

## LCQ10: Attracting the high-end consumer group to visit Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Nixie Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

It is reported that the State President made important remarks in an instruction on the 17th of this month on the work related to the tourism sector: "All regions and departments must effectively strengthen the sense of responsibility and mission in their work, do their share of work well and coordinate joint efforts to promote the high-quality development of the tourism industry with concrete actions and ensure its steady and sustainable growth." There are views that Hong Kong should promote the diverse development of the tourism industry (including tapping new areas of consumption growth) and proactively attract the high-end consumer group to visit Hong Kong, so as to achieve the high-quality development of its tourism industry. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows if there are sufficient service providers for custom-  
-designed tours in the market to offer personalized luxury travel experiences and plan tailor-made itineraries (e.g. guided shopping for famous-brand fashion and accessories, luxury sports events, rides on luxury yachts and helicopters, as well as high-end art experiences/auctions) for the high-end consumer group;

(2) as there are views that family-friendly tourism and pet-friendly tourism have great appeal to the high-end consumer group, whether the Government has plans to formulate targeted measures for such consumer group, such as putting in place special quarantine-free entry arrangements for their pets (e.g. introducing the "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Pet Passport" by modelling on the European Union's practice of pet passports) and providing more babycare facilities at famous tourist attractions, so as to further enhance this consumer group's desire for and satisfaction from visiting and spending in Hong Kong, thereby achieving the high-quality integrated development of Hong Kong's tourism industry in terms of both software and hardware; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as there are views that organizing mega events is one of the important directions in attracting the high-end consumer group, whether the Government has conducted promotion targeting the high-end consumer group from specific countries/regions on mega events organized by Hong Kong; if so, of the following information on such promotional efforts (set out in the table below): (i) countries/regions targeted, (ii) form of promotion and details of strategies adopted, and (iii) effectiveness; if not, the reasons for that; and

Title of mega event	(i)	(ii)	(iii)

(4) as it is learnt that the life style and consumption pattern of the Muslim high-end consumer group carry distinct religious overtones, whether the authorities have considered adding more Muslim-friendly facilities in the 18 districts in Hong Kong and compiling a guidebook on Halal-certified food and dining, so as to enhance the awareness of and interest in Hong Kong's unique travel experience among the Muslim high-end consumer group, thereby attracting them to stay longer and extend the length of their overnight stay in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

We have been actively developing tourism products and projects with local and international characteristics and diversifying source markets, with a view to attracting high value-added overnight visitors and driving high-quality tourism development. In respect of the question raised by the Hon Nixie Lam, having consulted the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the reply is as follows:

(1) Hong Kong's tourism industry is mature with different types of travel agents in the market providing personalised themed itinerary planning and other services for high-spending clients or tourists from other source markets and with different characteristics. With reference to visitors' budget and preferences, travel agents tailor-make itineraries of different themes and contents, so as to provide tourists with high-quality travel experiences. For instance, to attract visitors having a preference in high-end tourism experiences and specially curated itineraries, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) collaborated with the travel trade and launched in May this year a new guidebook "Travel in Luxe<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> Hong Kong" featuring a wide range of the city's distinctive lifestyle travel experiences, including thematic selections in family bonds offerings. Some examples of these experiences include whole-venue blocked-out theme park exploration, VIP-exclusive interactions in attractions, accommodation in luxurious suites in star-rated hotels, etc. The guidebook also introduces other exquisite services, which are of great interest to high-spending visitors, such as private jets, helicopters, yachts, VIP group reservation of the Peak Tram, exclusive shopping at luxury brand stores and more. The luxury travel experience guidebook enables high-spending visitors to plan their trip to Hong Kong. The HKTB will continue to adopt a multi-faceted strategy to attract high-spending visitors to Hong Kong to enrich their tourist experience, extend their stay and increase their spending in Hong Kong at the same time.

