

Opening remarks by SHA at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 14):

Mr Chairman,

I would like to brief Members about the key areas of our work on home affairs in 2021-22.

Arts and culture

The 2020 Policy Address provided that the Government will support the development of arts technology (art tech). In this connection, an interdepartmental task force has met in February to discuss strategies and measures to promote art tech while a total of \$100 million has also been earmarked for the funds and programmes under the purview of relevant policy bureaux for the promotion of art tech. The East Kowloon Cultural Centre under construction is expected to be commissioned in the second half of 2023 to provide an art tech incubation platform for local artists.

The West Kowloon Cultural District is Hong Kong's most important investment in cultural infrastructure. It will be home to the M+ museum and the Hong Kong Palace Museum, which are expected to open in the end of 2021 and mid-2022 respectively. The two world-class museums will emerge, together with the expanded Hong Kong Museum of Art, as new cultural landmarks along the waterfront of Victoria Harbour.

Sports

Kai Tak Sports Park

For the Kai Tak Sports Park occupying a site of about 28 hectares, the design, build and operate contract already commenced in February 2019. The piling works of the project have largely been completed while the substructure, basement and superstructure works are under way. Given the current construction progress, we envisage that the Sports Park will be completed in the second half of 2023.

Transformation of public play spaces and installation of novel outdoor fitness equipment

The Government has launched a five-year plan to transform more than 170 public play spaces under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) across the territory to inject more innovative and fun elements into them. Moreover, in response to the public demand for fitness equipment, the LCSD will introduce more novel outdoor fitness equipment suitable for younger

users on a pilot basis.

Five-year plan for upgrading football pitches

Football has long been a popular sport among the public. An amount of \$318 million has been earmarked for the implementation of a five-year plan for upgrading over 70 football pitches under the management of the LCSD, including substantially increasing the number of football pitches meeting international standards and expediting the replacement of artificial turf on football pitches. The LCSD is actively exploring with the relevant works departments on the technical feasibility of carrying out the improvement works and will draw up the implementation details having regard to various factors including the priority and estimated expenditure involved.

Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities

Out of the 26 projects under the Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities, 16 have already received funding approval. We hope that the Legislative Council will approve the funding for four other projects to be submitted within this legislative year as soon as possible.

Support measures for "M" Mark events

All "M" Mark events have been cancelled due to the pandemic since early last year. We have provided a special direct grant with a ceiling of \$2 million for each affected event to alleviate the financial burden of relevant "national sports associations".

Youth development

The list of funded organisations under two relevant schemes was announced in February this year, namely the Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes at Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area under the Youth Development Fund. A total of about \$135 million was granted under the two schemes for 30 non-governmental organisations to implement youth entrepreneurship projects or experiential programmes at entrepreneurial bases. It is estimated that subsidies will be provided for about 230 youth start-ups (involving more than 800 Hong Kong young entrepreneurs), with entrepreneurial services made available to about 4 000 young people and experiential projects for a first batch of about 700 young participants. The Home Affairs Bureau also maintains close collaboration with the Youth Development Commission to provide exchange and internship opportunities outside Hong Kong for young people in an effort to broaden their horizons while providing them with exposure to the actual workplace environment. Subject to the development of the pandemic, we will continue to enhance and expand the schemes concerned in the future to better cater for the needs of young people.

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