage the organisation of convention and exhibition activities in Hong Kong. The two parts of the Scheme were launched in October and November 2020 respectively. The Government has extended the Scheme twice to June 30, 2022.

Regarding the questions raised by the Hon Yiu Si-wing, my reply is as follows:

(1) As of June 30, 2021, the Scheme provided total subsidy of around \$97.38 million to 42 exhibitions, which involved around 6 100 exhibitors (around 4 500 local exhibitors and around 1 600 non-local exhibitors) and around 600 000 visits (around 597 000 local visits and around 3 000 non-local visits). Details of individual events involve commercially sensitive information and would not be disclosed.

(2) According to the information provided by the management companies of the HKCEC and AWE, 111 and 65 exhibitions originally scheduled for February 2020 to June 2021 at the two venues were postponed or cancelled respectively. Details of individual events involve commercially sensitive information and would not be disclosed.

(3) The HKSAR Government has been communicating and liaising closely with the governments of the Mainland and the Macao Special Administrative Region on measures for epidemic prevention and control. For the early resumption of normal cross-boundary flow of people amongst the three places in an orderly manner, the HKSAR Government will continue to closely monitor and control the epidemic situation, and to speed up vaccination for members of the public. Meanwhile, the HKSAR Government will maintain liaison with the Mainland and Macao to actively explore the resumption of normal cross-boundary activities amongst the three places in a gradual and orderly manner, on the premise that the epidemic situation in the three places is under control and without posing additional public health risks. As regards overseas economies, the HKSAR Government will continue to explore the establishment of "Travel Bubbles" with overseas economies that have relatively stable epidemic situation and close economic and trade relations with Hong Kong, in order to resume cross-border travel in a gradual and orderly manner while balancing the need to protect public health and avoiding importation of cases.

(4) As aforementioned, the HKSAR Government has extended the Scheme twice to June 30, 2022, benefiting more convention and exhibition activities. The trade has been positive towards the Scheme, and reflected that the HKSAR Government was ahead of other places in providing swift and timely subsidy. The HKSAR Government will maintain liaison with the trade to reinvigorate Hong Kong's premier position as an international convention, exhibition and

sourcing hub.