

International Forum on China's Economy and Policy successfully held

The Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Chinese Institute of Hong Kong and the National Academy of Economic Strategy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences today (November 15) jointly held the "China's Stride towards High-quality Development – The Opportunities and Roles of Hong Kong" International Forum on China's Economy and Policy 2023 at the Central Government Offices. The co-organisers were Fung Business Intelligence and the Bauhinia Magazine. The Forum brought together more than 20 experts, academics, business leaders and government officials from the Mainland, overseas and Hong Kong, and was attended by more than 400 participants, who explored in depth the opportunities and roles of Hong Kong under the trend of the country's strides towards high-quality development, as well as providing insights and suggestions on the economic development of the country and Hong Kong.

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, and the Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Zheng Yanxiong, delivered welcome remarks for the Forum, which were followed by an opening address by the President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Dr Gao Xiang. The President of the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macao Studies, Dr Deng Zhonghua; the Group Chairman of the Fung Group, Dr Victor Fung; and Member of the Academy of the Chinese Academy of Social Science Dr Gao Peiyong delivered keynote speeches on the high-quality development of the country, the new international trade landscape, and the macroeconomic policy setup of the country respectively for the Forum. The Acting Financial Secretary, Mr Michael Wong, and Philip H. Knight Professor Emeritus of Management of the Graduate School of Business, Stanford University and Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences, Professor Michael Spence, were also invited for special addresses to the Forum.

In addition, the Forum included three panel discussion sessions, with the first session in the morning focusing on the present and future of the country's economy, covering pertinent issues such as industry upscaling, the financial market and the housing market. The remaining two sessions were held in the afternoon with focused discussions on Hong Kong's unique advantages as well as changes in the global economic landscape and China's high-quality opening up, and the topics included the development of headquarters economy, innovation and technology, collaboration in addressing climate change, etc.

The Head of the CEPU, Dr Stephen Wong, said, "This Forum has gathered a large number of overseas and local experts, academics and business leaders, who not only gave a comprehensive review and foresight of our country's high-quality development, but also discussed in depth the positioning of Hong Kong in the overall national development and the way forward. This year marks the beginning of the full implementation of the spirit of the 20th National Congress report and the 10th anniversary of China's Belt and Road Initiative;

while the next year will be the fifth anniversary of the release of the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. At a time when our country is embarking on a new journey of Chinese-style modernisation and high-quality development and when Hong Kong is at a critical juncture of its transition from governance to prosperity, it is particularly meaningful to organise this heavyweight international forum. We hope that this Forum will bring new insights to Hong Kong on how to seize the boundless opportunities of our country's high-quality development, so as to give full play to Hong Kong's unique position and advantages of enjoying strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world."

More than 400 participants attended the Forum including experts, academics and personnel from overseas institutions in Hong Kong as well as representatives from think tanks, the business sector, professional bodies and local and foreign chambers of commerce.

[HKMA issues alert regarding specific website](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public in Hong Kong that Hong Kong National Bank as referred to on the website (<https://hongk.qupayt.us/>) does not have the authorization of the Monetary Authority under the Banking Ordinance (the Ordinance) to carry on banking business, or the business of taking deposits, in Hong Kong; and Hong Kong National Bank does not have the approval of the MA to establish a local representative office in Hong Kong under the Ordinance.

Given the global nature of the Internet, members of the public are reminded to verify the status of any organisation making use of the Internet to offer bank accounts to, or to solicit deposits from, the public in Hong Kong prior to transferring any funds to, or providing any personal information to, any such organisation.

A list of authorized institutions is available on the HKMA's website (www.hkma.gov.hk). Members of the public may also check the status of any entity which appears to be soliciting deposits from the public in Hong Kong, or holding itself out as a bank or deposit-taking company in Hong Kong, by emailing the HKMA's public enquiry service (publicenquiry@hkma.gov.hk).

