

**The Chief Executive's Question and Answer Session
at the Legislative Council
The Chief Executive's Written Statement**

(9 May 2019)

Mr President, Honourable Members,

On 10 October last year, I announced the second Policy Address and Policy Agenda in my term of office, setting out a total of more than 240 new policy initiatives. Over the past six months or so, I have been working industriously with the Secretaries of Departments, Directors of Bureaux and civil service colleagues to take forward the various policy initiatives. As with last year, I would like to make use of this Chief Executive's Question and Answer Session to provide a more comprehensive half-yearly progress report to the Legislative Council (LegCo).

2. In overall terms, about 12% (29) of the new initiatives announced in the 2018 Policy Address have been completed; about 85% are progressing on schedule and only three items are slightly behind schedule as the relevant policy bureaux need more time to consult the public or stakeholders. I will highlight some of the major achievements below.

Good Governance

3. I have continued in this legislative session the practice I put in place since I took up office - in addition to the four Chief Executive's Question and Answer sessions each year, I also attend the monthly 30-minute Question Time to answer Members' questions. This serves to demonstrate the interaction and close communication between the Chief Executive and LegCo, and gives me the opportunity to listen to and follow up directly on the requests raised by Members. These include, for example, extending the measures to enhance the welfare benefits of non-skilled outsourced workers which took effect on 1 April this year to contracts awarded on or after 10 October 2018, thereby benefitting an additional 14 000 outsourced workers.

4. In the current legislative session, the funding applications for new public works projects to be submitted to the LegCo amounted to

approximately \$170 billion. Leaving aside block allocations, about \$41.6 billion worth of new public works projects had been approved by the Finance Committee (FC) of the LegCo as at today. Infrastructure developments are important long-term investments for the community. Slow progress in approving funding for public works projects not only affects the livelihood of construction workers, but also results in a lagged effect that slackens our efforts in developing the economy and improving people's livelihood. I hope that Members will, in the long-term interest of Hong Kong and for the benefit of the public, deal with other works projects submitted by the Government as soon as possible in the remaining legislative session. I have also instructed colleagues of all bureaux to do their best in explaining the relevant policies.

5. To better understand the needs of citizens and the community, Secretaries of Departments and Directors of Bureaux have conducted about 260 district visits from the beginning of the current term to end April this year. On enhancing the openness and transparency of the Government, since the commencement of the current term to end April 2019, I and the Secretaries of Departments and Directors of Bureaux have attended more than 1 200 press conferences and various occasions to explain our policies and respond to questions from the media. Besides, the Law Reform Commission (LRC) is collating the views collected during the public consultation on the Archives Law. The Government will actively follow up on this after receiving the report from the LRC.

Housing and Land Supply

6. The shortage of land and housing supply is the greatest challenge faced by Hong Kong. In February this year, the Government fully accepted the report submitted by the Task Force on Land Supply at the end of 2018. We will implement the various recommendations of the Task Force as soon as possible.

7. I have proposed in the 2018 Policy Address a series of short, medium and long-term measures to increase land supply. For medium and long-term measures, we consulted the LegCo Panel on Development on the studies related to artificial islands in the central waters in March this year and secured its support to seek funding approval from the FC with a view to commencing the studies before the end of this year. We are also planning to consult the relevant Panel on the studies on reclamation at Lung Kwu Tan, Sunny Bay Reclamation and Road P1 (Tai Ho – Sunny

Bay Section) towards the end of this year. Subject to funding approval, the studies relating to these near-shore reclamation projects are expected to commence in the second quarter of next year.

