

LCQ8: Issue of cable trunking coating in public works projects

Following is a question by the Hon Doreen Kong and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (January 31):

Question:

Regarding the issue of cable trunking coating in public works projects, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Hospital Authority (HA) confirmed in November last year that the cable trunking coating of the new building of Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH) failed to meet the standards, while the Architectural Services Department has advised that it will take samples of and conduct tests on cable trunkings with regard to approximately 148 ongoing public works contracts involving cable trunkings, and the testing of the first batch of around 38 works contracts is expected to be completed within three to four weeks, of the names of the approximately 148 works projects and the respective government departments and cable trunking suppliers involved in such projects;

(2) of the test results of the aforesaid first batch of around 38 works projects (including whether the standards were met and how the results deviated from the standards);

(3) as the aforesaid works projects to be tested do not include public works completed in recent years, and the media have pointed out that the problem of substandard cable trunking coating is also found in public works completed in recent years, whether the Government will extend the relevant tests to public works completed in recent years; if not, of the reasons for that; and

(4) as it has been reported that HA, in its initial response to the media regarding the cable trunking coating incident of KWH, advised that the principal contractor and a team of independent experts appointed by the principal contractor each conducted tests on the relevant cable trunking in the presence of HA staff, and the results of both tests were satisfactory, whether it knows the reasons why the cable trunking coating concerned still failed to meet the standard in the end, and whether HA has investigated if there was falsification or other problems involved?

Reply:

President,

(1) & (2) Regarding the alleged use of cable trunkings with coating thickness not meeting the standards in public works projects, the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) explained in the press release of November 16, 2023 that insufficient coating thickness of cable trunkings may limit their durability, but it has no risk of electrical leakage and does not pose any

risks to the safety and health of the building users, the building's structure, fire safety and operations of relevant government departments or public organisations.

The ArchSD is following up the matter, together with relevant government departments and public organisations by taking samples and arranging testing. If any non-compliance with the required coating thickness of cable trunkings under the contract is found, we will require the contractor to give explanations and make appropriate arrangements in accordance with contract terms. Such arrangements may include:

- without affecting the operation of the relevant facilities and in a prioritised manner having regard to actual circumstances, replacing the cable trunkings which do not meet the standard;
- for materials which cannot be replaced shortly (for example, replacement works would require prolonged fencing-off of certain areas in the facilities because of the cable trunkings' locations and areas, hence affecting public use), we will request the contractor(s) to take other practicable remedies including strengthening inspection and maintenance; and
- the relevant government departments and public organisations will also claim the contractor(s) any additional expenses and losses incurred by the non-compliance of standard of the material in accordance with the contract terms.

With regard to the approximately 148 ongoing works contracts involving cable trunkings, relevant government departments and public organisations are arranging testing and reporting by accredited laboratories in batches. Since the testing is still in progress, if the lists of works contracts and suppliers or part of the test results, which are incomplete information, are released at this juncture, it may mislead the public into thinking that all works contracts on the list are affected by the incident. It is therefore inappropriate to disclose partial or incomplete information and analysis at this stage. We will announce the project list and results at an appropriate time upon completion of all testing and reporting.

(3) As regards government premises which are in use, the ArchSD follows up their repair and maintenance, including inspection of cable trunkings, in accordance with established mechanism. If any quality problems are found during routine inspections of cable trunkings, the contractor(s) concerned will be required to take follow-up actions pursuant to the contract terms. The contractor's responsibility for repair and maintenance to rectify the latent defects in the project remains valid for 12 years after completion of the project.

(4) It has been stipulated in the contracts for Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH) redevelopment project that the thickness of the cable trunking coating materials must comply with relevant standards, with testing by an accredited laboratory. In addition, the Hospital Authority (HA) also requires project contractors to strictly follow relevant regulations and to properly supervise the works so as to ensure the quality of works projects.

The two testing reports submitted by the project contractor earlier both showed that the thickness of the cable trunking coating complied with the standards. Subsequently, taking a very prudent approach, the HA also separately appointed an independent expert to, through an accredited laboratory, test and review the testing results submitted by the project contractor. After on-site inspection and assessment, the independent expert pointed out that since the preliminary testing may produce different results based on the instrument used and measurement location, there were uncertainties in the testing results of the project contractor. As such, the HA's personnel collected again cable trunking samples at KWH, as per the advice of the independent expert, for thorough testing by an accredited laboratory. The result determined that the thickness and weight of the cable trunking coating materials did not meet the standards.

