

# CE's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address" to LegCo (11)

## VIII. Hong Kong will Prosper Only When its Young People Thrive

157. Young people are Hong Kong's future. The Government will capitalise on our strength in education to help our young people prepare for their future, and build Hong Kong into an international hub for post-secondary education. On top of promoting traditional academic education, the Government will also enhance the status of vocational and professional education and training so as to develop Hong Kong as an education and talents hub for recognised high-quality technical professionals.

### Build an International Hub for Post-secondary Education

158. Hong Kong's post-secondary education is international and highly diversified. Hong Kong is acclaimed to be the only city with five universities in the world's top 100. We will develop Hong Kong into an international hub for post-secondary education. This would bring benefits to our local students and help widen their international perspectives. This would also inject professional vibrancy and growth impetus to our post-secondary education, enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international city and taking our post-secondary education to a higher level. To this end, we will:

(i) increase the admission quota of non-local students to Government-funded post-secondary institutions—Starting from the 2024/25 academic year, the admission quota of non-local students to Government-funded post-secondary institutions will be doubled to 40%. The institutions may take into account their capacity to proceed, step by step, with admission of more non-local students, especially students from B&R countries and from the Mainland, and stand to expand capacity and enhance standard through their high-quality teaching and supporting facilities;

(ii) expand scholarship schemes—In the last academic year, some 2 500 students from the B&R countries were recipients of the B&R Scholarship and various scholarship schemes of UGC-funded universities. We will inject \$1 billion into the Government Scholarship Fund such that starting from the 2024/25 academic year, the quota of the B&R Scholarship will increase by 50%, and the quota of the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme by one-third gradually, from 300 to 400 places per academic year. These will help attract more outstanding talents to study and conduct researches in Hong Kong. We will also continue with the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme, supporting annually around 100 outstanding local students to pursue their studies in world-renowned universities outside Hong Kong to broaden their global perspectives;

(iii) increase hostel places—UGC-funded universities will take forward a number of hostel projects, which will cumulatively provide about 13 500 additional hostel places by 2027 to cater for the needs of students, including those arising from the additional intake;

(iv) support self-financing post-secondary institutions in enhancing their campuses—In 2024, we will launch a new round of the Land Grant Scheme and Start-up Loan Scheme in a bid to support self-financing post-secondary institutions in developing and enhancing their campuses for supporting more teaching and learning activities;

(v) enhance learning and enrichment opportunities for international students—Starting from this November, full-time non-local postgraduate students will be temporarily exempted from the restrictions on taking up part-time jobs to enhance their experience and understanding of working in Hong Kong, and increase their incentive to stay for development after graduation. The arrangement will be implemented on a trial basis for two years, during which more than 35 000 students are expected to benefit;

(vi) promote multi-cultural learning experiences—Starting from the 2023/24 academic year, the UGC will inject \$100 million into the Funding Scheme for Mainland and Global Engagement and Student Learning Experience. This will encourage universities to offer students with more exchange and learning opportunities outside Hong Kong, and promote a diversified and inclusive international learning environment; and

(vii) take forward the development of post-secondary education in the Northern Metropolis—We will strive to develop the Northern Metropolis University Town where post-secondary institutions are encouraged to strengthen co-operation with renowned Mainland and overseas institutions, and create synergy by sharing resources and enhancing collaboration with the industry sector.

#### Develop Universities of Applied Sciences

159. The Government will facilitate the establishment of universities of applied sciences (UASs), and strive to raise the status of vocational and professional education and training to attain qualifications at university degree level, providing an alternative path to success for young people who aspire to pursue a career in the technical professions. UASs will closely collaborate with technical professions and offer programmes with more internship and practical learning opportunities. These will help students hone their practical skills in the fields.

160. The Government together with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications will make reference to international experience and work to prescribe the standards to be qualified as UAS, covering such aspects as the admission, curriculum, accreditation, career articulation, collaboration with the industry sector. We will offer financial assistance and other ancillary support, and will give priority consideration to include eligible UAS programmes in the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors. To support suitable existing self-financing institutions

to develop into UASs, we will provide additional subsidies to encourage institutions to offer more applied degree programmes related to the technical professions and provide more incentives for enrolment. We will also set aside a start-up fund to support potential post-secondary institutions to form an Alliance of Universities in Applied Sciences to undertake joint promotional activities to instill in students, parents and the community better appreciation of the importance of vocational and professional education and training.

#### Expand Our Vocational Talent Pool

161. We actively support vocational training to nurture local talents by enhancing capacity-building and value-addition, and offering them with a clear pathway for progression. We will:

(i) establish the Hong Kong Institute of Information Technology—The VTC will focus on pre-employment and on-the-job training for the IT sector. It will introduce programmes in the 2024/25 academic year to strengthen the capacity of the IT sector in Hong Kong;

(ii) increase allowance of the Apprenticeship Scheme—The VTC will, for a period of three years starting from the 2024/25 academic year, provide each registered apprentice with additional monthly training allowance, and subsidise graduated apprentices in undertaking upskilling courses of relevant trades. The two subsidy arrangements will each last for 36 months; and

(iii) enhance cross-boundary mutual recognition of qualifications—We will work with the relevant Mainland authorities on the arrangements for mutual recognition of sub-degree level qualifications, including higher diploma qualifications, and will put the arrangement on trial for selected pilot areas.