(2) As an international tourist destination, we have been working tirelessly to enhance Hong Kong's tourism facilities and supporting services for providing tourists with high-quality travel experiences. In terms of nursery facilities, many tourist attractions such as Hong Kong Disneyland, Hong Kong

Ocean Park, M+, Hong Kong Palace Museum, Hong Kong Wetland Park, Ngong Ping 360, Hong Kong Museum of Art, etc, have their nursery rooms open to visitors to facilitate their taking care of babies.

In respect of import of animals, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) currently regulates the import of live animals through a permit system, to prevent the transmission of animal diseases, including rabies, into Hong Kong. Rabies is a contagious disease that can cause human fatality and the incubation period can last several months. Rabies is almost always fatal once clinical signs appear and no specific treatment is available. Currently, cats and dogs imported from places that are considered rabies-free or where rabies cases are few and under effective control are exempt from quarantine, provided that relevant requirements are fulfilled. As for cats and dogs imported from places with higher or uncertain risk of rabies, they must undergo quarantine for not less than 120 days, to prevent the transmission of rabies into Hong Kong. In view of recent developments in biotechnology, the AFCD is conducting risk assessment to explore the feasibility of shortening the quarantine period for imported cats and dogs, by measures such as rabies vaccination and rabies antibody titer testing.

(3) Mega events can successfully showcase Hong Kong's strengths and charms, while creating more exciting experiences for global visitors, including high-spending segments. They will in turn boost the economic gains of tourism, hotel, food and beverage, retail, and other sectors. The Government announced on May 21 the calendar of mega events in Hong Kong for the second half of 2024. It is estimated that at least 210 mega events would be held throughout the year and approximately 1.7 million tourists would be drawn to participate in the mega events. Their spending is estimated to be about HK\$7.2 billion, bringing value-added of about HK\$4.3 billion to the Hong Kong economy.

The HKTB leverages different mega events and city happenings to launch global promotions in different source markets, followed by rolling out specific strategies and tourism products in respect of different markets. For instance, in light of the series of world-class art and cultural events during "Art March", including Art@Hravour, Art Basel Hong Kong and Art Central, together with another large-scale art event, French May, the HKTB partnered with Mainland travel agents to introduce travel packages featuring high-end local hotels and admission tickets to the exhibitions or arts and cultural attractions, to motivate visitors to come to Hong Kong for art and cultural tours. The HKTB also joined hands with Mainland airlines to organise an air ticket lucky draw campaign riding on "Art March" to attract visitors to Hong Kong and spend in town. On its Mainland social media platforms including WeChat, Xiaohongshu, Douyin, Weibo, and in partnership with Xiaohongshu, the HKTB produced and launched art and cultural map and invited KOLs to visit the city, jointly promoting Hong Kong's art and cultural tourism appeal.

On the other hand, riding on the Hong Kong Sevens in April, the HKTB also rolled out overseas promotions targeting different segments, partnering with overseas travel agents to launch event-limited Hong Kong Sevens-focused

tourism products and media familiarisation experiences, so as to deepen overseas travellers' understanding of Hong Kong's mega event ambience. For mature rugby markets such as Australia and South Korea, the HKTb not only invited local media to visit Hong Kong to watch the games, but also worked with Australian travel agents to design Hong Kong Sevens-themed tourism products to target high-spending travellers.

With the positive responses received by the HKTb events among the public and visitors, the HKTb will continue to stage its six flagship events of various experiences including sports, gastronomy, and festivity, including the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races, the Hong Kong Cyclothon, the Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, the Hong Kong WinterFest, the Hong Kong New Year Countdown Celebrations and the Hong Kong Chinese New Year Celebrations, while injecting new perspectives, elements and experiences to enrich the event content and further enhance their appeal. At the same time, the HKTb will step up promotions in the Mainland and overseas to attract visitors to visit Hong Kong repeatedly for participating in these events.