The HA announced on November 16 last year the testing results conducted by the independent expert and corresponding follow-up actions. At this stage, there is no evidence suggesting that any negligence or fraud was involved during the initial testing.

LCQ21: Ensuring stable electricity supply

Following is a question by the Hon Adrian Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (January 31):

Question:

Two power incidents involving CLP Power Hong Kong Limited (CLP) occurred in the same week this month, with the first one affecting a substation, and the second one which took place in the transformer room of a public rental housing estate even resulted in power outage at one point. Some members of the public are gravely concerned about the successive incidents involving electricity facilities. They are concerned about the safety, stability and reliability of electricity supply in Hong Kong, with worries about potential threats to their daily lives and safety. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as it is learnt that the authorities have requested CLP to submit detailed reports on the aforesaid two incidents, whether the authorities have strictly required CLP as well as the other electricity supplier in Hong Kong to formulate work plans for incident prevention, including preventing electricity facilities of all scales from ageing or falling into prolonged disrepair, and setting sufficiently stringent standards for the inspection of various equipment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that some members of the public are sceptical about CLP's routine inspection and repair work in the light of its successive power incidents, whether the authorities have gained an understanding of whether CLP has an adequate level of experienced staff to follow up repair work of the facilities, and whether it will continue to put in place proper recruitment and training of staff in the future;

(3) as there are views that while CLP indicated earlier that drone technology and robotics had been introduced for inspection of facilities in its power stations, the recent power incidents may reflect that the relevant facilities have yet to be benefited from such arrangement, whether the authorities have liaised with various electricity suppliers to gain an understanding of how they will further ensure the normal operation of their electricity facilities of all scales through technological application in the future; if so, of the details of the relevant technological application; and

(4) given that while the authorities completed an interim review of the Scheme of Control Agreements with the two power companies at the end of last year, with the introduction of a penalty scheme for large-scale electricity supply interruptions, under which penalties will be calculated according to a new indicator of "Customer Interruption Duration", it is learnt that the penalty scheme has not been activated for the aforesaid power incident involving the transformer room, despite having 388 households affected by the power outage, whether the authorities will conduct a detailed review on the principles for activating the relevant penalty scheme in the near future, so as to avoid the scheme concerned being rendered as virtually non-existent and to gain support from the public; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government is very concerned about CLP Power Hong Kong Limited (CLP)'s two power incidents, which were not caused by external factors such as adverse weather, in January 2024. The incidents affected the daily life and aroused concern of the public. Subsequent to the two incidents, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) immediately sent staff to the site to conduct investigation, followed up with CLP on the development of the incidents, and monitored the progress of the repair work.

Regarding the incident of Nga Ying Chau Street Substation in Tsing Yi on January 1 and the power supply incident in On Mei House, Cheung On Estate, Tsing Yi, on January 7, the EMSD earlier requested the CLP to identify the causes of the incidents and submit investigation reports on the incidents within four weeks and two weeks respectively. Thereafter, the EMSD had a meeting with CLP on January 8 and requested CLP to immediately strengthen inspections on the power supply system in Tsing Yi district, targeting to complete all inspections within January 2024, as well as review the maintenance arrangements of the territory-wide transmission and distribution

system.

The EMSD received on January 20 the investigation report submitted by CLP on the power supply incident of On Mei House, Cheung On Estate, Tsing Yi, on January 7, and received on January 27 the investigation report on the incident of Nga Ying Chau Street Substation in Tsing Yi on January 1. The EMSD is now examining the reports, including assessing whether the identified causes are well-founded and whether the rectification measures are adequate to prevent recurrence of similar incidents. The EMSD will request CLP to make clarifications or provide further information if needed.

Up till now, CLP has already completed inspections on the power supply system in Tsing Yi district and confirmed that the concerned facilities are in normal operation. The EMSD has reviewed the inspection work and found no abnormality. CLP will also continue to review the maintenance arrangements of the territory-wide transmission and distribution system. In view of the recent electrical incidents, the EMSD will step up inspections of the facilities and operations of the two power companies to monitor their technical and electrical safety performance.