8. In addition to large-scale land creation, the current term Government has introduced a number of measures to optimise the use of existing land resources. The Government has re-activated the Revitalisation Scheme for Industrial Buildings last October. The Task Force on Transitional Housing under the Transport and Housing Bureau will facilitate owner-initiated transitional housing projects in wholesale-converted industrial buildings. Moreover, the 2019-20 Budget has set aside \$2 billion to support non-government organisations (NGOs) in constructing transitional housing. We hope to seek funding approval from the LegCo within this year. Furthermore, the Development Bureau (DEVB) launched a funding scheme in February this year for application by NGOs to pursue basic restoration works on vacant government sites to take forward worthy projects for the community. We acknowledge the expectation of the community to develop brownfield sites. The report of the Study on Existing Profile and Operations of Brownfield Sites will be announced this month. After assessing the findings of the study, we will prioritise those sites with housing potential for follow-up by the relevant departments. As for the feasibility study on accommodating brownfield operations in multi-storey buildings, the findings and proposed policy measures are expected to be announced within this year. We have just obtained the LegCo FC's funding approval last Friday for land resumption and clearance, as well as detailed design work for the two New Development Areas (NDAs) in Kwu Tung North and Fanling North, and will seek FC's funding approval in the latter half of this year for the first batch of works and detailed design of the Stage 2 Works of the Hung Shui Kiu NDA.

9. Apart from devoting efforts to land development, the Government is taking multi-pronged measures to boost housing supply. We announced last December that the total housing supply target for the ten-year period from 2019-20 to 2028-29 would be 450 000 units. As the Government has revised the public/private split of new housing supply from 60:40 to 70:30 at the end of last year, the supply targets for public and private housing will be 315 000 units and 135 000 units respectively. The six new housing measures announced by me last June have been rolled out or are being implemented.

10. Firstly, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has adjusted the selling prices of 2018 Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats last July based on the new pricing mechanism, and re-launched the application for these around 4 400 units with oversubscription by 60 times. Besides, a total of about 2 500 Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme (GSH) flats were launched by HA last December with a further 10% discount on top of the discount rate for the preceding HOS sale exercise. The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) launched the pre-sale exercise of 450 Starter Homes pilot project units at Ma Tau Wai Road last December at 62% of the market value and was oversubscribed by 45 times. In March this year, the HA endorsed the increase in the annual quota of the White Form Secondary Market Scheme 2019 to 3 000; while the subsidised sale flats planned for sale this year include about 4 900 HOS flats which will be ready for intake in 2019 and 2020, as well as two GSH projects on Hong Kong Island and in Tsing Yi respectively to provide a total of about 3 700 flats. The Government has re-allocated nine private housing sites to the HA and the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) for public housing development. The relevant construction works are expected to be completed between 2024 and 2026, providing a total of about 11 000 units. We expect to provide a total of 248 000 public housing units in the next 10 years (i.e. 2019-20 to 2028-29). The Government will continue to explore ways to achieve the housing supply target.

Diversified Economy

11. The Central Government promulgated in February this year the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, which sets out the directions guiding the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), and announced after the second plenary meeting of the Leading Group for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Leading Group) held on 1 March eight measures facilitating the flow of people and goods, as well as facilitating Hong Kong residents to live in the GBA. The GBA development will bring new areas of growth for the Hong Kong economy, and is closely related to all sectors and industries. The Mainland and Hong Kong will implement the next phase of liberalisation on trade in services under the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, including opening up sectors such as finance, education, tourism and culture in the GBA to achieve full liberalisation of trade in services. With effect from this January, the number of clearance points under the Single E-lock Scheme in Guangdong Province has increased

to 51, and will extend to the nine municipalities within the GBA. Through the Leading Group, I will continue to propose policies and measures to facilitate co-operation among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau in order to further enhance the development potential of the GBA and Hong Kong. Since its establishment in October last year, the Steering Committee for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, chaired by me and comprises all Secretaries of Departments and Directors of Bureaux have already met to co-ordinate the Hong Kong Special Administration Region's (HKSAR) participation in the GBA development work.

12. In the 2017 Policy Address, I proposed an eight-pronged strategy to develop innovation and technology. In less than two years' time, we have implemented a number of policy initiatives and achieved good results. The arrangement which provides enhanced tax deduction for research and development (R&D) expenditures incurred by local enterprises has taken effect this financial year. We have also obtained LegCo's funding approval for establishing two research clusters in the Hong Kong Science Park, and have so far received 47 proposals from internationally leading universities and R&D institutes for admission to the research clusters on healthcare technologies and Artificial Intelligence/robotics technologies. We expect that the first batch of research centres/laboratories will be established in the fourth quarter of this year. Other initiatives that I proposed in the two Policy Addresses to promote industrial R&D and enhance the commercialisation of R&D results are being implemented, including doubling the funding ceiling for the State Key Laboratories, Hong Kong Branches of Chinese National Engineering Research Centres, the technology transfer offices of universities, as well as the Technology Start-up Support Scheme for Universities. The Government is formulating the operational details of the \$2 billion Re-industrialisation Funding Scheme. Subject to funding approval, the scheme will be launched in the latter half of this year.