The HKTb also rides on various international Meetings, Incentive travels, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) events such as the 17th Asian Financial Forum, WOW Summit Hong Kong 2024 and Fortune Innovation Forum to offer the visiting participants with different art and cultural experiences, including complimentary tickets to M+ and Hong Kong Palace Museum, land and sea adventures on Chinese-style junk Aqua Luna, nostalgic tram and open-top sightseeing bus tour across the Victoria Harbour and among different landmarks and iconic attractions in the city. The experience let the participants take a journey beyond the conference halls and expose them to the brilliant night-time urban charm of Hong Kong, while promoting Hong Kong's tourism appeal and stimulating their spending.

(4) The Muslim is a tourism segment with great potential. The HKTb has consolidated a series of travel information for Muslim visitors on its website DiscoverHongKong.com, including cuisines, hotels and accommodations, local cultures and activities suitable for Muslim visitors, with a view to attracting them to travel to Hong Kong and enhancing their travelling experience in the city. In addition, the HKTb will co-operate with the trade to further enhance the publicity of the infrastructure with a view to promoting Muslim travel. The HKTb will invite credible Muslim accreditation organisation to collaborate with local accreditation organisation for helping trade partners in different sectors such as hotels, shopping arcades and attractions to be certified in order to develop Hong Kong as a Muslim-friendly destination. Local Muslim groups will be invited to organise briefing sessions for the trade on the needs of Muslim visitors in terms of food and beverage, accommodation and attraction facilities, so as to help the trade to better understand Muslim-friendly tourism. The HKTb will also produce different promotional materials and enhance the content of its website to attract more Muslim visitors to visit Hong Kong.

In terms of visitor source markets, the Middle East has become an emerging market drawing attention in recent years. In May this year, the HKTb launched a series of promotions targeting countries in the Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC), including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar, with a view to stepping up efforts to promote Hong Kong tourism to the Middle East source markets and attracting more visitors.

The HKTB also led the largest-ever trade delegation from Hong Kong with more than 30 representatives of the Hong Kong travel trade, including travel agents, attractions and hotels, to participate in the largest international travel trade show in the Middle East, Arabian Travel Market (ATM) in Dubai, from May 6 to 9, 2024. The delegate networked with trade partners in the Middle East and discussed partnership opportunities. The HKTB set up a pavilion of Hong Kong at the event to showcase the city's novel experiences and offerings, deepening Arabian trade partners' understanding of Hong Kong in the tourism industry.

During the period of ATM, the HKTB signed two partnership memoranda of understanding (MoU) respectively, one with the leading airline in the Middle East Emirates and the other with leading online travel agent Dnata Travel Group to deepen exchange and partnership in promoting Hong Kong as an ideal tourism destination among Middle Eastern markets. The HKTB will partner with Emirates to organise familiarisation trip to Hong Kong for media, KOLs, travel trade and other stakeholders from GCC countries, allowing them to experience Hong Kong in person through specially curated itineraries. On the other hand, the HKTB and Dnata Travel Group will jointly promote Hong Kong tourism through the travel agent's online and offline platforms.

In addition to the promotions in the Middle East, the HKTB has invited more than 10 entrepreneurs, travel trade representatives and stakeholders from the Middle East to visit Hong Kong in May this year to experience the charm of Hong Kong. The group also visited Muslim-friendly facilities in Hong Kong to deepen their understanding of Hong Kong's cuisine, hotel accommodation, culture and travel experience for Muslim travelers so that they may in turn recommend Hong Kong to more travellers from the Middle East through their influence and networks.

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## **LCQ9: Protective measures for victims of crime and vulnerable witnesses**

Following is a question by the Hon Doreen Kong and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

It has been reported that the judges' decisions to require the

complainants to change clothes to demonstrate the acts involved in the case and to withdraw the use of protective screens by the complainants during the trials of two sexual offence cases last year have aroused public concern. Regarding the protective measures for victims of crime and vulnerable witnesses, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the respective numbers of applications received and cases approved by the Judiciary for the provision of protective measures (such as the use of protective screens or special passageways) for witnesses in criminal proceedings since the Judiciary's revision in 2016 of the Practice Directions issued for the conduct of court proceedings; among the cases approved, of the number of cases in which the provision of relevant measures had been withdrawn by the presiding judges during the trials and the reasons for the withdrawals;