#### STEAM Education

162. We will further strengthen the promotion of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) education in primary and secondary schools, including the introduction of Science subject in primary schools, with the curriculum framework to be announced in the 2023/24 school year for implementation from the 2025/26 school year. We will also launch programme in support of the Mathematics curriculum in the 2023/24 school year to strengthen students' capability in the applications of Mathematics, and take further steps to identify and nurture local STEAM elites.

#### Teacher and Student Support

163. The Government will continue to cater for the needs of teachers and students. These include strengthening co-operation with Mainland authorities and institutions to organise professional training, sharing and collaboration programmes on a regular basis; introducing new awards under the Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence to recognise teachers who are bold at innovation; and regularising the Relocation Grant for Kindergartens from the 2024/25 school year to encourage and help kindergartens apply for

relocation to government-owned premises.

## Sustain Youth Development

164. We released the Youth Development Blueprint late last year with a vision to nurture a new generation of young people with an affection for our country and our city, global perspectives and positive thinking. We will continue to implement and enhance some 160 measures in the blueprint, and organise the Youth Development Summit in mid-2024 as the opening and highlight of the next Youth Festival.

165. We will continue to implement various youth exchange and internship programmes in the Mainland and overseas. We will also establish the Alliance of Hong Kong Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the GBA within this year to provide a one-stop information, publicity and exchange platform.

166. Last month, the HYAB launched the Youth Link to engage youth participants of various government youth activities and offer them opportunities to develop diverse talents and take part in public affairs. We will study the possibility of utilising suitable facilities to provide Youth Link participants with a platform for constant interaction, including multi-function areas, a youth culture and creativity bazaar, and small-scale performance spaces.

167. We will also continue to implement the Security Bureau Youth Uniformed Group Leaders Forum and select distinguished members with great potential to participate in the Leaders Forum. Diverse learning opportunities, exchange activities with Mainland universities as well as study tours to the GBA and other Mainland or overseas cities will be organised. We will also encourage members to tender advice on youth development. Before the end of this year, we will establish the Leaders Forum Alumni Association for the outgoing alumni.

## IX. Closing Remarks

168. Hong Kong is our homes. I have met and spoken with many people from all walks of life, and I continue to meet with, and to listen to, the people of Hong Kong. I am particularly touched by the passion our people for Hong Kong and by their readiness to contribute to Hong Kong. Some have told me that they never get weary in working on behalf of Hong Kong, but that they are sometimes frustrated when they hear others' unfounded criticisms of Hong Kong or downplaying of the city's achievements and longstanding strengths. I thank everyone in Hong Kong who cherishes our city, our home. We will not be put off by their negativity. We will not let them erode our unity and our determination to make Hong Kong a success.

169. The spirit to strive, and to triumph, is in our blood. That was clear at the Asian Games in Hangzhou this year, where our Hong Kong athletes brought home a record of 53 medals. They strived and triumphed, making us proud of them.

170. Hong Kong has many strengths. We should treasure them, without inflating

our ego. In face of competition, we should never be complacent; we should not be frustrated or doubt ourselves when we lag behind. Hong Kong has come a long way from our beginnings as a small fishing village to a cosmopolitan world city we are today. Over the years and the decades, we have overcome countless difficulties and challenges. Flexible and resilient, blessed with an innovative mind-set, the people of Hong Kong have long turned crises into opportunities, and emerged from challenges with even greater strengths. It is the mutual reliance, trust and solidarity among the people of Hong Kong that have shaped our story of success.

171. I have faith in the building of China into a great country through Chinese modernisation. I have faith in the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. I have faith in our "One Country, Two Systems". And I have faith in you, the people of Hong Kong. As we stay united and embrace our diversity, I firmly believe that we will be able to build a better Hong Kong together.

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## **Partial principal repayment arrangement for SME Financing Guarantee Scheme**

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

The Chief Executive announced in "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address" today (October 25) that more flexible repayment options will be provided under the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme (SFGS). The enterprises may choose to repay only 10 per cent, 20 per cent or 50 per cent of the original principal repayment amount each month during a specified period, enabling them to have more time to gradually switch from principal moratorium to normal repayments.

At present, eligible borrowing enterprises may apply for the partial principal repayment (PPR) arrangement in respect of their term loans. Options include repaying only 20 per cent of the original principal repayment amount per instalment for a period of 18 months, repaying only 50 per cent of the original principal repayment amount per instalment for a period of 30 months, or adopting alternative PPR arrangements as agreed with the lending institutions. The new PPR option under the SFGS will allow borrowing enterprises to repay only 10 per cent of the original principal repayment amount per instalment for a period of 12 months. Under the PPR arrangement, the loan tenor and the guarantee period will generally be extended accordingly.

HKMC Insurance Limited will follow up with the lending institutions, aiming to implement the new option within November this year. Enterprises

should approach their lending institutions timely to discuss the arrangements.

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### Labour Support

133. The prevailing manpower shortage has constrained the pace of economic recovery of Hong Kong. To meet the imminent needs, we have, on a time-limited and non-permanent basis, enhanced the mechanism for admission of talents and labour. The Government attaches great importance to giving priority to local workers on employment. We will strengthen the training, support and protection for local workers, expand the potential labour force, enhance the productivity of our workers and create high-quality employment opportunities to cater for the need of our workers.

