

**Motion on “Seizing the opportunities to improve governance”
Legislative Council Meeting of 5 May 2021**

Progress Report

Purpose

The motion “Seizing the opportunities to improve governance” moved by Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan was passed at the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) meeting of 5 May 2021 (full text of the motion at **Annex**). This paper is a consolidated progress report by relevant policy bureaux in respect of the issues raised in the motion.

Relationship between the Executive and the Legislature

2. The Government fully respects LegCo’s constitutional function and strives to foster the relationship between the Executive and the Legislature. We will continue to enhance cooperation and maintain close liaison with LegCo Members to facilitate LegCo’s scrutiny of the various legislative and funding proposals introduced by the Government.

3. The Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Bill 2021 (“the Bill”) was passed by LegCo on 27 May this year, and published in the Gazette and came into operation on 31 May. The Bill was made in accordance with the Decision of the National People's Congress on Improving the Electoral System of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“the Decision”) and the amended Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law with a view to fully implementing “patriots administering Hong Kong” and safeguarding the overall interests of society and the constitutional order as set out in the Constitution and the Basic Law.

4. As the number of LegCo Members will be increased from 70 to 90 in the next term in accordance with the Decision and the amended Annex II to the Basic Law, the Government will continue to work closely with the LegCo Secretariat and will fully support LegCo in the provision

of accommodation and staffing resources. Funding approval for the expansion of the LegCo Complex will be sought from the Finance Committee before the end of the current-term LegCo to enable works to proceed as soon as possible.

5. In addition, LegCo is reviewing the Rules of Procedure in order to introduce measures to impose financial penalty on Members under specified circumstances. In this regard, the Government is working closely with the LegCo Secretariat in the preparation of legislative amendments to the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap. 382) for the purpose of implementing the relevant measures. The Government will introduce the Bill into LegCo as soon as practicable with a view to completing the legislative amendment exercise within the current LegCo term.

Coordination among various Secretaries' Offices and training for the civil service

6. The current-term Government attaches great importance to communication and co-ordination across policy bureaux and departments, especially for cross-bureau issues. In fact, policy bureaux and departments will align and provide support to each other in policy formulation and implementation, and act in the overall interest of the Hong Kong community, the long-term development of the city as well as the welfare of Hong Kong. Politically appointed officials and the civil service will continue to work together as one so that the HKSAR Government is able to make better-informed decisions and implement policies more effectively.

7. The civil service is the backbone of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. "Dedication, professionalism and diligence" is a core value that civil servants are required to uphold. The civil service endeavours to serve the community and contributes to the effective governance as well as stability and prosperity of Hong Kong.

8. The Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") is committed to providing

suitable training, through the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (“CSTDI”), to civil servants in different departments in many areas, including leadership and innovation, design thinking, application of technology, work process improvement, supervisory management, customer service skills, etc. Such training seeks to enable civil servants to move ahead with times, enhance work efficiency and provide good quality service to the public. With the upcoming establishment of the Civil Service College and the eventual commissioning of the accommodation in Kwun Tong, the training facilities and training programmes will be enhanced to strengthen the capacity of the civil service in tackling different challenges and scaling higher in public service delivery.

9. Civil servants are subject to performance appraisal on an annual basis which enables the management to monitor and assess staff performance. An officer's work performance is also an important consideration for the departmental or grade management when selecting suitable officers for promotion and training. In addition, the Government has made use of various commendation schemes (such as the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme, the Secretary for the Civil Service's Commendation Award Scheme and the Commendation Letter Scheme, etc.) to recognise and motivate exemplary performance of civil servants, and encourage them to provide quality service to members of the public with dedication. With the community's rising expectations for public services, the civil service will continue to strive for excellence.

