

Territory-wide anti-drug programme launched to combat drugs (with photos)

The Chairman of the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN), Dr Ben Cheung, today (June 22) officiated at the opening ceremony of the large-scale anti-drug event Fight Drugs Together 2019, launching this year's territory-wide anti-drug programme.

In support of the United Nations International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26, the Narcotics Division (ND) and the ACAN in co-ordination with Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) jointly held the event at MacPherson Stadium in Mong Kok today to promote concerted community efforts against drugs.

More than 1 000 guests and young people attended the event, including students, members and partners of Junior Police Call, uniformed groups, non-governmental organisations from the anti-drug sector, district bodies, Senior Police Call, social services groups and the education sector. They all pledged to stand firm against drugs and convey anti-drug messages to their friends.

Speaking at the event, Dr Cheung said that according to the Central Registry of Drug Abuse's figures, the total number of reported drug abusers recorded a continuous decrease of over 50 per cent, from the peak of around 14 200 in 2008 to about 6 600 in 2018, and the number of reported young drug abusers aged under 21 registered a more notable decline of over 80 per cent, from around 3 500 to about 470. However, the number of reported cannabis abusers showed an increasing trend in the past two years, especially among youths. He reminded young people to refrain from following the influence of peers and incorrect information, and not to try cannabis in the mistaken belief that it could be harmless. He pointed out that cannabis is an addictive drug and can cause irreversible damage to abusers' cognitive functions and health.

To encourage young people to participate in healthy activities, various student and youth groups performed in the event to showcase their spirit and talents. Their performances included marching, combinations of kung fu and other types of martial arts, freestyle basketball and a street workout. Artiste Kara Wai; badminton player Angus Ng; singers Mag Lam, Kenny Chan and Alfred Hui; singing group Sugar Club; and basketball freestyler Eddie Lui also attended the event to call on young people to develop positive lifestyles and hobbies, and stay away from drugs.

Before the event ended, Dr Cheung and other guests led all participants to chant an anti-drug slogan to show their determination to fight drugs.

Today's event marked the official launch of a new round of the territory-wide anti-drug programme. A series of anti-drug activities arranged in collaboration with RTHK, other media organisations and anti-drug bodies

will commence in the summer holidays. Anti-drug advertisements will be placed on public transportation networks, in entertainment venues and on popular websites, mobile applications and social media platforms. In addition, the ND will collaborate with popular YouTubers again to introduce a short video on social media platforms, in a bid to disseminate information about the harms of cannabis abuse through a story that can appeal to young people.

Other officiating guests at today's event included the Chairman of the ACAN Sub-committee on Preventive Education and Publicity, Mr Chan Wing-kin; the Chairman of the ACAN Sub-committee on Treatment and Rehabilitation, Professor Cheung Yuet-wah; the Director of Broadcasting, Mr Leung Ka-wing; and the Commissioner for Narcotics, Ms Manda Chan.