Regarding the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Adrian Ho, a consolidated reply is as follows:

(1), (2), (3) and (4) The objectives of the Government's energy policies are to ensure energy needs of the community are met safely, reliably and efficiently at reasonable prices, to minimise the environmental impact of energy production and use, and to promote the efficient use and conservation of energy. The Scheme of Control Agreements (SCAs) provide a framework for the Government to monitor the corporate affairs of the power companies. By signing the SCAs, the power companies pledge to provide sufficient facilities to meet the electricity demand, and are responsible for the provision, operation and proper maintenance of their facilities. In addition, the power companies must strictly abide by their responsibilities, including maintaining high efficiency and quality in terms of reliability of power supply.

In accordance with the SCAs, the Government conducts annual Auditing Review with the power companies with regards to technical, environmental and financial performance, including customer performance, of the power companies. Under the mechanism, an incentive and penalty mechanism has been established. The performance indicators relating to the stability of power supply are: (1) "Supply Reliability", which is the measure of the "Average Service Availability Index (ASAI)" achieved by the power companies in that year; and (2) "Supply Restoration", which is the measure of the "Average Grid Supply Restoration Time (Average GSRT)" achieved by the power companies in that year.

The Government completed the 2023 Interim Review of the SCAs with the two power companies at the end of 2023. After rounds of negotiations between the Government and the two power companies, with a view to enhancing the existing incentive and penalty mechanism in the SCAs, the two power companies

eventually agreed with the introduction of a new penalty scheme for large-scale electricity supply interruptions. The new penalty scheme (Note 1), which targets serious large-scale electricity supply interruption incidents such as the CLP Cable Bridge Fire Incident on June 21, 2022, etc, is based on a new performance indicator of "Customer Interruption Duration" (CID) with details below:

Threshold		Penalty Adjustment on Permitted Return
CLP	The Hongkong Electric Company	
30 000 000 minutes > CID >= 15 000 000 minutes	10 000 000 minutes > CID >= 5 000 000 minutes	-0.015%
CID >= 30 000 000 minutes	CID >= 10 000 000 minutes	-0.03%

CID is the sum of the product of "number of customers being interrupted" and "duration of power interruption" expressed in minutes for each group of affected customers for each large-scale electricity supply interruption incident (Note 2). "Affected customers" refers to the power companies' customers whose electricity supply is interrupted by power interruptions. Introducing the new penalty scheme for large-scale electricity supply interruption incidents complements the existing incentive/penalty mechanisms with "ASAI" and "Average GSRT", thereby enhancing the overall incentive and penalty mechanism of the SCAs.

The incentive and penalty mechanism in the SCAs is calculated on the basis of annual settlement and all power supply interruption incidents of the power companies are included in the calculation. The Government will visit the two power companies to sample and verify the relevant records and information submitted by the power companies during the annual Auditing Review, including information relevant to power supply incidents, to ensure the accuracy of the performance data provided by the power companies.

Apart from the SCAs, the EMSD monitors the operation of the power companies in accordance with the Electricity Ordinance (Cap. 406) (the Ordinance) to ensure a safe and reliable supply of electricity in Hong Kong. The Ordinance stipulates the powers and obligations of electricity suppliers, which includes giving the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services a report of the cause of the accident and what remedial action has been or will be done after an electrical accident. The EMSD regulates the operation of the power companies in accordance with the Ordinance and closely monitors the conditions of their power supply systems through measures including daily communications with power companies, inspections of relevant power supply facilities and regular meetings with power companies for discussion of matters related to power supply.

As for the maintenance and repair regime of the power supply system, the maintenance and repair plans of the two power companies are established with reference to international standards, recommendations of equipment manufacturers and system operation experience. In addition, the Government attaches great importance to the training of talents in the electrical and mechanical industry, and encourages stakeholders (such as the two power companies) to adopt more innovation and technology to enhance the efficiency and performance of work. To our understanding, the two power companies have comprehensive training and development plans, including the regular recruitment of suitable talents and the provision of systematic training and regular assessments, to ensure the continuity of talent supply and the technical capability of engineering staff. With a view to enhancing the safety and reliability of the power supply system, the two power companies also adopt various innovation and technology, such as online condition monitoring of power supply equipment through installing advanced devices, and analysis of the health condition of power supply equipment through application of big data, thereby optimising the efficiency of maintenance work as well as enhancing the reliability of electricity supply.

Note 1: Incidents subject to the new penalty scheme will not be counted for incentives/penalties under "ASAI" or "Average GSRT".

Note 2: A single incident may cause supply interruptions to more than one group of customers with different interruption durations. Therefore, summation is required to get the total customer interruption duration for a single incident.