### Strengthen Training to Promote Re-employment

134. To encourage the latent labour force to enter the labour market, we will complete the legislative amendments early next year regarding increasing the maximum monthly retraining allowance by nearly 40% from \$5,800 to \$8,000 early next year. Furthermore, the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) will roll out a two-year pilot scheme in the first quarter of next year, allowing employers to arrange enterprise-based pre-employment training, with the provision of retraining allowance. The first phase of the pilot scheme will target trades facing severe manpower shortage, such as healthcare, catering, retail and hotel hospitality services. Upon completion of training, trainees will be offered employment contracts by the participating enterprises, lasting for no less than one year and with salary above the prevailing market wage. The ERB will also offer the trainees six-month placement follow-up services and skill training.

135. The ERB will review its service scope, training strategies and operation mode, etc. to better meet the needs of Hong Kong's economic development and manpower training, and promote continuous learning and skills development for all. It will submit recommendations in the third quarter of next year.

136. The Government will launch a three-year Re-employment Allowance Pilot Scheme, targeting at elderly and middle-aged persons aged 40 or above who have not been in paid employment for three consecutive months or more. To encourage these persons to rejoin the workforce, those who have worked for six consecutive months will be provided with a maximum allowance of \$10,000, while those who have worked for 12 consecutive months will be given an

additional maximum allowance of \$10,000. Some 6 000 persons are expected to be benefitted.

### Statutory Minimum Wage

137. The Minimum Wage Commission will submit a report by the end of this month on how to enhance the review mechanism of the Statutory Minimum Wage. The Government will consider and follow up on the recommendations made by the Commission, and decide on the way forward of the review mechanism in six months' time.

### The "Continuous Contract" Requirement

138. The Labour Advisory Board (LAB) is discussing how to revise the "continuous contract" requirement (commonly referred to as the "418" requirement). Under this requirement, an employee is entitled to comprehensive employment benefits only if he/she is employed by the same employer for four weeks or more and has worked for 18 hours or more each week. The LAB has agreed in principle to revise the requirement by using the aggregate working hours of four weeks as the basis of calculation, and is deliberating on the working hour threshold. The Government will amend the Employment Ordinance as soon as possible after the LAB has reached a consensus.

### Healthy Hong Kong

Develop into a Health and Medical Innovation Hub – Establish a Drug Approval Authority based on "Primary Evaluation" in the Long Run

139. With our high-quality medical care services and efficient healthcare system, Hong Kong is among the places with the longest life expectancy in the world. We are determined to leverage Hong Kong's medical strengths with the long-term objective of establishing an authority that registers drugs and medical devices under the "primary evaluation" approach, i.e. to directly approve applications for registration of drugs and medical devices based on clinical data, without relying on other drug regulatory authorities. We will endeavour to attract more pharmaceutical and medical device enterprises, both locally and from around the world, to conduct R&D and clinical trials in Hong Kong, and build up the capacity, recognition and status to ensure that the eventual approval mechanism of drugs and medical devices of Hong Kong would be widely recognised internationally and by the Mainland. We will:

(i) set up a preparatory office for the Hong Kong Centre for Medical Products Regulation (CMPR) – A preparatory office will be set up to study the potential restructuring and strengthening of the current regulatory and approval regimes for medicine, medical devices and medical technology. The office will also put forward proposals and steps for the establishment of the CMPR which will be a step towards the transition to the "primary evaluation" approach in approving applications for registration of pharmaceutical products, and explore the upgrading of the CMPR as a standalone statutory body in the long run. This will help accelerate the launching of new drugs and medical devices to the market, and foster the development of R&D and

testing of medical products and related industries;

(ii) accession to the International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH)â€¦â€¦We will pursue Hong Kong, China's accession to ICH as an observer to familiarise with and promote the latest development of drug regulation, and to pave the way for developing Hong Kong into an internationally recognised regulatory authority for drugs and medical devices in the long run;

(iii) establish the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Instituteâ€¦â€¦We will establish the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Institute in the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone next year to provide a one-stop clinical trial support platform for medical research institutions. The Institute will co-ordinate clinical trial resources in the public and private healthcare sectors in Hong Kong, including researchers, supporting services, data banks, sample banks, laboratories, etc. We will discuss with the Shenzhen Municipal Government regarding a cooperation framework, with a view to achieving coordinated development of the Hong Kong and Shenzhen Parks. We will also explore cooperation with the clinical trial networks in the Mainland, in particular the GBA, through the Institute, and co-ordinate clinical trial work between the two places to comply with national and international standards;

(iv) promote clinical research and trials under the HAâ€¦â€¦The HA will establish the Cluster Clinical Research Support Office in 2024-25. The office will provide advisory and support services for frontline staff, introduce additional measures to encourage medical teams to participate in clinical researches and trials, expedite the process of ethics review of clinical research, and strengthen the systems and mechanisms for supporting clinical research and data sharing; and

(v) establish the new "1+" mechanism to expedite the approval of new drugsâ€¦â€¦To accelerate patients' access to new chemical or biological entities (NCEs) and promote the development of clinical trials and research and development of drug in Hong Kong, we will enhance the existing drug regulatory regime by establishing the new "1+" mechanism this year. Under this mechanism, pharmaceutical products containing NCEs for life-threatening or severely-debilitating diseases with local clinical data will be allowed to register conditionally with only one certificate of pharmaceutical product (instead of two under the prevailing arrangement) issued by reference drug regulatory authorities (e.g. the National Medical Products Administration).

