

Ombudsman as “clear mirror” of public administration commends public organisations and public officers who provided quality public service (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

At the 26th Presentation Ceremony of The Ombudsman's Awards today (November 15), The Ombudsman, Ms Winnie Chiu, presented the Grand Award to the Immigration Department (ImmD), an Award for Public Organisation to the Efficiency Office (EO) and the Hospital Authority (HA) separately, and the Award on Mediation to the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office (CSO). Individual Awards were also given to 62 public officers.

Ms Chiu said, "Throughout the years, our Office has been like a clear mirror when handling public complaints: we examine complaint cases in an impartial manner, reveal the facts as they are, make objective and unbiased comments, then put forward improvement recommendations. Our ultimate goal is to lift the standard of public administration."

As a six-time winner of the Grand Award, the ImmD has triumphed more times at the Ombudsman's Awards than any other department. In early 2023, there had been a sharp increase in demand for identity document replacement services. The ImmD responded by implementing a series of measures, such as extended office hours, special service days on public holidays, additional days available for appointments to replace/apply for identity cards, enhanced website information, etc. It had, as always, provided flexible, efficient and "people-oriented" public services, and been co-operating proactively with the Office of The Ombudsman investigations.

In response to the Office inquiries into complaint cases, the EO could always explain the course of events clearly and provide detailed records to give the Office full pictures of the cases. The 1823 contact centre under the EO had been helpful in several direct investigations of the Office which involved only other departments. It readily provided the Office with useful data, case studies and its observations so that the Office could analyse the issues from multiple perspectives and make improvement recommendations.

The HA had to deploy resources to handle COVID-19 cases and pay close attention to the pandemic situation in order to make necessary adjustments to other areas of work in hospitals. Amid the pandemic, HA staff dedicated themselves to providing quality services and caring for patients, and endeavoured to maintain an effective public healthcare system in Hong Kong. The HA positively responded to complaints, provided the Office with

information and explained their work in detail despite the challenges at the time.

The CSO was presented the Award on Mediation this year. In 2022/23, it handled 95 complaint cases by way of mediation upon the Office's intervention, which accounted for 31 per cent of all mediation cases the Office handled in the year. Many of the complaints against the CSO the Office received were related to government subsidies provided during the pandemic. The CSO handled the complaints by way of mediation. It had promptly contacted the complainants, informed them of the progress of their cases, reviewed their applications and provided a dedicated hotline for checking the progress of the case and results at any time, sparing no effort to relieve the financial stress of members of the public and business enterprises affected by the pandemic.

At the presentation ceremony, Ms Chiu also commended the recipients of the Individual Awards and recognised their contributions. She said, "Government departments and public organisations rely on their committed and diligent staff to provide quality public service. This year, 62 public officers received the Individual Award. I am very pleased to see that more officers are commended for their professional and excellent services, as they have earned the recognition and commendation of the general public, the department/organisation concerned and my Office alike."

A full list of the recipients of the Individual Awards this year and the experiences and thoughts of some of them about receiving the Awards are in Appendices I and II respectively.

The Ombudsman's Awards Scheme was introduced in 1997. In 1999, the Scheme was extended to honour individual public officers. In 2018, an additional Award on Mediation for a public organisation was introduced.



[Speech by Secretary for Health at](#)

signing ceremony of MoU for establishment of Hong Kong Jockey Club Global Health Institute (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, at the signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Global Health Institute (HKJCGHI) today (November 15):