LCQ12: Transport planning for tourist attractions in Northern Metropolis

Following is a question by the Hon Yiu Pak-leung and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Liu Chun-san, in the Legislative Council today (January 31):

Question:

The Northern Metropolis Action Agenda published by the Government at the end of October last year outlines the four major zones, including the Blue and Green Recreation, Tourism and Conservation Circle, in the Northern Metropolis and adopts an "industry-driven and infrastructure-led" approach as its key planning axle. Regarding the transport planning for tourist attractions in the Northern Metropolis, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as there are views that the current restriction on the entry of tour coaches into the section of Luk Keng Road from Bride's Pool to Sha Tau Kok

not only obstructs the access of tourists, but also wastes the scenery along Starling Inlet which may attract tourists, whether the Government has plans to widen Luk Keng Road, improve the transport infrastructure of the road, and relax the restriction on the access of tour coaches to the aforesaid road section;

(2) as the Second Phase Opening-up of Sha Tau Kok began on January 1 this year, whether the authorities will open up the Frontier Closed Area of the section of Lin Ma Hang Road between Wang Lek and Sha Tau Kok to allow vehicles or bicycles to go to Sha Tau Kok via that road section;

(3) as there are views pointing out that at present, the roads in the Northern Metropolis are narrow, making it difficult for tour coaches to get close to the declared monuments in the area, whether the authorities have studied the widening of the vehicular entrances and exits of the monuments or historic buildings in the area to facilitate tourists' visits to them; and

(4) whether it has adjusted the routes of public light buses and public buses as well as provided additional parking spaces for tour coaches in the light of the increase in the vehicular and passenger flows arising from the Opening-up of Sha Tau Kok?

Reply:

President,

As a new engine for the future development of Hong Kong, the Northern Metropolis will inject new economic impetus into Hong Kong. The easternmost part of the area, the Blue and Green Recreation, Tourism and Conservation Circle, is rich in natural resources and has many traditional rural townships with potential for recreation and tourism development. Relevant bureaux/departments will plan and implement the necessary transportation and infrastructural facilities in the light of the development of this area.

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Having consulted the Development Bureau (DEVB), the Security Bureau and the Transport Department (TD), my reply to the questions raised by Hon Yiu Pak-leung is as follows:

(1) Luk Keng Road is currently designated as a prohibited zone for vehicles with gross weight over 5.5 tonnes, public light buses (except for scheduled service), buses and coaches because this road section is narrow and contains many turns. In view of this, the TD issues Prohibited Zone Permits and allows coaches with 29 seats or less to travel along Luk Keng Road southbound to Bride's Pool Road during non-peak hours on Sundays and public holidays. According to the TD's assessment, Luk Keng Road still has sufficient capacity at the moment to meet the overall traffic demand, including the demand from vehicles with Prohibited Zone Permits. The TD will continue to closely monitor the traffic conditions in the nearby area and make appropriate arrangements.

(2) The section of Lin Ma Hang Road between Wang Lek and Sha Tau Kok (STK), located inside the Frontier Closed Area (FCA), serves as an exclusive access

for enforcement of boundary security by Police officers. For security reasons, the road section concerned will not be open to all members of the public and vehicles. Through issuing Closed Area Permits, the Police allow limited access to the road section concerned by local residents and other persons who have genuine need for access, such as works staff, and members of the public who need to go tomb sweeping at nearby burial grounds during the Ching Ming and Chung Yeung Festivals. In addition, the road section concerned ends at STK Boundary Control Point and does not provide direct access to the area already opened up under the Second Phase Opening-up of STK.

To tie in with the implementation of the Second Phase Opening-up of STK on January 1, 2024, the TD has implemented various measures to enhance the transport facilities in STK, including the introduction of an express franchised bus service connecting Fanling and Sheung Shui stations, enhancing the services of one existing bus route and one existing green minibus route, and provision of additional designated pick-up/drop-off points for coaches in the FCA to ensure smooth traffic flow. The public transport arrangements have been working smoothly since the implementation of the opening-up plan.

(3) Under the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme, the DEVB invites proposals from non-profit-making organisations for preservation of selected government-owned historic buildings in the form of social enterprise, by revitalising the historic buildings and putting them into good and innovative use, and opening them up for public enjoyment and appreciation as appropriate. As for privately-owned historic buildings, through the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme on Built Heritage, the DEVB assists owners to carry out maintenance works on their historic buildings and requires owners receiving subsidies to open up their historic buildings where appropriate. The DEVB also encourages government departments to open up the historic buildings under their ownership and management. For government works (including improvement works of transport ancillary facilities) involving declared monuments or historic buildings, the Antiquities and Monuments Office provides technical advice from the heritage conservation perspective to the works proponent departments and, where practicable, for enhancing the connectivity and accessibility of the historic buildings to facilitate visits by the public.