#### Continue to Promote Primary Healthcare Development

140. The Government released the Primary Healthcare Blueprint late last year, which sets out the development direction and strategies for coping with the challenges brought about by an ageing population and the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases. We are pressing ahead with our work on various fronts, which include: advocating the concept of "family doctor for all", with 3 400 family doctors enrolled in the Primary Care Directory (representing an increase of around 20%); providing subsidised hypertension



and diabetes mellitus screening and management service for persons aged 45 or above starting from this November; enhancing the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme to include audiologists, dietitians, clinical psychologists, speech therapists; and allowing the shared use of elderly health care vouchers between spouses and rolling out a new reward scheme. The Government will continue to work with the healthcare sector and NGOs to implement the blueprint.

### Strengthening Capacity to Combat Communicable Diseases

141. While Hong Kong has successfully combatted the COVID-19 pandemic, we must possess a sense of crisis for better preparation of emerging communicable diseases. The Government will enhance the local capacity in surveillance, early warning and prevention and control; strengthen the joint disease prevention and control as well as manpower training with the Mainland authorities; and promote, through local university, international cooperation in scientific research in areas such as vaccines. To that end, the Hong Kong Jockey Club will provide funding of \$3 billion to support related efforts.

### Digital Healthcare Record

142. The Government will roll out the eHealth+ to build a comprehensive healthcare information infrastructure over the next five years. We aim to develop a personalised eHealth account for every resident to deposit their digital health records in both public and private sectors, and to integrate the healthcare service processes. eHealth+ will allow users to check and carry electronic health records as well as scheduled appointments through mobile phones anytime. The new system will also support various healthcare policies and reforms more effectively, especially on cross-boundary medical collaboration within the GBA.

### Enhance Public Healthcare Services

143. The HA will continue its efforts to enhance public healthcare services including:

(i) reducing the waiting time of stable new case bookings for two specialties, namely Ear, Nose and Throat, and Orthopaedics and Traumatology, by 10% in 2024-25;

(ii) setting up Hong Kong's first Chest Pain Centre in Queen Mary Hospital in 2025 in accordance with national accreditation standards, with a view to optimising patient journey for patients suffering from cardiovascular diseases, improving treatment outcome and increasing survival rate; and

(iii) establishing a breastmilk bank and formulating the related mechanism for breastmilk donation in 2025 to provide breastmilk for infants and young children who cannot be breastfed by their biological mothers, and especially to minimise the chance of serious illness in premature or severely-ill babies.

### Oral Health

144. In the light of the views of the Working Group on Oral Health and Dental Care, established last year, the Government will accord priority to enhancing the oral health of the community. In the coming two years, we will:

(i) launch the Primary Dental Co-care Pilot Scheme for Adolescents to promote preventive dental care among adolescents through the provision of partial subsidies for private dental check-up services for adolescents aged between 13 and 17;

(ii) collaborate with NGOs to enhance emergency and special care dental services to the under-privileged, vulnerable groups with special needs, and persons with disabilities; and

(iii) enhance the Elderly Dental Assistance Programme to allow more eligible elderly persons to receive dental treatment services such as dental check-ups, scaling and polishing, fillings and extractions.

### Mental Health

145. The Government attaches great importance to mental health, and will continue to adopt an integrated approach to promote mental health, which covers prevention, early identification, as well as provision of timely intervention, treatment and rehabilitation for persons in need. We strive to implement the 10 enhanced measures announced in June for supporting persons in mental recovery and those with mental health needs, which include:

(i) expedite case management—The HA will optimise the ratio of case manager to patients with severe mental illness to no higher than 1:40 under the Case Management Programme. For new cases triaged as Priority 1 (urgent) and Priority 2 (semi-urgent) at psychiatric specialist outpatient clinics, the median waiting time will be maintained at no longer than one week and four weeks respectively;

(ii) enhance community support and training of social workers—The SWD will enhance the services of Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness next year, including strengthening early identification of persons with mental health needs and early intervention, and exploring to scale up the training of social workers in community mental health service units to raise their capacity in handling complicated cases;

(iii) provide mental health assessment in the community—A pilot scheme will be launched in three District Health Centres next year in collaboration with community organisations to provide mental health assessment for those in need, and to provide early follow-up and referral for high-risk cases;

(iv) strengthen training of Care Team members—Care Team members will be provided with mental health support training to assist in the early referral of persons in need in the local communities for support; and

(v) launch a "Mental Health Literacy" resource kit—The EDB will launch a "Mental Health Literacy" resource kit suitable for upper primary and junior secondary levels in the 2023/24 school year, and prepare the same for lower primary and senior secondary levels, with a view to enhancing student

awareness of mental health and assisting schools in promoting it.

#### Healthcare Manpower Supply and Training

146. To alleviate the shortage of dentists and nurses, the Government will introduce amendment bills to the Dentists Registration Ordinance and the Nurses Registration Ordinance by mid-2024 to provide new pathways for admission of qualified non-locally trained dentists and nurses for serving in specified institutions under the premise that the professional standards and patients' welfare are maintained. Furthermore, we will, starting from the 2023/24 academic year, gradually increase the training places of ancillary dental workers and provide tuition sponsorship to attract more people to join the industry. The Government will also explore amending the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance to provide new pathways for admitting qualified non-locally trained supplementary medical professionals to serve in the HA and the Department of Health.