Dr David Li (Pro-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong (HKU)), Ms Priscilla Wong (Chairman of the HKU Council), Professor Zhang Xiang (President and Vice-Chancellor of the HKU), Mr Michael Lee (Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC)), Mr Engelbrecht-Bresges (Chief Executive Officer of the HKJC, Mr Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges), Professor Gabriel Leung (Executive Director, Charities and Community of the HKJC, Dr Gabriel Leung), Mr Bickerstaff (Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the International Vaccine Institute, Mr George Bickerstaff), Professor Maxwell (Regius Professor of Physic and Head of the School of Clinical Medicine at the University of Cambridge, Professor Patrick Maxwell), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I stand before you today as the Secretary for Health to express my immense gratitude and appreciation for a momentous occasion that brings together four esteemed institutions: the Hong Kong Jockey Club, the International Vaccine Institute, the University of Hong Kong and the Cambridge University towards the establishment of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Global Health Institute.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the HKJC for their exemplary philanthropy. As the world emerges and recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, and moves to the post-COVID-19 era, we must remain on our guard and be prepared for the next one. We must respond swiftly to future public health threats. As announced in "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address", the HKJC will make a donation of HK\$3 billion to support the Government to strengthen epidemic preparedness in Hong Kong. These measures include surveillance, early warning and infection control mechanisms; joint disease prevention and control work with Mainland authorities; as well as international collaboration in vaccine development. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated graphically and comprehensively the critical importance of vaccine innovation and development as well as global health co-operation. The establishment of the HKJCGHI marks an important milestone in this mission.

This new Institute will facilitate international collaboration in vaccine research and create a unique amalgamation of expertise and resources. It will foster multidisciplinary research, enabling scientists,

immunologists, virologists and public health experts to work together seamlessly. Together, they will pave the way for groundbreaking discoveries, cutting-edge innovations and novel approaches in vaccine development, and will bolster regional and international vaccine industry development to translate research into clinical practice. Through this partnership, the development of innovative and effective vaccines that benefit not just our regional community but also the global population can be expedited. The HKJCGHI will act as a central hub for research, development and translation, ensuring that equitable distribution for life-saving vaccines will reach every corner of the globe, particularly those in underserved and marginalised communities.

Investing in research and development (R&D) is not just about addressing the immediate crisis at hand, but rather, it is an investment in our future. The Global Health Institute will play a crucial role in strengthening our preparedness for future pandemics and outbreaks, giving us the capacity to respond swiftly and effectively. It will also serve as a training ground for the next generation of scientists and healthcare professionals. By nurturing young minds and providing them with state-of-the-art facilities and mentorship, we will empower them to become future leaders in the field of global health.

Lastly, I want to emphasise the importance of collaboration in this Institute. The fight against pandemics and infectious diseases requires a united front, where governments, academia, private sector, and civil society work hand in hand. The HKJC, the International Vaccine Institute, the HKU and the Cambridge University are leading by example, demonstrating the power of collaboration and collective actions.

By the same token, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is also determined to leverage our medical strengths to develop Hong Kong into a health and medical innovation hub, and enable more pharmaceutical and medical device enterprises to conduct R&D and clinical trials in Hong Kong. As stated in the 2023 Policy Address, Hong Kong will enhance our medical product regulatory system and establish the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Institute (GBAICTI) in the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone.

The GBAICTI will provide a one-stop clinical trial support platform for medical research institutions, and facilitate co-operation with the clinical trial networks on the Mainland, in particular in the GBA. It could make good use of Hong Kong's strengths in clinical research and international experience, and capitalise on Shenzhen's biomedical clusters and huge clinical volume in the GBA to enhance the cross-boundary ecosystem for clinical trials, thereby accelerating R&D and the availability of quality medical products to benefit the people, and promoting biomedical industry development. I am sure that there would be scope for collaboration between the GBAICTI and the HKJCGHI in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to again express my deep gratitude to the HKJC for their extraordinary donation towards the establishment of this Global Health Institute. This contribution will not only save lives but will

also serve as a shining example of what can be achieved when we unite under a common cause. Let us all come together, embrace the spirit of collaboration, and work towards a healthier and more resilient future for the world. Thank you.



[Tentative issuance schedule for Exchange Fund Bills and Notes](#)

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) issued today (November 15) a tentative issuance schedule for Exchange Fund Bills and Notes (EFBNs) for the coming quarter of January to March 2024. The schedule contains information on the tentative tender dates, issue sizes and issue dates of individual issues, representing rollover of maturing issues and taking into account planned adjustments to the maturity spectrum of the EFBN portfolio.

The quarterly schedule is issued in the second month of each quarter (i.e. February, May, August and November), covering the EFBN tenders in the following quarter.