13. On the opening up of government data, all bureaux/departments published their open data plans last December. Some 700 new datasets are expected to be opened up for free use by the public this year. Since the launch of the Pilot Big Data Analytics Platform last December, the Hospital Authority has already received six research applications. Besides, two franchised bus companies have agreed to open up their real-time arrival information and the data is expected to be available on the "DATA.GOV.HK" Portal in the third quarter of this year. Another

important information technology infrastructure, eID, will be launched in mid-2020 as scheduled. A pro-innovation government procurement policy was also introduced on 1 April this year.

14. As an important national development strategy, the Belt and Road (B&R) Initiative has far-reaching implications for Hong Kong's future development. The Belt and Road Task Group, jointly established by Hong Kong and its Mainland counterparts, held a high-level meeting last December and both sides agreed to strengthen co-operation in five aspects. Last month, I led a Hong Kong delegation comprising close to 70 members from various sectors to attend the second Belt and Road Forum for International Co-operation organised by our country. Our delegates were moderators or speakers at a number of forums and the CEO Conference. They also joined the business-matching activities and attended the high-level meeting. Relevant bureaux and departments will continue to assist Hong Kong companies and professional services sector to seize the opportunities arising from the B&R Initiative. For example, the Insurance Authority launched the Belt and Road Insurance Exchange Facilitation (BRIEF) platform in late 2018. So far, 29 companies, including insurers, reinsurers and insurance brokers from the Mainland, Hong Kong and overseas, have joined BRIEF as members. In January, the Department of Justice established the Inclusive Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Office, which is responsible for pursuing and concluding co-operation arrangements in relation to international arbitration and mediation matters with other jurisdictions and international organisations.

15. On enhancing external trade and economic relations, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (ETO) in Bangkok, our third ETO in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, commenced operation in February this year. Hong Kong and Australia signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the Investment Agreement in March to enhance mutual economic and trade relationship. The FTA and the related Investment Agreement signed between Hong Kong and ASEAN earlier will take effect progressively in the middle of this year.

16. Significant progress has been made on the application of financial technologies (Fintech) in the past year. In less than eight months since its launch by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Faster Payment System (FPS) has recorded a total of 2.7 million registrations. As of 30 April 2019, the FPS has processed over 13.3 million Hong Kong Dollar transactions involving an aggregate amount of HK\$272 billion. The

Government is also planning to allow the public to use FPS to pay various government fees including taxes, rates, water charges, etc. On the other hand, we are also keeping in view the potential risks associated with the development of Fintech and financial safety. The Securities and Futures Commission announced a new regulatory approach for virtual assets last November with a view to encouraging market innovation while protecting investors. Moreover, the Government is preparing for the implementation of the new regulatory regime under the Financial Reporting Council (Amendment) Ordinance 2018. To regulate the insurance industry more effectively, we plan to commence the new licensing regime for insurance intermediaries to replace the existing self-regulatory regime this September.

17. On the development of the bond market, the People's Bank of China issued bills totalling RMB40 billion in Hong Kong last November and this February. Last year, green bonds arranged and issued in Hong Kong reached US\$11 billion, more than triple of that in 2017. To further develop Hong Kong as a leading hub for green finance in the region, the Government is actively collaborating with multiple international organisations and industry associations to jointly organise large-scale seminars on green finance, such as the Green Finance Forum held just this Tuesday, the high-level regulatory meeting among the Mainland, Hong Kong and the European Union being held today, and the 6th Climate Business Forum to be co-organised with the International Finance Corporation in early 2020. The inaugural green bond under the Government Green Bond Programme will be issued after the roadshow shortly.