(4) To tie in with the Second Phase Opening-up of STK and for the convenience of tourists, the TD, as mentioned above, has arranged operators to introduce a new express franchised bus service and enhance the existing green minibus and franchised bus services to cope with the passenger demand. In addition, the TD completed the improvement works at the Sha Tau Kok Bus Terminus in December 2023 to provide additional coach parking spaces for passenger boarding and alighting.

LCQ13: Mandatory Provident Fund

Following is a question by the Hon Kingsley Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, in the Legislative Council today (January 31):

Question:

In delivering the 2023-2024 Budget in February last year, the Financial Secretary (FS) pointed out that society at large had clear aspirations for Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) funds that offered stable returns at low fees and he had instructed the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority to conduct a study on this. He also indicated that to start off, he planned to earmark a certain proportion of the future issuances of Government green bonds and infrastructure bonds for priority investment by MPF funds. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the progress of the aforesaid study and whether the FS has received the study report; if so, of the recommendations made in the report and the expected time for implementing the recommendations; if not, the expected completion time of the study;
- (2) of the development progress of the eMPF platform; whether it has assessed if the platform can be launched as scheduled to dovetail with the implementation of the abolition of MPF "offsetting arrangement" and the implementation of policies such as the making of MPF contributions by the Government on behalf of low-income persons; and
- (3) as it is learnt that the minimum and maximum income levels for MPF contributions have not been adjusted upward for almost 10 years and have significantly lagged behind the benchmarks stipulated under the statutory review mechanism, when the authorities plan to adjust such income levels?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority (MPFA), the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the Labour and Welfare Bureau, my reply to the three parts of the question is as follows.

- (1) The Financial Secretary announced in the 2023-24 Budget that the Government had instructed the HKMA and the MPFA to conduct a study on Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) funds that offer stable returns at low fees. To start off, the Government planned to earmark a certain proportion of future issuances of Government green bonds and infrastructure bonds for priority investment by MPF funds, thereby providing MPF scheme members an additional investment option.

The HKMA and the MPFA have already put in place a mechanism to earmark a certain proportion of Government green bonds for priority investment by MPF funds. The mechanism will also apply to future issuances of Government infrastructure bonds. This arrangement allows MPF fund managers to consider more investment instruments with stable returns in their portfolio management for the benefit of scheme members.

The study on MPF funds which offer stable returns at low fees is ongoing, and will take into account the evolving market trend, including the fact that certain low-risk MPF funds have lately generated returns higher than the inflation rate over the same period under interest rate normalisation, thereby meeting the aspirations of scheme members for stable returns.

(2) Based on the latest progress, the MPFA expects that the phased migration of MPF account information to the eMPF Platform could commence in the second quarter of 2024, with a view to achieving full implementation of the eMPF Platform in 2025. The Government will implement the initiative of paying MPF contributions for low-income persons after the full implementation of the eMPF Platform. Separately, the Government has announced that the abolition of the offsetting arrangement under the MPF system would take effect on May 1, 2025, which will be implemented without the Platform's full implementation.

(3) The Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Ordinance (Cap. 485) requires the MPFA to conduct a review of the minimum and maximum relevant income levels (Min and Max RI levels) not less than once in every four years. In the last review (i.e. the 2018 to 2022 cycle), the MPFA, having considered the exceptional circumstances arising from the COVID-19 epidemic, recommended that no adjustments be made to the Min and Max RI levels. The Government noted the severe impact of the epidemic on the economy and community in Hong Kong and concurred with MPFA's recommendation. The MPFA has commenced the work for the review for the next cycle (i.e. the 2022-2026 cycle). The Government will carefully consider the review recommendations once received from the MPFA.