147. We will strengthen the two-way training and exchange of healthcare talents between Hong Kong and the Mainland, while continuing to take forward the "Hospital Authority Healthcare Talents Visiting Programme". Building upon the successful experience of the first phase of exchanges with the Guangdong Province recently, we will take forward talent exchanges with other Mainland regions/cities, such as Shanghai, to promote continuous mutual learning and clinical exchange between different clinical healthcare professionals from the two places, including doctors, nurses and Chinese medicine practitioners, etc.

#### Chinese Medicine Development

148. The Government will actively promote the development of Chinese medicine in Hong Kong. We will:

(i) promote testing of and scientific research on Chinese medicine—Leveraging on the platform of the Government Chinese Medicines Testing Institute, we will accelerate the promotion of Chinese medicine informatisation and digitalisation, and facilitate the sharing of information. For instance, a Digitalised Chinese Medicines Information Platform will be launched early next year for Chinese medicine identification and educational purposes;

(ii) formulate the Chinese Medicine Development Blueprint—The recruitment exercise for the post of Commissioner for Chinese Medicine Development is at its the final stage. It is anticipated that the Commissioner can assume office early next year, who will co-ordinate the professional and policy development of Chinese medicine, and liaise with the Chinese medicine sector to formulate a comprehensive Chinese Medicine Development Blueprint for release in 2025;

(iii) strengthen integrated Chinese-Western medicine services—Starting from 2023-24, Chinese medicine rehabilitation will be incorporated to the clinical framework for "stroke care", and a new pilot project on "cancer care" will be launched at day chemotherapy centres. We will continue to

explore the extension of integrated Chinese-Western medicine services to cover more disease areas, such as elderly degenerative diseases; and

(iv) take forward the preparatory work for Hong Kong's first Chinese Medicine Hospital (CMH)â€¦â€¦The first CMH in Hong Kong is expected to commence service in phases starting from the end of 2025. It will establish a co-operation mechanism with another CMH in the Mainland to support its continuing development.

#### Cross-boundary Medical Collaboration

149. We will strengthen medical collaboration with the Mainland, and contribute to the national strategy of "Healthy China". We will:

(i) support the internationalisation of national hospital accreditation standardsâ€¦â€¦The HA will resume the hospital accreditation programme to ensure its management and services attaining international standards, and support the Shenzhen Hospital Accreditation Research Centre to set up an office in Hong Kong in the future with a view to contributing to the internationalisation of the national hospital accreditation standards and improving the overall healthcare quality of the GBA;

(ii) rolling out the "Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme"â€¦â€¦We will extend the coverage of the elderly health care vouchers initially to about five suitable medical institutions in the GBA as trial service points for provision of primary healthcare services. It will also cover individual designated medical institutions providing dental services at places near Hong Kong, e.g. Shenzhen; and

(iii) making optimal use of healthcare services in the GBAâ€¦â€¦We will strategically procure healthcare services for the people of Hong Kong from suitable healthcare institutions in the GBA (including the University of Hong Kong – Shenzhen Hospital) so as to alleviate the pressure on service demand of our public hospital services and shorten the waiting time of our residents.

#### A Liveable and Vibrant City

##### Sports Development

150. In recent years, Hong Kong athletes have achieved great results in major sports events. In the recent Asian Games in Hangzhou, Hong Kong won a record high of 53 medals. The Government will continue to promote sports development in Hong Kong, supporting elite sports, enhancing professionalism, maintaining Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events, developing sports as an industry, and promoting sports in the community.

151. On promoting elite sports and professionalism, the new building of the Hong Kong Sports Institute, to be completed in mid-2024, will provide more advanced training facilities for elite athletes. We will also allocate additional resources to enhance its Sports Medicine Centre. CSTB will continue to implement the 10-year Development Blueprint on Sports and Recreation Facilities, providing sports and recreation facilities such as

sports centres, sports grounds and parks, amongst which include a swimming pool suitable for hosting international competitions, as well as an arena with fencing training and competition facilities. Furthermore, we will collaborate with the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC) in mid-2024 to offer more professional training and internship opportunities to coaches. This will enhance the professional standards of our coaches and the quality of training for our athletes.

152. On maintaining Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events and developing sports as an industry, over 15 major international sports events supported by the "M" Mark system will be held in Hong Kong this year, the highest number ever. These events have attracted elite athletes and visitors around the world to visit Hong Kong. The supported events include the FIA World Rallycross Championship, the Aramco Team Series Hong Kong, as well as the Hong Kong Tennis Open, which will be staged in Hong Kong for the very first time. Being the largest sports infrastructure built in Hong Kong, the Kai Tak Sports Park, to be completed by the end of next year for opening in 2025, will be a premier venue for major events, such as international football and rugby matches as well as concerts. This will boost our soft power as a sports hub and foster the development of the related industries.

153. On promoting sports for all, we will collaborate with the SF&OC to organise Festival of Sport events on the Sport For All Day so that more people of Hong Kong may participate. The LCSD will also consider opening its sports facilities for free admission on specific festive occasions every year, where thematic sports days will be held for public participation. From next year onwards, the LCSD will set up self-test fitness corners at its sports centres, and introduce smart fitness equipment to its outdoor recreation venues. This will allow users to store or retrieve data of their physical activities and access information on sports and health via mobile applications. In addition, we will encourage and assist community organisations to arrange various sports activities and competitions.