18. The Task Force on Ship Leasing of the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board was set up in late 2018 to devise details of the tax concessions for promoting ship leasing business in Hong Kong as proposed in the 2018 Policy Address. The relevant study is expected to be completed in the second half of this year. In addition, upon the passage of the Appropriation Bill 2019, we will be able to inject \$200 million into the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund. On promoting the creative industry, the construction works of the Sham Shui Po Design and Fashion Project has commenced earlier this year and are expected to be completed in 2023-24. The Travel Industry Bill was passed by LegCo last November, and the Government is now working at full steam to prepare for the setting up of the new regulatory regime underpinned by the Travel Industry Authority. On promoting the development of the film industry, the injection of \$1 billion into the Film Development Fund will take effect

upon the passage of the Appropriation Bill 2019. The relevant Central Authorities have announced five relaxation measures last month to further facilitate the entry of Hong Kong films and film practitioners into the Mainland market. DEVB is overseeing the pilot implementation of Construction 2.0 in various public projects. Besides, \$250 million of the Construction Innovation and Technology Fund has been earmarked to provide subsidies for the construction industry to adopt Modular Integrated Construction.

19. Talent is Hong Kong's most valuable resource. The Human Resources Planning Commission, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, is steering the setting up of a one-stop portal to integrate human resources planning and industry development information and is expected to be launched this year.

Improving People's Livelihood

20. On improving people's livelihood, various measures regarding poverty alleviation, elderly care and support for the disadvantaged announced in the two Policy Addresses are being launched. These include setting up 16 social work teams this February for early identification and provision of assistance to pre-school children and their families with welfare needs (the other 32 teams will be set up progressively); regularising the On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services with the number of service places increased to about 5 000 (the number will be further increased to 7 000 this October); setting up the Special Needs Trust Office, which started to receive applications this March, to provide affordable trust services for parents with needs; setting up six new parents/relatives resource centres this March (and to set up another seven centres in the first quarter of next year); and providing 1 500 additional places of Home Care Service for Persons with Severe Disabilities/Integrated Support Service for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities to serve persons with disabilities in the community. On elderly care, we will provide full subsidies in phases starting from March this year for home managers, health workers and care workers of all residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) in Hong Kong to enrol in Qualifications Framework-based training courses, which will benefit about 30 000 practitioners; and launched two four-year pilot schemes to provide professional outreach services for residents in private RCHEs and residents of private RCHDs respectively. The Government also launched the

\$1 billion Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care last December to subsidise eligible elderly and rehabilitation service units to try out and procure/rent technology products.

21. On labour rights, the Government has consulted the Labour Advisory Board and the LegCo Panel on Manpower on the proposal to extend the statutory maternity leave to 14 weeks, with the target of introducing the bill into the LegCo for scrutiny by the end of this year and implementing the proposal in 2021. The Government has extended the maternity leave for all of its employees to 14 weeks since the announcement of the initiative in the 2018 Policy Address, while the legislation on increasing the statutory paternity leave from three days to five days came into effect on 18 January this year. The preparatory work for the abolition of the “offsetting” arrangement under the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme, another major labour policy of the current-term Government, has commenced. Our target is to introduce the bill into the LegCo next year.

22. To meet the increasing healthcare demand and relieve the immense pressure on public healthcare and frontline healthcare workers, the Government has introduced corresponding measures including an annual allocation of about \$200 million to enhance the healthcare professional training provided by the Hospital Authority (HA) and an additional recurrent subvention of \$400 million for the HA to expand the scope of the Drug Formulary. On increasing the manpower of doctors, the HA will employ all qualified local medical graduates and provide them with relevant specialist training. Over 2 000 medical graduates will register as medical practitioners in the next five years. On hospital facilities, the HA will introduce medical services in Tin Shui Wai Hospital, North Lantau Hospital and Hong Kong Children’s Hospital in phases. Nine hospital projects under the first 10-year Hospital Development Plan (HDP) have commenced. The Government plans to seek funding approval from the FC for four other hospital projects in the second quarter of 2019. Meanwhile, the HA has commenced planning for the second 10-year HDP at an estimated budget of about \$270 billion. The Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme was fully implemented on 1 April. Furthermore, the Chinese Medicine Development Fund will soon be launched and we hope to be able to kick off the tendering exercise for selection of the operator of the Chinese Medicine Hospital in the second half of 2019.

