

Youth Development Commission convenes 15th meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, chaired the 15th meeting of the Youth Development Commission (YDC) today (February 1).

At the meeting, members were briefed by government representatives on the implementation of the Youth Development Blueprint since its release in December 2022. Members were pleased to note that the feedback received from various sectors of the community on the Blueprint is positive and the community agrees with the Blueprint's vision and general direction. Policy bureaux and departments have also been taking forward youth development work at full steam along the guiding principles set forth in the Blueprint and implementing more than 160 concrete actions and measures as stated therein. Over the past year, close to 60 new youth-related measures have been put forward to consistently respond to the evolving needs of young people.

Mr Chan said, "The Blueprint demonstrates the Government's commitment to continuously promoting long-term youth development work. Policy bureaux and departments work closely together, progress with the times and break new ground while upholding fundamental principles. Apart from actively taking forward the various concrete actions and measures as set out in the Blueprint, policy bureaux and departments have also introduced various new measures in the light of the latest situation of the society and the youth. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the YDC for their full collaboration with the Government in fully implementing and promoting the Blueprint."

At the meeting, members also noted the progress of the various youth development initiatives under the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) and the YDC. The major initiatives are as follows:

(1) In 2023-24, the HYAB and the YDC implemented various Mainland and overseas internship and exchange programmes which provide over 4 800 internship places and over 36 000 exchange places to young people. These programmes cover various Mainland provinces and cities, as well as 42 overseas countries, including countries in the Belt and Road region, providing young people with diversified internship and exchange opportunities;

(2) The Government's inaugural Youth Festival was held in 2023 with the slogan "Ignite Youth Power". Around 200 activities, which included knowledge exchange, arts and culture as well as sports activities, were featured to strengthen cohesion among and unleash the potential of the youth, and promote positive thinking among young people;

(3) The HYAB launched the Youth Link in September 2023 to link up participants of various government youth programmes. It provides young people with opportunities to develop diverse talents through participating in

seminars, different types of large-scale government activities, and exchange visits to the Mainland and overseas, and strengthen their communication, interaction and trust with the Government. More than 5 000 youths have joined the Youth Link;

(4) The HYAB has established the Alliance of Hong Kong Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Greater Bay Area in December 2023. The Alliance will leverage the resources and network of representative organisations from various sectors in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) to provide a one-stop information, publicity and exchange platform and offer comprehensive support to Hong Kong youth entrepreneurs, with a view to facilitating their expansion of network in the GBA and enhancing their competitiveness;

(5) The HYAB will continue to take forward each of the projects under the Youth Hostel Scheme. The second youth hostel project, whose construction cost was fully funded by the Government, has come into operation since May 2023, providing 1 680 hostel places. Moreover, the HYAB launched the Subsidy Scheme for Using Hotels and Guesthouses as Youth Hostels in early 2023, under which three projects with the provision of 478 hostel places in total have been approved; and

(6) The HYAB and the YDC launched the Funding Scheme for Youth Positive Thinking Activities and the Funding Scheme for Youth Adventure Training Activities in late 2022. The first round of the two funding schemes subsidises 11 non-government organisations in total to organise projects promoting young people's positive thinking. The sponsored organisations have gradually rolled out their activities, which will last for two years, with the total number of beneficiaries estimated to be more than 16 000.

Mr Chan said, "Young people are the future, hope and pillars of Hong Kong. They are also the engine that drives the long-term development of society and the economy. In the coming year, I hope that the YDC will continue to work hand in hand with the Government in drawing the community together to support youth development and provide our younger generation with an enabling environment to build their future."