(2) of the work progress of the authorities in implementing the recommendations for legislative amendments in the report on Review of Substantive Sexual Offences published by Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong in December 2019;

(3) whether it knows if the Judiciary will, by drawing reference from the latest experience of overseas jurisdictions, conduct a comprehensive review and revision of the protective measures for victims in trials of sexual offence cases;

(4) whether the authorities have considered incorporating measures relating to the protection of victims of crime and vulnerable witnesses (e.g. the guidelines set out in the aforesaid Practice Directions) into the legislation, so that they can become inalienable rights that require no application;

(5) whether the authorities have studied putting in place more protective measures for victims of crime and vulnerable witnesses (e.g. requiring statement-taking to be done in one single interview, formulating rules on cross-examination allowed at trials, and introducing "independent sexual violence advisers"), so as to further mitigate "secondary damages" caused to the victims; and

(6) as it is learnt that the Police have established the Vulnerable Witness Support Cadre as a voluntary secondary-duty team since 2022 to provide support for dealing with cases involving the abuse of children and mentally incapacitated persons, whether the Police have considered expanding the scope of service to cover other adult vulnerable witnesses?

Reply:

President,

The Government has all along attached great importance to the professionalism in handling of sexual offence cases. Different departments and the Judiciary have taken a number of measures according to their

professional areas to protect victims of crime and vulnerable witnesses from secondary victimisation, including provision of protection through legislation and various administrative measures.

In consultation with the Judiciary and the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), my consolidated reply in response to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) Since the Judiciary's revision of the Practice Directions concerning conduct of court proceedings in 2016 to date, the Judiciary have maintained and provided the following statistics on provision of protective measures for witnesses in criminal proceedings:

Protective measures	Number of applications	Number of approved applications
Provision of screens for sexual offence cases	766 (From 2016 to end of March 2024)	763
Use of special passageways for entering/leaving the court	722 (From 2018 to end of March 2024)	720
Giving of evidence by live television link	464 (From 2018 to end of March 2024)	462

None of the approved applications had been revoked by the presiding judges during the trial. However, having regard to specific considerations in individual cases, the court may impose appropriate restrictions as considered applicable under the circumstances concerned, for example, whether the screens should prevent the defendant, the public, or both from seeing the witness. Of the two cases mentioned in the question, only one concerns the complainants' application for use of protective measures (i.e. the latter case), which actually did not involve any "decision to withdraw the use of protective screens by the complainants". Rather, the judge had ordered screening arrangements such that the screen should hide the view from public gallery only but not the view between the accused and the witness.

(2) The Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong (LRC) published a report on Review of Substantive Sexual Offences in December 2019 and, subsequently in May 2022, a report on Sentencing and Related Matters in the Review of Sexual Offences covering the subjects of four consultation papers of the LRC in the past ten-odd years, including rape and other non-consensual sexual offences, sexual offences involving children and persons with mental impairment, miscellaneous sexual offences, and sentencing and related matters in the review of sexual offences. They cover principle-based recommendations as well as those involving making substantive legislative amendments, including the creation of a range of non-consensual sexual offences (e.g. a range of new sexual offences involving children and persons with mental impairment which

are gender neutral), the proposed penalties for the offences, treatment and rehabilitation of sex offenders, and a review on the Sexual Conviction Record Check (SCRC) Scheme.

The two reports have extensive coverage and contain over 70 recommendations, hence requiring the Government's careful consideration. Regarding the recommendations on the SCRC Scheme, we will consult the Legislative Council Panel on Security on the proposed arrangements for expansion of the Scheme in June this year. As for other recommendations, the Security Bureau and the Department of Justice are studying the reports and will propose legislative amendments with reference to the development of relevant laws in other jurisdictions. We will timely conduct public consultation on the proposed legislative amendments and submit them to the Legislative Council for scrutiny.