LCQ2: Top Talent Pass Scheme

Following is a question by the Hon Carmen Kan and a reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (January 31):

Question:

Last year, a total of about 65 000 applications were received under the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS), and about 51 000 of them were approved. In

this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) among the applications approved under the TTPS, of the numbers of applicants and their dependants who have entered Hong Kong and obtained Hong Kong Identity Cards, together with a breakdown by application category (i.e. Categories A, B and C), and the respective proportions of the numbers of such applicants in the numbers of successful applicants of the relevant categories; whether it has conducted surveys on successful applicants' major factors for consideration in choosing to come to Hong Kong or not; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) in respect of taking up employment and starting up business by top talents, how the authorities will step up efforts in assisting them in giving full play to their strengths, staying in Hong Kong for development and contributing to Hong Kong; and

(3) of the number of school-age children who had come to Hong Kong in the capacity as the dependants of successful applicants under the TTPS as at the end of last year, and whether it has assessed if the number of places in public and private schools as well as complementary educational resources are adequate; if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

To relieve the prevailing tight local labour market situation, the Government has since end-2022 implemented a series of talent attraction measures including the newly launched Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) which targets talent with high income and academic qualifications. An eligible outside talent is not required to have secured an offer of employment in Hong Kong before application for a two-year visa through the TTPS to explore opportunities in Hong Kong.

To assist incoming talent in adapting to the new environment more quickly and settling down in Hong Kong, Hong Kong Talent Engage (HKTE), following its launch of the online platform in end-December 2022, has its physical office established in end-October last year and commenced its work immediately. HKTE is dedicated to providing comprehensive one-stop support services for incoming talent, formulating talent attraction strategies, and following up talent's development and needs after arrival.

Our reply, in consultation with the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Education Bureau (EDB) and the Immigration Department (ImmD), to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) As at end-December last year, among the approximately 51 000 approved applications under the TTPS, around 36 000 of them arrived in Hong Kong, accounting for around 70 per cent of the approved applications. In addition, more than 51 000 dependants were approved to come to Hong Kong under the TTPS, and nearly 36 000 of them arrived in Hong Kong. A detailed breakdown by category of applications is at Annex.

According to the Registration of Persons Regulations (Cap. 177A), newly arrived persons aged 11 or above who are permitted to stay in Hong Kong for more than 180 days must register for an identity card within 30 days after arrival. We believe that talent and their dependants who come to Hong Kong under the TTPS would apply for identity cards within the specified time limit in accordance with the law. The ImmD does not separately maintain relevant statistics.

To assist talent who have planned to come to Hong Kong or have just arrived to settle, adapt to the living in Hong Kong and integrate into the local community as soon as possible, HKTE, which was established last year, strives to offer them with comprehensive one-stop support services through a variety of online and offline activities in collaboration with many working partners, to provide information on job seeking, accommodation, education, employment, setting up of businesses, etc. Specifically, in terms of employment support, HKTE has engaged more than 10 human resources consultants as working partners. These working partners will provide personalised job matching and career support services based on the background and specific needs of job seekers. As at the end of last year, the partners' online platform processed nearly 1 400 job-seeking referrals. In addition, HKTE will co-organise online and offline job fairs with different industry sectors and stakeholders to enable outside talent to have a better understanding of the outlook and opportunities in various industries in Hong Kong, with a view to addressing the talent shortage in relevant industries. HKTE will also hold briefing sessions at target universities in various places to proactively reach out to talent there and attract them to work and live in Hong Kong. Separately, for incoming talent requiring assistance in starting businesses in Hong Kong, HKTE will provide them with advice and necessary information on business operation. If incoming talent are interested in setting up or expanding businesses in Hong Kong, Invest Hong Kong will proactively provide assistance and suitable support services.

At the same time, the Government is conducting follow-up surveys with the approved applicants under the TTPS to understand the situation or their plans of settling in Hong Kong, including employment, accommodation and children's education in Hong Kong, as well as their considerations for choosing Hong Kong for development, so as to understand their needs for provision of better support services. An analysis into the findings will be available shortly. The Labour and Welfare Bureau will share relevant findings with other bureaux and departments to facilitate their review of relevant support and ancillary services.

(3) As at end-December last year, nearly 21 000 unmarried dependent children under the age of 18 arrived in Hong Kong under the TTPS. Talent coming to Hong Kong can choose to arrange their school-age children to study in private schools or publicly-funded schools. According to the EDB, there are at present sufficient secondary and primary school places in Hong Kong.

The EDB provides support services for newly-arrived children to help them adapt to the learning environment in Hong Kong and integrate into the local community. It also provides subsidies to publicly-funded schools admitting newly-arrived children to provide school-based support services.

HKTE will also provide information including children's education to talent who intend to come to Hong Kong or have just arrived, and will refer related enquiries to relevant bureaux or departments for follow-up actions.