23. In addition to in-patient services, the Government also strives to enhance primary healthcare services and disease prevention and control. The Kwai Tsing District Health Centre, the first of its kind, is expected to commence operation in the third quarter of this year. We will draw on this experience in setting up health centres in other districts as soon as possible. From next year onwards, the Department of Health will regularise the School Outreach Vaccination Pilot Programme, covering more primary schools and extending its coverage to kindergartens and child care centres on a pilot basis. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, female primary school students of suitable ages will be provided with human papillomavirus vaccine under the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme. Since February 2019, the Government has expanded the target beneficiaries of the Community Care Fund Elderly Dental Assistance Programme to cover all elderly persons who are aged 65 or above and receiving Old Age Living Allowance. The number of eligible elderly persons will increase by about 150 000. To guard against the harm of electronic cigarettes and other new smoking products, the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill 2019 was introduced into LegCo this February with a view to imposing a ban on the import, manufacture, sale, distribution and advertising of these alternative smoking products.

Nurturing Talent

24. Regarding the eight key areas of education which require further review as mentioned in my 2017 Policy Address, five of the eight Task Forces have completed their work. I announced in my Policy Address last year that the recommendations of the Task Force on Review of Research Policy and Funding have been accepted in full, including the injection of \$20 billion into the Research Endowment Fund. We will seek funding approval from the FC in due course. The Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education, the Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers and the Task Force on Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education submitted their reports to the Government in December 2018, March and April 2019 respectively. The work of the remaining three Task Forces is in good progress. The Task Force on School-based Management Policy consulted the education sector and stakeholders on its preliminary recommendations last year and is expected to submit a review report in the third quarter of this year. The Task Force on Review of School Curriculum and the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training plan to commence

public consultation later this year. Some of the recommendations of these Task Forces will be implemented from the 2019/20 school year, such as the “One Executive Officer for Each School” policy, the all-graduate teaching force policy, provision of additional resources to Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations in various districts and Parent-Teacher Associations of schools and expansion of the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors to cover locally accredited self-financing sub-degree programmes in selected disciplines. Moreover, the EDB has submitted to the LegCo the recommendations on improving manpower at the middle management level and rationalising salaries for principals and vice-principals in public sector primary schools. These initiatives are planned for implementation from the 2019/20 school year.

25. The EDB is actively following up on a series of new measures supporting the research work of the higher education sector. Subject to the FC’s approval of the funding of \$3 billion for the Research Matching Grant Scheme, it is expected that the Scheme will be launched in July this year. Regarding the three fellowship schemes for outstanding academics, the University Grants Committee and the Research Grants Committee are consulting the institutions and relevant experts on the new schemes to formulate the details. The schemes are expected to be launched in the 2019/20 academic year.

Liveable City

26. The past year has seen the commissioning of a number of major cross-boundary and local transport infrastructure projects, including the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the Central-Wan Chai Bypass, bringing convenience to the travelling public. In the first three months of the implementation of the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme since 1 January this year, the average monthly subsidy amounted to around \$163 million, benefitting a monthly average of around 2.2 million people. On public transport services, the Government has just introduced the Franchised Taxi Services Bill into LegCo with the aim of enhancing the quality of taxi service and providing better personalised point-to-point transport service. The legislative amendments for exempting the tolls for franchised buses using the seven government tunnels and two government roads took effect on 17 February 2019. The toll saved will be deposited in dedicated fund accounts for relieving the fare increase pressure of franchised bus operators. The Transport

Department will consult relevant stakeholders on the detailed proposal for the Electronic Road Pricing Pilot Scheme in Central in the second quarter of this year. The Government continues to promote “Walk in HK” to foster a pedestrian-friendly environment.

27. We are pressing ahead with a number of schemes to enhance building safety, including the Operation Building Bright 2.0 and the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme. Moreover, the first round of application for the Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme, launched by the Government in partnership with the URA, commenced in late March this year. The Budget this year has allocated an additional \$6 billion dedicated funding for the Harbourfront Commission and the relevant departments to take forward nine harbourfront enhancement projects, as a result of which the easily accessible harbourfront to be enjoyed by the public will increase from 21 kilometers to 34 kilometers.