#### Environmental Protection and Ecological Conservation

154. In order to achieve the "dual carbon" targets, the Government is striving to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050 and reduce Hong Kong's carbon emissions by 50% before 2035 as compared to the 2005 level. The Government has established the Office of Climate Change and Carbon Neutrality to help achieve the carbon neutrality targets of our country and Hong Kong, and tackle the carbon emission problem at source. We will:

(i) enhance energy conservation and decarbonisation in buildings—We will consult the trade this year on the proposal of amending the Buildings Energy Efficiency Ordinance, including extending the scope of regulation to more types of buildings, mandating the disclosure of information in energy audit reports, and shortening the interval of energy audit. Our target is to commence the legislative exercise next year;

(ii) extend the recovery and recycling schemes to more products—We will introduce a bill next year to establish a common legislative framework applicable to different products and make relevant subsidiary legislation.

Our target is to gradually extend, starting from 2025, the producer responsibility schemes to five types of products: plastic beverage containers, beverage cartons, electric vehicle batteries, vehicle tyres and lead-acid batteries;

(iii) establish the Sam Po Shue Wetland Conservation Park...We will enhance the ecological quality and biodiversity of the Northern Metropolis, providing quality outdoor eco-education and recreation facilities for public enjoyment. Modernised aquaculture will also be introduced in the park. The relevant strategic feasibility study is expected to be completed in the first half of next year; and

(iv) protect Hong Kong's ecosystems...We will update and implement the Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan based on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, endorsed at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and having regard to the actual situation of Hong Kong.

#### District Environment

155. The Government will launch the "Shining City Project" to enhance the beautification work of our city. The project will focus on developing the Shing Mun River and Yuen Long Nullah into flower viewing hotspots, implementing landscaping improvement works at the central dividers and roundabouts of major roads during major festivals, and injecting art and design elements in suitable pitches/courts, as well as the external walls of sports venues and washrooms. The Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration will be in charge of co-ordinating these efforts.

#### Stay United to Tell Good Stories of Hong Kong

156. We will unite patriots with affection for the country and our city to actively promote, in the local and the international arenas, the success story of "One Country, Two Systems", presenting the openness and cultural vibrancy in Hong Kong and our distinctive advantage as a conduit between our motherland and the world. We will also be telling our local and international audiences the true and good stories of our city.

(To be continued.)

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## **Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund performance announced**

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (October 25) announced the financial performance of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund (EMSTF) in 2022-23, with total revenue of \$8.911

billion and a return rate on revenue at 2.6 per cent.

The Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services and General Manager of the EMSTF, Mr Eric Pang, said that the EMSTF provided quality electrical and mechanical (E&M) engineering services to client departments during the year, supported the Government in mitigating the impact of the epidemic and prepared society for full resumption to normalcy.

"We have been proactively adopting innovation and technology to streamline workflows and enhance E&M services, expanding collaborations with the Mainland and the world, and striving to uplift energy efficiency standards to expedite Hong Kong's progress towards carbon neutrality," he said.

The EMSTF Report was tabled in the Legislative Council today and uploaded to the EMSD website ([www.emsd.gov.hk/en/rl/EMSTF\\_AR\\_2223](http://www.emsd.gov.hk/en/rl/EMSTF_AR_2223)) for public reference.

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## [CE's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address" to LegCo \(9\)](#)

Caring and Inclusive Community

Support Persons with Disabilities

121. To address the needs of persons with disabilities, the Government provides a variety of rehabilitation services catering to different types and levels of disability. These services include pre-school rehabilitation, vocational rehabilitation, centre-based or home-based community support services, as well as hostels for severely mentally handicapped persons, halfway houses and hostels for severely physically handicapped persons, etc. The Government will continue to strengthen the support in this regard, including the following measures:

(i) provide subsidy to encourage employment—We will implement a three-year pilot scheme to provide an additional subsidy of \$500 per month to employed disabled recipients of CSSA as a means of encouraging their employment. This will benefit some 6,800 persons with disabilities;

(ii) strengthen the services of residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) and day training services—Given the ageing of users of RCHDs, the Government will increase nursing staff in RCHDs in the coming year to enhance care for their ageing residents. We will also increase service places of the Extended Care Programme in Day Activity Centres and the

Work Extension Programme to enhance care for persons with disabilities using day training services who are ageing or have deteriorating health conditions;

(iii) encourage developers to construct and operate RCHDs in their development projects—Drawing reference from the prevailing arrangements applicable to private RCHEs, the Government will launch the "Incentive Scheme to Encourage Provision of Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities in New Private Developments" this year. Eligible RCHDs will be exempted from premium payment for lease modifications, land exchange or private treaty grants, and the relevant GFA of the RCHD will not be counted in the calculation of total permissible GFA for the entire project;

(iv) optimise the establishment of resource teachers for aided special schools— Starting from the 2024/25 school year, we will strengthen the establishment of resource teachers for the primary and secondary sections of aided special schools, and extend the initiative to cover schools for social development, allowing them to provide additional learning and developmental support for students with autism spectrum disorder; and

(v) increase the number of representatives of persons with disabilities and carers in the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee—The Government has completed the review of the Committee's composition. There will be more representatives of persons with disabilities and their carers in the next term of the Committee to better gauge their needs.