It should be noted that the tender dates, issue sizes and issue dates projected in the advance issuance schedule are tentative. The details of new issues of Exchange Fund Bills are to be confirmed and announced at least four business days prior to the respective tender dates. The details of new issues of Exchange Fund Notes are to be confirmed and announced seven business days prior to their respective tender dates. The HKMA may make changes in the light of prevailing market conditions.

Credit card lending survey results for third quarter 2023

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority published today (November 15) the credit card lending survey results for the third quarter of 2023.

Total card receivables increased by 2.4 per cent in the third quarter to HK\$147.5 billion at end-September 2023, after an increase of 1.2 per cent in the previous quarter.

The combined delinquent and rescheduled ratio edged up to 0.33 per cent at end-September 2023 from 0.30 per cent at the previous quarter-end. The quarterly charge-off ratio increased slightly to 0.47 per cent from 0.44 per cent in the previous quarter.

LCQ13: Ameliorating congestion at Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

Following is a question by the Hon Steven Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (November 15):

Question:

It is learnt that since the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong, the number of users of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) has increased drastically, and congestion has even occurred during long holidays. Situations relayed by some members of the public include: (i) dozens of tour groups of about 1 000 people going through immigration clearance at the same period of time; (ii) no proper diversion of Hong Kong residents and visitors to Hong Kong at the outbound and inbound private car kiosks, resulting in an increase in the time taken for immigration clearance, in particular after the implementation of the Quota-free Scheme for Hong Kong Private Cars Travelling to Guangdong via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge; and (iii) some visitors being caught in traffic congestion for more than three hours before they could go through immigration clearance during the Chung Yeung long holidays just passed. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information of the HZMB Hong Kong Port (i) since the

resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong this year, and (ii) during the Labour Day Golden Week, the National Day Golden Week and the Chung Yeung long holidays this year respectively: (a) the average daily numbers of outbound passengers and (b) inbound passengers, (c) the daily numbers of outbound private cars and (d) inbound private cars, and (e) the average and the longest waiting time for immigration clearance at the passenger counters and the outbound and inbound private car kiosks respectively;

(2) of the details of the measures currently taken during peak hours or on the days with more visitors to alleviate congestion at the HZMB Hong Kong Port (such as setting up dedicated passenger channels and waiting areas for tour groups, diverting tour group passengers and non-tour group passengers, as well as increasing manpower to shorten the waiting time);

(3) of the operational processes of diverting Hong Kong residents and visitors to Hong Kong at the outbound and inbound private car kiosks of the HZMB Hong Kong Port (especially during peak hours or on the days with more visitors), and whether it has plans to increase manpower to alleviate the pressure on boundary control points;

(4) as it is learnt that many Hong Kong people have views on the situation of immigration clearance at the HZMB Zhuhai port and Macao port, whether the Government has met with the relevant departments of Macao and Zhuhai in respect of relevant matters and relayed them to such departments; if so, of the details (including the number of meetings held and the matters discussed); and

(5) as some members of the public have relayed that serious congestion occurred at the HZMB Hong Kong Port during the past Chung Yeung long holidays, whether the authorities had made preparations and deployments before such long holidays, and whether they have conducted reviews afterwards, so as to properly cope with similar situations in the future?

Reply:

President,

Since the cross-boundary traffic returned to normal following the full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland, and the introduction of the Quota-free Scheme for Hong Kong Private Cars Travelling to Guangdong via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, there has been a surge in the number of cross-boundary passengers and vehicles using the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Hong Kong Port, especially during long holidays, which leads to increased service demand at the control point. The Government has been closely monitoring the passenger flow and vehicular flow at various boundary control points (BCPs) with an aim to make necessary arrangements to cope with any emergencies that may arise.

In consultation with the Transport and Logistics Bureau, my reply to the question raised by the Hon Steven Ho is as follows:

(1) Usage of HZMB Hong Kong Port by passengers and private cars is set out at Annex.