Enhancing the capabilities of the Government in explaining and publicising policies, answering queries and refuting rumours

10. The HKSAR Government has been proactively explaining government policies and measures to the public as well as clarifying misconceptions and misunderstandings through different channels and platforms. Policy bureaux and departments have increasingly made use of the Internet and social media in explaining and publicising government policies and disseminating correct information to the public directly, such as issuing blogs and producing a variety of video clips for broadcast on multiple platforms.

11. Policy bureaux and departments have been closely monitoring rumours and misinformation on major social media platforms. When there is false information relating to the government widely circulating which has caused misunderstanding or negative sentiments in the community, clarifications are made immediately through various channels to curb the spread of rumours and address public queries. The channels for making clarifications include issuing press releases, arranging relevant officials to explain to media, and disseminating widely the correct information on the Internet and social media through the following means: setting up a clarifications section on the website of news.gov.hk to facilitate public access to the clarifications; and making use of the “Tamar Talk” Facebook page and news.gov.hk Facebook page to provide correct information to set the record straight. The Information Services Department (“ISD”) also produces short video clips, such as the one-minute series on clarifications and major government messages, which are broadcast on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, as well as on TV32 of Radio Television Hong Kong. In addition, the ISD collaborates with different print and electronic media to disseminate accurate information to the public. It also produces Announcements in the Public Interest and a series of short videos, and makes use of other platforms to encourage the public not to believe in rumours. The Government will continue with the above work and will increase placement of online advertisements to disseminate information.

12. The ISD and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices will continue to make clarifications on erroneous reports in overseas media. These clarifications are uploaded on the thematic website “Hong Kong Update” to facilitate public access.

13. The HKSAR Government will continue to adhere to the principles of openness and transparency for better dissemination of information and publicity work.

Streamlining various administrative procedures and implementing service reforms

14. Through the “Be the Smart Regulator” (“BTSR”) and the “Streamlining of Government of Services” (“SGS”) programmes coordinated by the Efficiency Office of the Innovation and Technology Bureau, policy bureaux and departments will continue to carry out service reforms by adopting innovation and technology and streamlining business processes. Under the BTSR programme, relevant B/Ds have reviewed the status of their e-licensing services and are implementing concrete plans to enable e-licensing for all licensing applications by mid-2022.

15. Under the SGS programme, relevant B/Ds have proposed and started implementing streamlining measures for 2021-22 to provide more e-services, reduce documentation requirements, share application information among different policy bureaux and departments and schemes, and adopt people-centric design and end-to-end process re-engineering.

District administration

16. The Government will continue to handle District Council (“DC”) affairs in accordance with the District Councils Ordinance (“DCO”) and ensure that DC Members focus on livelihood issues in the district and carry out rational discussion. If a proposed committee/working group or item for discussion is found not compatible with the functions specified in the DCO, the Government will follow up accordingly, such as writing to the DC Chairman concerned about the problem and request the Chairman to follow-up and re-examine the committee’s terms of reference. If the DC concerned still keeps the terms of reference or items for discussion which are not compatible with the DCO, the DC secretariat cannot provide secretariat service for these matters, and secretariat staff or other government officers will neither attend the relevant parts of the meeting nor join the discussion of the relevant papers. The Government hopes to continue to co-operate with the DCs under the principles of mutual respect, observation of order and rational discussion.

17. As regards the Community Involvement Projects, the Home Affairs Department and District Offices will continue to remind the DCs

that they have to strictly comply with the Manual on the Use of District Council Funds (“the Manual”) and the Code of Conduct for Members of a District Council or Its Committees in their funding allocation and process funding applications in a fair, objective and reasonable manner, thereby enhancing community harmony. The Home Affairs Department and District Offices will seriously follow up on cases involving breaches of the Manual and reserve the right to seek a refund/withhold any further payment so as to ensure the effective and proper use of public money. In addition, the Government encourages Area Committees, District Fight Crime Committees and District Fire Safety Committees to submit more Community Involvement Programme applications to organise district activities. District Offices will also continue to provide executive support to the district committees concerned.

