

SFH attends WHO Western Pacific regional meeting (with photos)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, today (October 25) virtually attended the meeting of the 72nd session of the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Committee for the Western Pacific.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related public health restrictions, the Regional Committee meeting this year is held in a hybrid format under which members may participate on-site at Himeji, Japan, or virtually through video conferencing. As the pandemic continues around the world, the meeting focuses on the anti-epidemic work by members of the Regional Committee and regional co-operation, in addition to other health-related issues including primary healthcare, use of traditional and complementary medicine, and the health of future generations.

"Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has implemented various anti-epidemic measures, including border controls, social distancing, testing, contact tracing and quarantine measures as well as a community-wide vaccination programme, etc. The HKSAR Government has responded promptly and successfully to four waves of the epidemic so far with the above measures. It is encouraging to see that Hong Kong has no local cases with unknown sources of infection for most of the days in the past few months and has basically achieved zero infection. As the epidemic situation in Hong Kong continues to remain stable, we have adopted a new direction in fighting the epidemic since April by adjusting various anti-epidemic measures with a 'vaccine bubble' as the basis, with a view to restoring our city to normality in a gradual and orderly manner," Professor Chan said during the discussion on COVID-19.

"As the global pandemic situation is still under serious threat from mutant strains, we will continue to stay vigilant to cope with next wave of the COVID-19 epidemic. Towards this end, we will consolidate the experience gained, strengthen our current capacities and map out targeted and refined strategies. Looking forward, it is important for the HKSAR and the wider international community to continue to press ahead with large-scale vaccination of the general public, particularly the elderly, in order to build an immune barrier for the entire community. On the other hand, as Hong Kong is gradually returning to normality, we would put greater focus and efforts on other priority areas in the health portfolio including strengthening primary healthcare and developing Chinese medicine."

Professor Chan also reaffirmed the HKSAR Government's commitment in maintaining close collaboration with the WHO and the Regional Committee in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Health), Mr Thomas Chan, and the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, are also members of the HKSAR

delegation.