(3) Relevant government departments and the Judiciary have implemented various measures to protect victims of crime and vulnerable witnesses. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the measures and keep abreast of the experience of other jurisdictions. Improvements to the arrangements will be made as and when appropriate and necessary so as to protect these persons from secondary victimisation.

(4) In accordance with the relevant Practice Directions issued by the Judiciary or relevant laws, vulnerable witnesses, including those relating to sexual offence cases, may apply to the court for protective measures in a criminal trial, including giving evidence by way of live television link, using protective screen, and/or using special passageway from the entrance of a court building to the relevant courtroom. The presiding judge will strike a balance among various relevant factors in giving directions for the use of a screen/special passageway in such trials. These factors mainly include the protection of the suspected victim (such as avoiding unnecessary embarrassment or pressure), ensuring the defendant's right to a fair trial, and upholding open administration of justice. The experience in the past few years has shown that such approach is effective. For the time being, the Government has no plan to incorporate the guidelines in the Practice Directions into the legislation.

(5) Government departments have always adopted a series of procedures, guidelines and measures to protect victims of crime and vulnerable witnesses; on one hand to safeguard the fundamental right of defendants to a fair trial, on the other hand encourage and assist victims and witnesses to testify in court by treating them with compassion and understanding. The trauma caused to the testifying victims will also be minimised and their rights and safety are adequately protected.

The HKPF also review from time to time the handling procedures of sexual violence cases and enhance the skills and professional sensitivity of police officers in handling such cases. Depending on the needs of victims, the Police will apply, under section 79B of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance (Cap. 221), to the judge via the Department of Justice to allow victims to give evidence by live television link during criminal proceedings. Under the



Witness Support Programme, HKPF would also arrange specially trained staff to take up the role of support persons and provide support services for victims of sexual violence in need. Such services include escorting the witnesses to visit the court before the trial, and accompanying them while they are testifying in court to help reduce their anxiety. The Police also introduced the one-stop service model, whereby victims of sexual offences will be arranged to receive medical treatment at public hospitals and undergo forensic examinations at the same place if circumstances permit. A police officer of the same sex who has received relevant training will be assigned to take statements so as to minimise the trauma caused to victims when they recount their cases during the investigation.

We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the protective measures. The arrangements will be reviewed and enhanced timely so as to avoid causing harms to victims in the course of investigation.

(6) The Vulnerable Witness Support Cadre of the HKPF is composed of police officers who are specially trained to conduct video recorded interviews with vulnerable witnesses in compliance with the requirements under section 79C of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance (Cap. 221) to ensure that the video recordings are admissible as evidence in court. The legislative intent of the Ordinance is to protect two types of vulnerable witnesses, namely children and mentally incapacitated persons, including mentally incapacitated adults. As for other adult victims of sexual offences, as mentioned in paragraph 5 above, we have corresponding measures in place to provide them with appropriate support. The Government will continue to closely monitor the situation, review the measures from time to time and spare no effort in protecting all crime victims and vulnerable witnesses.

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## [LCQ13: Coping with extreme weather](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Stanley Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

During the once-in-a-century torrential rain in September last year, a severe landslide occurred on a natural slope above a section of Yiu Hing Road near Yiu Tung Estate in Shau Kei Wan, resulting in the need for temporary full closure of the section of the carriageway fronting Yiu Ming House of Yiu Tung Estate, with one traffic lane only being reopened on March 23 this year. In addition, during the onslaught of rainstorms on the 4th of this month, which was particularly heavy in Tseung Kwan O and Sai Kung, the authorities received as many as 17 reports of landslides. There are views that extreme weather will become more frequent as Hong Kong has entered the typhoon and

rainstorm seasons. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the specific contents and procedures of the recovery work in relation to extreme weather; whether it has set a target for such work (e.g. the time for completion of work) and designated a government department or team to undertake the work; if so, of the scope of work and responsibilities; if not, how the work is being arranged;

(2) of the new measures in place to step up prevention of landslides during extreme weather, such as proactively inspecting hillsides/slopes in locations which are more prone to extreme weather and taking corresponding measures as early as possible; and

(3) whether it will explore the factors contributing to the vulnerability of Siu Sai Wan to severe flooding under extreme weather, and take such factors into consideration when formulating policies and measures to cope with sea level rise and storm surges?