28. In respect of building and improving public markets, we have secured the support of the relevant District Councils on the locations of the new public markets in Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung town centre. The relevant departments are now pressing ahead with the works and technical studies. The \$2 billion Market Modernisation Programme has commenced with the overhaul of the Aberdeen Market as the pioneering project, to be followed by the overhaul of three other public markets in Kowloon and the New Territories.

29. To improve air quality, the legislation requiring vessels to use low sulphur fuel with sulphur content not exceeding 0.5% within the waters of Hong Kong came into effect in January this year. An inter-departmental working group has been formed to take forward the pilot scheme on green ferry and the implementation details are being worked out. The Environmental Protection Department is working on the legislative amendments to tighten the emission standards of newly registered motor cycles, and will conduct a three-month public consultation in mid-2019 to collect public views on the proposed tightening of the Air Quality Objectives. On waste reduction, upon the passage of the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018 by the LegCo, municipal solid waste charging will be implemented by the end of 2020 at the earliest. We are also reviewing the effectiveness of the plastic shopping bag charging scheme.

30. The development of arts, sports and recreation is of paramount importance to the mental and physical health of the public. The construction works of the Kai Tak Sports Park commenced last month and are scheduled for completion in 2023. Also, the injection of \$6 billion into the Elite Athletes Development Fund was approved by the FC this January. The recurrent funding for the nine major performing arts groups and the funding for the Hong Kong Arts Development Council in 2019-20 will be increased by 21% and 39% respectively as compared to that in 2017-18. The recurrent provision to support Hong Kong's arts groups/artists to perform and stage exhibitions outside Hong Kong will be increased to \$50 million progressively. On cultural infrastructure, the Xiqu Centre in the West Kowloon Cultural District was formally commissioned this January; Phase 1 and most of Phase 2 of the Art Park are already open for public use, while Phase 3 will be completed this year. The expansion and renovation of the Hong Kong Museum of Art is near completion and re-opening is scheduled for late November this year. Furthermore, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department has rolled out the \$300 million dedicated funding scheme in March this year to engage the community in the safeguarding, research, education, promotion and transmission of local intangible cultural heritage.

Connecting with Young People

31. Youth development covers a wide spectrum of policy areas. Chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration and established in April last year, the Youth Development Commission (YDC) has organised 15 youth engagement sessions and is preparing to hold the first Chief Executive's Youth Summit in August this year. The YDC launched the brand new Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes at Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in March this year. So far, seven start-up teams have been selected and they will set up businesses in the innovation and entrepreneurial bases in Shenzhen. Since the launch of the Space Sharing Scheme for Youth in end 2017, seven projects have been in full operation, supporting over 1 300 young people of various industries.

32. To encourage the participation of young people in policy discussion and debate, the Pilot Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth has been regularised since 2018 and two rounds of recruitment are

held each year. The Scheme has been extended to cover 25 government committees and so far, including those for the pilot scheme, more than 4 000 applications were received. Progress has been made on promoting the participation of young people in public affairs as evidenced in the increase in the overall ratio of youth members serving on advisory and statutory bodies from 7.8% in 2017 to around 10% by the end of 2018.

Concluding Remarks

33. Mr President, Honourable Members, over the past two years, the current-term Government has leveraged on Hong Kong's unique strengths under "One Country, Two Systems" to grasp the new opportunities arising from the B&R Initiative and the development of the GBA, and strived to inject new impetus into Hong Kong's economy. Measures to improve people's livelihood, ranging from small-scale programmes such as improving public markets and public toilets to large-scale initiatives like increasing land and housing supply, are evidence of the proactive response of the current-term Government to meet the public's aspirations. While some of the goals cannot be achieved overnight or the measures may not be perfect, I hope the community will stand united and strive ahead with firm belief. I will continue to monitor the implementation progress and effectiveness of the measures proposed in my two Policy Addresses, and have already started preparing for the 2019 Policy Address. In the coming months, I will listen to the views of different sectors and strata of the community. My team and I will continue to strive to serve the people of Hong Kong.

34. Thank you, Mr President.