SED's opening remarks at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

　　â€‹Following is the English translation of the opening remarks by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 12):

Chairman,

　　The total expenditure on education in 2019-20 is $124 billion, which is higher than the 2018-19 revised estimate by over 12 per cent. Of this, the recurrent education expenditure increases by about 6 per cent to $90.6 billion. Both the total and recurrent education expenditure account for more than one-fifth of the respective government expenditure and take up the largest share among all policy areas. The Government will continue to devote resources in enhancing the quality of education and providing students with quality education.

　　In 2019-20, we will take forward the following new measures announced in the Policy Address and Budget.

　　For primary and secondary education, we will implement the all-graduate teaching force policy, and carry out the "One Executive Officer for Each School" policy to increase the administrative support for public sector schools, Direct Subsidy Scheme schools and their management committees. In calculating promotion posts of public sector secondary schools, those regular teaching posts converted from the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant and the Career and Life Planning Grant will be accounted for. We will provide the Life-wide Learning Grant to promote life-wide learning with enhanced efforts. We will also enhance various support measures under integrated education policy to support students with special educational needs (SEN). Furthermore, we will provide additional resources to support parent education and continue to carry out various improvement projects of school premises. In addition, we consulted the Panel on Education in late March on the proposal of increasing the manpower at the middle management level and rationalising the salaries for school heads and deputy heads in public sector primary schools. We will soon submit the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee and the Finance Committee.

　　We will enhance the subsidy for kindergartens joining the kindergarten education scheme and admitting non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students, provide additional resources for NCS students with SEN and to support NCS students to use Chinese in learning Chinese History, and commission school-based professional support services for schools and kindergartens admitting NCS students from the 2019/20 to 2021/22 school years.

　　We propose injecting $20 billion into the Research Endowment Fund, and setting up a $3 billion Research Matching Grant Scheme. We will also introduce three new fellowship schemes for outstanding academics to support

research work and help retain talents. Moreover, we have earmarked $16 billion for the University Grants Committee-funded universities to construct or renovate their campus facilities, including the acquisition of necessary research equipment.

We will expand the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors to self-financing sub-degree programmes, and regularise the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme as well as the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme.

As regards Vocational and Professional Education and Training, we will regularise the Pilot Training and Support Scheme with an increased quota. For the 2019/20 to 2021/22 academic years, we will introduce a new pilot incentive to employers participating in the workplace assessment from, and provide tuition fee subsidies to students admitted to designated professional part-time programmes offered by the Vocational Training Council.

Furthermore, we will provide a support grant of $2,500 for financially needy students, and pay the examination fees for school candidates sitting for the 2020 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, as relief support measures.

Chairman, my colleagues and I will be happy to answer further questions from Members. Thank you, Chairman.