Reply:

President,

My respective replies to the various parts of the Hon Ng's question are as follows:

(1) In response to the impact of extreme weather on Hong Kong last year, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has summed up the experience, formulated and implemented a number of enhanced measures in four aspects, including advance emergency preparedness, enhanced early warning, decisive emergency response and speedy recovery, with a view to continuously strengthening the overall ability to respond to extreme weather, protecting people's safety as the first priority, as well as minimising the damage and impact of extreme weather so as to allow people's lives to return to normal as soon as possible. The Chief Secretary for Administration earlier (May 16) led the relevant policy bureaux and departments to hold a press conference to explain the relevant arrangements.

(2) In relation to landslides, the Government has been implementing an effective slope safety system to improve slope safety in Hong Kong and has kept enhancing the capability in coping with landslide risk. For government man-made slopes, government departments responsible for their maintenance (for example, roadside slopes are generally maintained by the Highways Department) should conduct routine inspection and maintenance annually, and to engage geotechnical engineers to conduct inspection every five years according to the Guide to Slope Maintenance published by the Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO) under the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) to ensure proper maintenance of slopes and reduce the chance of landslides. Private owners should also follow the same requirements to carry out inspection and maintenance for man-made slopes for which they are responsible. Before every wet season, the GEO will remind private owners

to complete all regular slope inspections and the necessary slope maintenance before the onset of wet season through letters, social media posts, television promotional videos, radio broadcasts, media briefings, etc.

In addition to routine inspection and maintenance, the GEO has been further systematically strengthening the slopes against inclement weather according to a risk-based approach. For government man-made slopes, all slopes with relatively high potential impacts (e.g. locating near residential buildings, hospitals and schools) and moderate potential impacts (e.g. locating near major infrastructures, heavily used roads and footpaths) have been upgraded in the early years. At present, the GEO continues the Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme to mainly deal with remaining government man-made slopes with moderate potential impacts. In addition, the GEO carries out safety screening studies for private slopes. Based on the slope condition, the GEO will recommend relevant owners to carry out proper maintenance works or, when private man-made slopes are found to have major signs of distress or be liable to become dangerous, recommend the Buildings Department to issue Dangerous Hillside Orders to the relevant owners.

For natural hillside catchments, the GEO has identified those relatively close to existing buildings and important transport corridors, and carries out systematic investigation and studies and implements risk mitigation measures for them in an orderly manner, based on their potential impacts to the surroundings. In response to the extreme weather brought by climate change, the GEO has further identified approximately 500 government man-made slopes adjacent to sole accesses to community or important livelihood facilities, and has required relevant slope maintenance departments to complete special inspections for these slopes, on top of the regular inspection and maintenance, before the wet season so as to minimise the potential impact on people's lives due to incidents on these slopes. The special inspection before the wet season this year has been substantially completed.

Furthermore, the Government will adopt a more pre-emptive and strategic approach to continuously enhance the prevailing slope engineering design standard and preventive measures and to support relevant work on slope safety risk management through the application of innovation and new technologies (e.g. remote sensing technology and smart barriers). The Government will also explore ways to use big data, artificial intelligence and other technologies to improve our landslide risk assessment capabilities.

(3) The Government has been monitoring the situation in various districts under extreme weather conditions. Past serious flooding incidents in Siu Sai Wan mostly occurred during passage of tropical cyclones and were mainly caused by the rise in sea level by storm surge and waves approaching shores surpassing the coping level of seawall, resulting in seawater inundation at coastal areas.