18. To further highlight that upholding the Basic Law and bearing allegiance to the HKSAR are the basic responsibilities of a DC Member, the Legislative Council passed the Public Offices (Candidacy and Taking Up Offices) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2021 on 12 May 2021 which introduced the oath-taking requirements for DC Members. The amended ordinance which came into effect on 21 May 2021 provides that DC Members must take oath to uphold the Basic Law and bear allegiance to the HKSAR, which is important and conducive to upholding the constitutional order of the HKSAR and ensuring “Hong Kong being administered by patriots”, and would contribute to the steadfast and successful implementation of the “one country, two systems” principle. DC Members who fail to take oath in accordance with law will be immediately disqualified from being a DC Member. Section 19A of the newly amended Oaths and Declarations Ordinance also provides that the District Council Oath must be administered by the Chief Executive (“CE”) or a person authorised by the CE.

19. The taking of the oath is legally binding. The oath taker must sincerely believe in and strictly abide by the relevant oath prescribed by law. An oath taker who makes a false oath, or, who, after taking the oath, engages in conduct in breach of the oath, shall bear legal responsibility in accordance with law. The Government will implement the relevant oath-taking requirements in accordance with the Ordinance.

20. Moreover, following the coming into effect of the Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Ordinance 2021, the Government will properly organise and conduct the upcoming elections, including the Election Committee Subsector Elections scheduled for September, in accordance with the relevant amended electoral legislations. Members of the Area Committees, District Fight Crime Committees and District Fire Safety Committees will then be able to run for a seat in the Fourth Sector of the Election Committee as representatives of district organisations. This would bring more voices from the districts to the Election Committee so that the Government could respond to district needs more effectively. This would also realise balanced political participation and better attend to the overall interests of the Hong Kong society.

Conclusion

21. The current-term Government and the civil service will continue to implement “One Country, Two Systems” comprehensively and accurately in accordance with the Basic Law, make good use of the opportunities presented by the National Security Law and the improved electoral system, enhance governance and promote continuous economic and social development of Hong Kong.

Chief Secretary for Administration’s Office
Civil Service Bureau
Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
Home Affairs Bureau
Innovation and Technology Bureau
July 2021

(Translation)

Council meeting of 5 May 2021

**Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan's motion on
"Seizing the opportunities to improve governance"**

Wording of the Motion

That Hong Kong's long-standing deep-rooted conflicts have remained unresolved, coupled with the blow of the riots and the epidemic, people's livelihood has been hit and the economy weakened, leaving Hong Kong's future full of challenges; while at the same time, the global setting is complicated and volatile, and is beset with crises; however, after the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has enacted for Hong Kong the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and promulgated the Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Qualification of the Members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the forces causing disorder in Hong Kong have been restrained and riots have also been reduced, thereby restoring the rule of law and social order and bringing the operation of the Legislative Council back to normal; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to seize the opportunities under Hong Kong's new political situation to seek changes proactively, implement administrative reforms and enhance the efficiency of governance, so as to lead Hong Kong in overcoming the epidemic and boosting economic recovery, and at the same time resolving various deep-rooted conflicts and improving people's livelihood; the relevant proposals include:

- (1) rebuilding the relationship between the Executive and the Legislature under the executive-led system, and requiring officials to pay high regard to the Legislature's monitoring function and its function in raising questions, and to attach great importance to the role of the Legislature as the representatives of the public and of the industries;
- (2) improving the division of work and functions among various Secretaries' Offices and Bureaux under the accountability system, and strengthening the capabilities of politically accountable officials in leading and supervising the civil service;

- (3) enhancing the capabilities of the Government in explaining and publicizing policies, answering queries and refuting rumours;
- (4) streamlining various administrative procedures and implementing service reforms, so as to meet the practical needs of social development and public expectations;
- (5) breaking the civil service's culture of procrastination and evasion of responsibilities; and
- (6) reforming district administration.