

Opening remarks by Acting SHA at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 12):

Mr Chairman,

I would like to first brief Members about the key areas of our work on home affairs in 2022-23, which are related to the Budget.

Arts and Culture

Hong Kong Performing Arts Market

The National 14th Five-Year Plan supports the development of Hong Kong into an East-meets-West Centre for International Cultural Exchange. To complement this new positioning, the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) plans to allocate \$42 million for organising the first Hong Kong Performing Arts Market within two years to facilitate exchanges amongst arts and culture practitioners in the Mainland, overseas and Hong Kong, and expand the trading market of performing arts programmes.

Promotion of arts technology

To further promote arts technology development, we will allocate \$30 million to implement the Arts Technology Funding Pilot Scheme and inject an additional \$10 million into the Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme to encourage the 9 major performing arts groups, and small and medium-sized arts groups to explore the application of arts technology. Moreover, we will provide an annual provision of \$85 million to support the development of the East Kowloon Cultural Centre into a major arts technology incubator providing structured training. We also set aside \$70 million to upgrade the facilities of the performing arts venues under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). More quality arts productions successfully integrating arts and technology will enhance Hong Kong's standing in the international arts arena.

Conservation training

On conservation training, we will allocate a total of \$37 million over the next 6 financial years starting from this year to provide professional training for the conservators of the LCSD and the soon-to-open Hong Kong Palace Museum, and increase the number of places under the museum trainee (conservation) and the summer internship programme, with an aim to foster the professional development of conservation and museum personnel in Hong Kong.

Cantonese Opera Development Fund

The Cantonese Opera Development Fund will receive an injection of \$100 million in 2022-23 to further support Cantonese opera practitioners in pursuing their professional advancement and continuous training, with a view to facilitating the long-term development of the Cantonese opera sector.

Community Arts Scheme

Popularisation of arts can enrich our quality of life. In 2022-23, the LCSD will continue to implement the Community Arts Scheme across the 18 districts. Starting from the 2024-25 financial year, an annual recurrent provision of \$20 million will be allocated for the LCSD to collaborate with local small and medium arts groups and district organisations to curate tailor-made arts activities with the aim of promoting the integration of arts into our community, providing more opportunities for members of the public to take part in arts and cultural activities, thereby enhancing the artistic ambience in the community.

Sports

Allocation of new resources for sports development

The Government has since 2017 allocated over \$60 billion of new resources to promote sports development in Hong Kong proactively and provide more sports and recreational facilities. Among which, the Kai Tak Sports Park, occupying a site of about 28 hectares, aims to provide modern and multi-purpose sports and leisure facilities. Its superstructure works and detailed design are underway for target completion in the end of next year. In addition, out of the 26 projects under the Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities, funding approval has been obtained for 21 projects, seven of which are available for public use. We will submit the funding application for the Redevelopment of Yuen Long Stadium (Main Works) in due course and hope to get the Legislative Council's approval as soon as possible.

Transformation of public play spaces

The HAB has launched a five-year plan to transform more than 170 public play spaces under the LCSD across the territory with a view to injecting more innovative and fun elements. The LCSD will encourage and promote community participation and engagement in the process of transforming the public play spaces.

Five-year plan for upgrading football pitches

The Government announced in the 2021-22 Budget to set aside about \$320 million to implement a five-year plan for upgrading over 70 football pitches under the management of the LCSD. In 2021-22, the LCSD has commenced improvement works for 17 pitches, of which nine have been completed. The LCSD will, in consultation with relevant works departments, continue to actively explore the technical feasibility of carrying out the improvement works with a view to implementing the works concerned as soon as possible.

Support measures for "M" Mark events

Many major international sports events scheduled for 2021 were cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic. We have provided a special direct grant with a ceiling of \$2 million for each affected event. We will continue to encourage "national sports associations" to organise more major sports events in Hong Kong.

Youth Development

The Government will continue to work closely with the Youth Development Commission to address young people's concerns about education, career pursuit and home ownership, and encourage their participation in politics, public policy discussion and debate. We will also put more emphasis on nurturing young people's positive thinking to help them develop positive values so that they may become young individuals with a passion for the Motherland and Hong Kong, as well as a commitment to serving the community. We have set aside sufficient funds for this financial year and will, subject to the development of the pandemic, take forward various youth development initiatives when it is safe and practicable to do so.

Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

This year marks an important milestone for our city as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the Motherland and the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. We are organising a broad range of major celebration events in Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas under the theme of "A New Era – Stability • Prosperity • Opportunity". We also welcome and encourage various sectors of the community to organise different types of celebration activities for the participation and enjoyment of all. As the pandemic stabilises and steadily subsides, the celebration events will be gradually rolled out as planned.

My colleagues and I are happy to answer questions from Members. Thank you, Mr Chairman.