[DSJ to lead delegation of young lawyers to visit Shenzhen and Foshan \(with photo\)](#)

The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, will lead a delegation of young lawyers comprising more than 30 members to visit two cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), Shenzhen and Foshan, tomorrow (November 16).

Comprising young representatives of the Law Society of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Bar Association, young government counsel of the Department of Justice (DoJ), and students from the three law schools, the delegation will visit a court, law-related authorities and institutions, top-notch enterprises and a start-up incubation base for youth, to have a better understanding of the GBA's need for cross-jurisdictional legal services, the significance of innovation and technology on legal services as well as the importance of Hong Kong as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr Cheung said that young people are the future of Hong Kong. This visit follows the one to Huizhou, conducted by the DoJ with young lawyers in September, to continue to engage proactively with youth. The Department endeavours to support Hong Kong's new generation of the legal sector, including law students, by providing them with opportunities to acquire a deeper and wider understanding of the country's development, and encouraging them to better integrate into the overall national development and contribute to the rule of law development of the country proactively at an earlier stage. The destinations of the visit, Shenzhen and Foshan, are also the most preferred destinations for the Hong Kong legal sector to expand businesses in the GBA.

Mr Cheung and the delegation will return to Hong Kong on November 18.



LCQ7: Proposal to amend the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance

Following is a question by Dr the Hon David Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (November 15):

Question:

The Government once again proposed in the 2022 Policy Address to amend the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance (Cap. 359), so as to facilitate direct access of patients to services provided by physiotherapists and occupational therapists without a doctor's referral. Besides, the Panel on Health Services of this Council also discussed the legislative proposal to amend Cap. 359 at its meeting on 9 September 2022. However, it has been reported that the initiative to amend Cap. 359 has made no progress so far. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the latest progress of the legislative exercise to amend Cap. 359;
- (2) whether it has drawn up an updated timetable for amending Cap. 359; if so, of the details; and
- (3) as it has been reported that the supplementary medical professions have been eagerly expecting the amendment to Cap. 359 for a long time, whether the Government will make a positive response to the professions' aspirations and undertake to include the relevant bill in the 2024 Legislative Programme?

Reply:

President,

The consolidated reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon David Lam is as follows:

The 2021 Policy Address mentions the need to strengthen the roles of healthcare professionals other than doctors in the local healthcare system (especially in the primary healthcare setting). The former Food and Health Bureau (FHB) (currently the Health Bureau (HHB)) would follow up with the statutory Councils and Boards of various healthcare professions on the recommendations in the Report of the Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development promulgated in 2017, including proposing legislative amendments to allow patients to have direct access to healthcare professional services (e.g. physiotherapy and occupational therapy) without a doctor's referral.

To follow up on the above-mentioned matter, the former FHB wrote to the Supplementary Medical Professions Council (SMP Council) in October and December 2021 respectively, urging the SMP Council and its Boards of supplementary medical professions (the Boards) to accord priority to discussing the above-mentioned matter, to work out feasible proposals for implementation after communicating with relevant stakeholders, including amending the relevant Codes of Practice, and to report their work progress by end of June 2022, so that the Government could take forward the relevant legislative amendment exercise in due course.

The SMP Council replied to the Government in late June 2022 that they supported the policy direction of strengthening the roles of supplementary medical professionals in the local healthcare system. However, the expected timeframe to submit proposals with consolidated views from different parties was difficult to achieve, given the complexity of relevant matter and the engagement of most members of the SMP Council and its Boards from various healthcare professions in combating the fifth wave of the COVID-19 epidemic. In this connection, the HHB reported the progress at the Panel on Health Services of the Legislative Council (LegCo) in September 2022. The 2022 Policy Address delivered in October 2022 also mentioned under the section of primary healthcare that the Government would better utilise multi-disciplinary healthcare services, including amendment of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance (SMPO) to facilitate direct access of patients to services provided by physiotherapists and occupational therapists without a doctor's referral.