The CEDD has updated the design parameters, such as storm surge increase and sea level rise, in the Port Works Design Manual taking into account the data from super typhoons, the Sixth Assessment Report by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and the relevant research

findings. Moreover, the Drainage Services Department has made reference to the Sixth Assessment Report and updated the Stormwater Drainage Manual to provide the latest data and guidelines, including updating the design requirements for the rainfall increase and sea level rise associated with climate change, for designing and planning of stormwater drainage infrastructure.

In response to sea level rise and storm surges caused by climate change, in respect of short and medium-term measures, the CEDD completed a coastal hazards study in end-2021, which identified coastal low-lying or windy residential areas with higher risks for formulation of improvement works and management measures to safeguard public safety. The improvement works have been progressively taken forward and are anticipated to be completed in an orderly manner by 2027. In the long term, the CEDD has also commenced a study on Shoreline Management Plan with an aim to providing guidelines on planning and implementing urban coastal development and protection measures, and formulating the related long-term strategies and preventive measures in order to enhance the Government's and relevant stakeholders' capacities to combat climate change. It is expected that the study will be completed in the fourth quarter this year.

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## **SED visits Chicago (with photos)**

The Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, visited Chicago, the United States (US), on May 27 and 28 (Chicago time). She had a tour of local universities and conducted in-depth exchanges with education experts on developing Hong Kong into an international hub for post-secondary education. The Secretary-General of the University Grants Committee (UGC), Professor James Tang, joined the tour.

On May 27 (Chicago time), Dr Choi visited Northwestern University and met Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Civil and Environmental Engineering of the University, Professor Liu Wing-kam, who is also a member of the Research Grants Council of the UGC. They exchanged views on efforts in promoting academic research in Hong Kong, as well as the latest developments in building Hong Kong into an international education hub.

On the same day, Dr Choi paid a courtesy call to the Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Chicago, Mr Zhao Jian, to brief him on the latest education developments in Hong Kong and the collaboration between higher-education institutions in Hong Kong and the US as well as the future opportunities.

On May 28 (Chicago time), Dr Choi visited the University of Chicago to meet its leaders and explore ways to better utilise its Hong Kong campus to advance the strengths of Hong Kong as an international hub for post-secondary

education.

She pointed out that the University of Chicago Hong Kong campus has yielded success since its establishment a few years ago. It is a testament to Hong Kong's sound education infrastructure and highly internationalised post-secondary education sector. She looked forward to counting on the University's continuous staunch support for Hong Kong developing into an international post-secondary education hub, bringing more of its leading programmes to Hong Kong and strengthening academic exchanges between Hong Kong and the US to nurture future talent.

Dr Choi will attend the NAFSA 2024 Annual Conference & Expo in New Orleans on May 29 (New Orleans time).



# LCQ14: Three-Runway System at Hong Kong International Airport

Following is a question by the Hon Lee Chun-keung and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Liu Chun-san, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

The construction of the Three-Runway System (3RS) at the Hong Kong International Airport is currently underway. According to the paper submitted by the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) to the Panel on Economic Development of this Council this month, 3RS will be officially commissioned by the end of this year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that the AAHK's total executed external financing for the 3RS project is about \$124 billion according to the aforesaid paper, whether it knows the AAHK's loan repayment schedule for the external financing after the commissioning of 3RS;
- (2) whether it has estimated (i) the number of additional manpower required and (ii) the manpower shortfall in the aviation industry after the commissioning of 3RS, with a breakdown by job type; as it has been reported that the aviation industry currently faces manpower shortage, whether it knows the plans of the AAHK to fill the manpower gap;
- (3) in the light of the enhanced passenger and cargo handling capacities after the commissioning of 3RS, of the Government's plans to collaborate with other airports in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) to develop "a world-class airport cluster in GBA"; and
- (4) given that the Financial Secretary has indicated in the latest Budget that the Government will, leveraging the opportunities brought by 3RS, focus on current major routes and routes along the Belt and Road with potential, strengthen aviation services between Hong Kong and related countries and expand our aviation network, how the Government will encourage airlines to develop new flight routes, including routes between Hong Kong and Belt and Road countries as well as routes with countries or regions which do not run direct flight services to Hong Kong at present?