## Support Carers

122. Carers play an important role in supporting elderly persons and persons with disabilities to live in the community. The Government is committed to supporting carers of elderly and carers of persons with disabilities, including providing financial assistance, care skills training, counselling and emotional support etc., and in parallel providing the elderly and persons with disabilities with personal care, home cleaning, rehabilitation training, respite services, etc. to relieve the pressure on carers.

123. With the aim of alleviating the physical and mental pressure of carers, the Government launched the 24-hour Designated Hotline for Carer Support last month to provide professional support on consultation, counselling, matching of respite services, etc., and will launch a one-stop Information Gateway for Carers next month to facilitate and encourage carers to seek timely assistance. We will continue our efforts to support carers through the following:

(i) mobilise Care Teams—The Government will pilot in Tsuen Wan and Southern Districts to engage the Care Teams to help, through visits or contacts, identify carers of elderly persons and carers of persons with disabilities requiring support, and refer cases to the relevant social welfare service units for follow-up. The Government will review the effectiveness of the implementation in the pilot districts, and consider extending the services to other districts. We will also assist households referred by the Care Teams to install emergency alarm systems as necessary;



(ii) expand the network of respite services—Carers of elderly persons or persons with disabilities may need to rely on community respite services for temporary relief when they need to take short breaks or attend to personal matters. We will request about 140 RCHEs under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme, about 20 RCHDs under the Bought Place Scheme for Private RCHDs, and about 190 service units participating in the Community Care Service Voucher Scheme for the Elderly to provide residential and day respite services when there are vacant residential care places or service places for care-receiving individuals. Carers in need will also be matched with respite services through the social workers of the designated hotline for carer support;

(iii) strengthen peer support services—In the coming two years, the SWD will set up four additional Parents/Relatives Resource Centres for carers of those in mental recovery to support people in mental recovery and their carers;

(iv) promote publicity on caring for the carers—This three-year campaign encourages people from all walks of life to show their empathy, support and care for carers. In the first year, under the theme of "Helping Carers Help Themselves", publicity will focus on encouraging carers to help themselves. In the second year, under the theme of "Walk with Carers", publicity will emphasise standing by carers. In the third year, under the theme of "Fostering a Carer-Friendly Community", publicity will focus on creating a community environment that supports carers;

(v) support special school leavers and their carers—Designated teams will be set up in the second quarter of next year to proactively contact carers of special school leavers six months before graduation to provide training on caring and interaction skills, arrange post-school care plans and link with community support services; and

(vi) utilise technology to reduce the burden and pressure of carers—We will expand the scope of the Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care to cover gerontechnology products suitable for household use. Eligible elderly and rehabilitation service units can procure suitable technology products for lending to elderly persons, persons with disabilities and their carers for use at home. This will improve the quality of life of the care recipients and relieve the pressure of the carers.

## Protect Children

124. The LegCo is scrutinising the Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Bill. We look forward to the early passage of the bill and the implementation of the mandatory reporting regime for early identification and intervention into child abuse cases. The Government will provide training for mandated reporters and draw up guidelines. We will also increase the number of emergency places for residential child care service.

125. The Committee on Review of Residential Child Care and Related Services, formed last year, has completed its review. The Government will follow up on

and progressively implement the relevant recommendations, including stepping up inspections and unannounced visits, increasing the number of residential child care service places, strengthening the support and training for foster families, etc.

126. To encourage more willing individuals to become foster families, the Government will substantially increase the incentive payment for foster families starting from next April. For foster care service, the payment will be more than doubled from around \$5,000 to about \$11,000 per month. For emergency foster care service, it will be doubled from around \$6,600 to about \$13,000 per month. Additional support will be provided to foster families taking care of children with special learning or care needs, including arranging early assessment and appropriate professional rehabilitation therapy and training.

#### Support the Development of Welfare Services Organisations

127. The Government will set up a dedicated fund of \$500 million to help NGOs operating subvented welfare services meet their development needs for staff training and system enhancement, particularly in enhancing professional knowledge of their staff and strengthening awareness of inter-disciplinary collaboration, as well as encouraging and promoting the application of information technology, etc.

#### Targeted Poverty Alleviation

128. The current-term Government has adopted the strategy of targeted poverty alleviation by directing resources to those most in need. Based on the latest statistics and multi-dimensional analyses of household characteristics, employment and income conditions, cash welfare assistance and living conditions, etc., the Commission on Poverty has identified three groups for targeted poverty alleviation: households residing in SDUs, single-parent households and elderly households. In the coming year, the Government will implement various targeted poverty alleviation projects catering to the needs of these target groups. We will:

(i) enhance the Strive and Rise Programme—Through tripartite collaboration among the Government, the business sector and the community, focused support will be given to junior secondary students from underprivileged families, particularly those living in SDUs. The second round of the programme will begin at the end of this month, including such new elements as: increasing the number of mentees from 2,800 to 4,000, with an extension to cover Secondary Four students; enriching the variety of group activities with more Mainland study and exchange tours; introducing mentorship groups; and establishing an Alumni Club for mentees who have completed the programme to provide them with diversified social activities and internship opportunities. The total number of benefited mentees will increase to 6,800 in the 2023/24 school year, reaching 12,000 in the 2025/26 school year;