Subsequent to the discussion on the direct access arrangement for physiotherapists at the regular SMP Council meeting in February 2023, the SMP Council wrote to the HHB, summarising the different views of Council members and enclosing the proposal that the working group under the Physiotherapists Board submitted to the SMP Council for the Government's consideration. On the other hand, the Occupational Therapists Board discussed the direct access arrangement for occupational therapists in August 2023 and subsequently requested its working group to refine the proposal. Relevant work is still underway.

Since the direct access arrangement involves various healthcare professions and requires the SMP Council and relevant Boards to provide recommendations, with the discussion process having been affected by the earlier COVID-19 epidemic, the legislative progress has thus been delayed.

As mentioned in the 2023 Policy Address delivered in October 2023, the Government will also explore amending the SMPO to provide new pathways for admitting qualified non-locally trained supplementary medical professionals to serve in the Hospital Authority and the Department of Health. The new measures will be incorporated into the amendment bill to be proposed by the Government. The HHB has planned to report the latest progress at the LegCo Panel on Health Services in December 2023 and strives to prepare the amendment bill for consultation with stakeholders in 2024, with a view to introducing the bill into the LegCo as early as practicable.

[1823 wins Ombudsman's Award for Public Organisations and several customer service awards \(with photos\)](#)

1823, managed by the Efficiency Office, was bestowed with The Ombudsman's Award for Public Organisations today (November 15) at the presentation ceremony of the 26th Ombudsman Awards in recognition of its quality services to the public. 1823 staff also received The Ombudsman's Award for Officer of Public Organisations for the 18th consecutive year.

The Ombudsman's awards affirm that 1823 has handled complaints conscientiously, and clearly explained the causes of the issues concerned and provided detailed case records in response to the Ombudsman's inquiries. In cases where the investigations target other departments, 1823 still actively renders assistance by providing data and insights to help the Ombudsman fully understand the details of the case.

Separately, 1823 also received the Silver Award for Best Customer Centre in Technology Application and the Bronze Award for Best Customer Centre in Digital Transformation at the 24th Hong Kong Customer Contact Association Awards Ceremony held on November 3. These two awards are a testament to the achievements of 1823 in applying innovation and technology over the years to provide quality services to members of the public.

Since its inception, 1823 has been committed to providing one-stop services to the public. In addition to answering public enquiries for participating departments, 1823 handles public complaints about any area of government services and actively follows up on the progress of departments' responses. For complaints that may involve multiple departments, 1823 will liaise with the relevant departments to ensure that the complaint is handled properly and promptly. During the fifth wave of the COVID-19 epidemic last year, which brought unprecedented challenges to 1823, there has been a huge surge in public enquiries on the Government's anti-epidemic measures and services, with many 1823 colleagues being infected or required to be quarantined at home at the same time. This being so, through flexible arrangements and active application of innovative technologies, 1823 had taken a host of contingency measures so that it could not only maintain its original services, but also manage to answer additional anti-epidemic hotlines.

Looking ahead, 1823 will keep improving service quality and efficiency through the application of innovative technologies. In his Policy Address delivered last month, the Chief Executive stated that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government will press ahead with the digitalisation of government services, including the expansion of artificial intelligence (AI)

chatbot services in the 1823 enquiry service to further improve service quality and efficiency. The other artificial intelligence projects being pursued by 1823 include:

- use of generative artificial intelligence technology to assist in drafting responses to public written enquiries, followed by further checking by staff before making replies;
- applying AI speech-to-text solutions to convert voicemail messages from the public into text so that 1823 staff can handle public enquiries and complaints more efficiently and effectively; and
- upgrading of the telephony system to allow citizens to use voice input options when calling 1823, and the use of speech recognition technology to identify the caller's enquiry subjects to provide relevant information by phone and distribute textual information via SMS.

The scope of 1823 service covers most citizens' daily livelihood issues. Apart from calling 1823, members of the public can contact 1823 through a variety of channels, for example:

- [mobile application](#);
- [electronic web form and chatbot](#); and
- email: tellme@1823.gov.hk.