Reply:

President,

â€‹Hong Kong is an international aviation hub. This positioning is recognised in the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. To cater for the long-term air traffic demand and to enhance the passenger and cargo capacity,

the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) is developing the Three-Runway System (3RS) at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA). The third runway was commissioned in 2022 as scheduled and the target is to commission the 3RS by the end of this year. The AAHK will open relevant passenger facilities by phases in light of the passenger traffic demand. The expanded HKIA will be able to handle 120 million passengers and 10 million tonnes of cargo per year from 2035 onwards.

In this connection, the Government and the AAHK have launched a series of measures to implement national strategies and to enhance the long-term competitiveness of Hong Kong's aviation industry. My reply to the four parts of the question is as follows:

(1) The AAHK funds the 3RS project mainly by external financing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the AAHK executed a series of financing activities in the market to ensure the AAHK has sufficient working capital and funding for the 3RS project and other capital expenditures. As of March 2024, the AAHK's total external financing was about \$124 billion. The financing for the 3RS project has been substantially completed, and the external financing level is expected to be stabilised. The AAHK is currently exploring ways to enhance its financial position through reviewing its assets, external borrowings and asset-liability mix. Taking into consideration a basket of relevant factors, including the passenger traffic recovery situation of HKIA, the overall financial performance and the free cash flow, the AAHK will pro-actively review its debt repayment schedule and other future financing needs to support the overall operations and future development needs of the AAHK.

(2) In terms of manpower, the Government established the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund in 2014 and supported the AAHK to set up the Hong Kong International Aviation Academy in 2016 to promote the professional development of the aviation industry and attract more young people to join the industry. At the same time, in collaboration with the airport community, the AAHK has been actively enhancing the working environment and welfare of practitioners, as well as applying technology and smart techniques in airport services to reduce the pressure on manpower. To support the continual recovery of air traffic after the pandemic, in addition to active local recruitment by the industry, the Government launched a labour importation scheme specific to the aviation industry in July last year to allow aviation-related companies with direct contractual relationship with the AAHK to suitably import workers on the prerequisite of safeguarding the employment priority for local workers.

After the commissioning of the 3RS, the flight movements of HKIA as well as the manpower demand are expected to gradually increase. The AAHK will conduct a fresh round of airport manpower survey this year to review the manpower situation of the airport community.

(3) We have been actively developing the intermodal transport networks through various means, including co-operation with airports in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), so as to enhance the convenience for the transport of passengers and goods in the GBA to and from all parts of the world via Hong Kong. Among these, the AAHK and the Zhuhai Municipal

Government signed a memorandum of understanding in November 2022 to deepen the co-operation between HKIA and Zhuhai Airport, including commissioning "Fly-Via-Zhuhai-HK" direct passenger service, exploring the development of international air cargo business of Hong Kong and Zhuhai, developing a high-end aviation industrial cluster in Zhuhai and proactively discussing the acquisition of the equity of Zhuhai Airport by the AAHK. In this regard, the "Fly-Via-Zhuhai-HK" direct passenger service was launched in December last year. We look forward to the early implementation of the other relevant co-operation in order to achieve greater synergy between the two airports.

(4) Leveraging the opportunities brought by the 3RS and our country's support of the "Air Silk Road", the Government will focus on the current major routes and routes along the Belt and Road with potential, including destinations in Europe, Africa, South America and Asia, negotiate and enhance air services agreements and strengthen aviation services between Hong Kong and these regions. While local airlines are actively resuming their services, they are also launching new routes. The Transport and Logistics Bureau encourages them to enhance their services in response to market demand and in line with our country's development strategies. The AAHK will continue to support and encourage airlines to launch and increase flights to and from Hong Kong through various measures, as well as work with relevant parties to step up publicity efforts so as to boost the demand for travel to Hong Kong for leisure and business purposes.