(ii) launch a Pilot Programme on Community Living Room—While we will embark on a study to tackle the issue of SDUs in the long term, we also

strive to improve the living and community environment of the SDU households. We will launch a Pilot Programme on Community Living Room (CLR) later this year. Under the pilot programme, the business sector will provide venues and the Community Care Fund (CCF) will provide the funding to commission NGOs to operate the CLRs. The CLRs will offer shared kitchens and dining rooms, as well as common spaces for doing homework, holding interest classes and group activities, providing SDU households with additional living space in their respective communities. To strengthen community support for the service targets, the pilot programme will also arrange information and talks, make referrals to other community services as appropriate, and approach the business sector and local organisations for in-kind donations, such as food or food vouchers, as well as providing volunteer services like homework guidance. The first CLR under the pilot programme will be rolled out at Fuk Wa Street of Sham Shui Po later this year, for a period of three years. The CLR is expected to serve at least 500 SDU households, with about 80000 attendance a year. We will review the effectiveness one year after operation, and consider extending the pilot programme to other communities with more SDU households;

(iii) operate the School-based After School Care Service Scheme—We will roll out a School-based After School Care Service Scheme in the 2023/24 school year to allow primary students in need to stay at school outside school hours for care and learning support. This will help their parents go to work and will also benefit single parent households. The scheme will be implemented on a trial basis in 50 primary schools in districts with more targeted students for one year, and will be reviewed. NGOs will be engaged to run the services at the participating schools, benefiting some 30000 students; and

(iv) support singleton or doubleton elderly households—Despite the continuous development of elderly services and increasing dedication of resources, singleton or doubleton elderly households remain vulnerable, and we need to reach out proactively to offer support. To that end, the Government will mobilise community resources and will, starting from the first quarter of next year, engage the Care Teams in Tsuen Wan and Southern districts as pilots, to arrange visits and contacts for singleton or doubleton elderly households. The Care Teams will assist the households in seeking relevant government support services, and refer cases with welfare needs to the relevant social welfare units for follow-up. The Government will review the effectiveness of the implementation in the pilot districts, and consider extending the services to other districts.

## Care Teams

129. In the last Policy Address, I announced the establishment of the Care Teams, which have contributed considerably towards district care and social services. An example was last month's Super Typhoon and torrential rain, in which the Care Teams in the Southern and Tsuen Wan districts promptly assisted the residents affected. The selection of Care Teams in all 18 districts has been completed and they are now ready to kick-start their service, converging community resources and efforts to support district work, and foster ties with the communities. The Government will, having regard to

the operation of Care Teams, make good use of technology to develop management applications for the Care Teams to facilitate their work.

### Women's Development

130. Following the allocation of additional funding to establish the Women Empowerment Fund last year, the Government will set up under the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) a dedicated Women Affairs Team and designate the post of Commissioner for Women Affairs to steer work related to women's affairs. Key initiatives for the coming year include launching a one-stop family and women information portal; organising the first Family and Women Development Summit to collect views for formulating more focused measures; and introducing a maintenance mediation pilot scheme through CCF to assist the parties concerned, including women who are victims of maintenance arrears, to resolve disputes through mediation.

### Promote Hometown Culture

131. The Home Affairs Department will launch the Clansmen Culture Promotion Scheme in the first quarter of 2024 for a period of three years, with a total funding of \$30 million earmarked for application by local clansmen associations to organise activities promoting hometown culture. The scheme aims to deepen the public's understanding of and sense of belonging to their hometowns, thereby fostering the spirit of loving the motherland, Hong Kong and their hometowns.

### Ethnic Minorities

132. Ethnic minorities (EMs) form an integral part of Hong Kong. The Government has been providing them with services and support on various fronts, such as integration into the community, education, employment, welfare and healthcare. Measures include:

(i) integration into the community—The Government will set up two additional support service centres for EMs next year, one in Kowloon Central and the other in New Territories East, bringing the total number of these centres to 10. These service centres provide EMs with language classes, after-school tutorial classes, integration programmes, counselling services, etc. Each of the centres will be invited to set up one EM Care Team to reach out to EM households, understand their needs and introduce public services they need. Also, we will continue to enhance the support provided by these centres for EM new arrivals and youths, and will regularise the District-based Programmes for Racial Harmony;

(ii) education—EDB will continue to encourage non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students to learn Chinese for integration into society. Our enhanced efforts include designing Online Chinese Language Self-learning Resources for NCS students to provide diversified learning materials; preparing for the offer of after-school Chinese language courses for lower primary NCS students on a trial basis using adapted learning materials for the Youth Chinese Test; expanding the Summer Bridging Programme to include NCS students progressing to primary 5 and primary 6 starting from the 2023/24 school year; and

increasing the number of schools that provide school-based life planning services for NCS students, etc.;

(iii) employment—Government departments may design their own job-oriented language tests according to the requirements of individual grades to enable applicants to meet the appointment requirements of relevant grades in respect of language proficiency. Departments will also step up recruitment and outreaching efforts to invite job applications from EMs;

(iv) the District Ambassador Scheme—The SWD will extend the EM District Ambassador pilot scheme for three years to engage EMs or designated persons to support EMs in the welfare service units of NGOs and the SWD; and

(v) emotional support and counselling—We will collaborate with NGOs to set up a service centre on a trial basis to provide emotional support and counselling services for EMs.

(To be continued.)