The HZMB Hong Kong Port has been operating smoothly since the resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland. Generally speaking, 98 per cent of Hong Kong residents (including those travelling via passenger clearance building and vehicle clearance kiosks) were able to have their clearance procedures completed within 15 minutes. Ninety-five per cent of visitors (including those travelling via passenger clearance building and vehicle clearance kiosks) could complete the procedures within 30 minutes. For clearance of private cars, except those selected for further examination, customs clearance for all private cars was completed within 60 seconds. In the last Chung Yeung Festival Holiday, there was no serious traffic congestion at the HZMB Hong Kong Port. During peak periods, vehicles could in general complete the clearance process in around 35 minutes at the HZMB Hong Kong Port.

(2) At present, drop-off and pick-up locations at the arrival hall and the departure hall of the HZMB Hong Kong Port passenger clearance building are different for passengers taking cross-boundary coach (including coaches for tour groups) and those taking shuttle buses to achieve traffic diversion. In addition, to address the congestion that may be caused by tour groups during long holidays or peak periods, relevant departments make flexible deployment for operation of additional immigration counters and vehicle clearance kiosks to divert passenger and vehicular flow. More security guards are also deployed to provide crowd management support. Close liaison is maintained with the relevant Mainland authorities to closely monitor passenger flow and to implement appropriate measures whenever necessary to ensure smooth passenger flow at the control point.

(3) At present, clear electronic signage are displayed above the vehicle clearance kiosks for diversion of vehicles to different lanes for immigration clearance. The Immigration department makes flexible arrangements at the private car kiosks of the HZMB Hong Kong Port to facilitate the provision of immigration clearance services for Hong Kong residents and visitors. To ensure smooth vehicular flow, staff at the HZMB Hong Kong Port closely monitors the vehicular flow and make appropriate diversion adjustments to the clearance kiosks according to the actual circumstances on site so as to cope with the vehicular flow.

(4) and (5) Since the full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland in February 2023, the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and Macao Special Administrative Region have been closely monitoring the passenger and vehicular flow at HZMB and established the "Joint Works Committee of the Three Governments" (JWC) to promote co-ordination and co-operation on issues relating to HZMB operation. The HKSAR Government will continue to relay observations and recommendations through JWC on the operation of HZMB.

In addition, relevant government departments have been maintaining close liaison with relevant Mainland and Macao authorities (such as the Mainland and Macao immigration authorities, Gongbei and Macao Customs) in respect of

clearance and enforcement matters at HZMB Hong Kong Port. The Mainland Customs, Macao Customs and Hong Kong Customs have also established a hotline and notification mechanism for sharing the latest situation of passenger flow and vehicular flow of Hong Kong, Macao and Zhuhai ports such that necessary arrangements could be made to cope with any emergencies that may arise at the control points.

In view of the surge in passenger and vehicular flow during holiday periods, the Inter-departmental Joint Command Centre, composed of relevant departments including Customs and Excise Department, the Hong Kong Police Force, and the Immigration Department, etc, will be activated during the periods to monitor the situation at each BCP and take contingency actions where necessary. The relevant departments will also flexibly deploy manpower according to the passenger flow, open more e-Channels, counters and vehicle clearance kiosks to facilitate passenger and vehicular movement to ensure smooth operation at the BCPs. Hong Kong, Macao and Zhuhai have been maintaining close liaison for reciprocal notification of real-time passenger and vehicular flow situation for taking contingency actions where necessary.

In addition, prior to major long holidays, the HKSAR Government will announce through press releases and social media apps the expected passenger flow during the holiday period, and encourage the public and passengers to plan their trips in advance and make good use of BCPs with less passenger traffic, while appealing to Mainland travellers and Hong Kong residents planning to enter or leave Hong Kong to cross the border during non-peak hours as far as possible, with a view to minimising the congestion at land BCPs during the morning and evening peak hours in holiday periods.

Relevant departments of the HKSAR Government will continue to maintain close liaison with the relevant Mainland and Macao authorities to make full preparation and planning before festive periods, deploy staff flexibly and formulate contingency measures with a view to ensuring that BCPs are operating in an orderly manner.