

Over \$60 million released for disaster relief in 2017-18

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region released \$64.28 million from the Disaster Relief Fund in the year 2017-18 to support relief organisations in providing emergency relief to the victims of disasters occurring outside Hong Kong.

Grants amounting to \$64.28 million were disbursed for 23 programmes carried out by nine relief organisations, providing relief to drought victims in Ethiopia and Somalia, cyclone victims in Bangladesh and the Philippines and flood victims in the Mainland of China, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. The number of beneficiaries was estimated to be around 540 000. The nine relief organisations concerned were Amity Foundation, Hong Kong; Oxfam Hong Kong; World Vision Hong Kong; Adventist Development and Relief Agency, China; Plan International Hong Kong; Habitat for Humanity Hong Kong; CEDAR Fund; Hong Kong Red Cross; and Save the Children Hong Kong.

To cater for the different needs of the victims, a wide range of relief supplies including food, quilts, hygiene and household items (such as water filters, kitchen utensils and portable solar powered lights) and temporary shelter materials and tools (such as corrugated galvanised iron sheets and tarpaulins) had been distributed through the relief programmes. From the feedback gathered by the relief organisations, the victims were very grateful for the timely assistance provided by the Disaster Relief Fund.

Relief organisations receiving grants from the Disaster Relief Fund are required to submit evaluation reports and audited accounts on the use of the grants to the Government after the completion of the relief programmes.

The Disaster Relief Fund, administered by the Administration Wing under the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office, provides an effective channel for the Government to respond swiftly to appeals for humanitarian aid in relief of disasters that occur outside Hong Kong. The annual report on the activities of the Fund for the year 2017-18, photos of the relief programmes and feedback from the victims have been uploaded to the website of the Administration Wing at www.admwing.gov.hk/eng/links/drfund.htm.

The Disaster Relief Fund is replenished by the Government at the start of each financial year and, as necessary, during the financial year, depending on the calls for relief and the size of the Fund balance and commitments.

The Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee is responsible for advising the Government on the policy and practices regarding the disbursement of funds for disaster relief, specific amounts of grants made to the applicants, and monitoring the use of grants. The Committee is chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration. Members include Mr Ip Kwok-him, Dr Lam Ching-choi, Dr Helena Wong, Mr Kenneth Lau, Dr Tik Chi-yuen, Mrs Ann Kung,

the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury and the Secretary for Labour and Welfare.