

LCQ9: Sustainable development of traditional and emerging industries

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Following is a question by the Hon Chung Kwok-pan and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, in the Legislative Council today (November 25):

Question:

Some owners of enterprises have pointed out that the Government should advocate that while pursuing profits, enterprises should conduct their business in a sustainable manner, including avoiding damage to the environment and fulfilling corporate social responsibilities. It is learnt that the international fashion industry is taking strides towards this major trend, and leaders of the local fashion industry have also spearheaded the sustainable development of the industry, making achievements that surpass those of other Asian cities. Regarding the sustainable development of traditional industries (in particular the fashion industry) and emerging industries, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the specific measures implemented by the Government in the past three years to promote the sustainable development of various industries; whether it has studied the effectiveness of such measures; if it has, of the details;

(2) given that the Government plans to develop a number of emerging industries, such as the innovation and technology industry, of the specific measures the Government has in place to foster the sustainable development of the various emerging industries;

(3) given that some members of the fashion industry have proposed the setting up of the first fashion centre in Hong Kong with the theme of sustainable development, with a view to helping Hong Kong become a knowledge hub for the sustainable development of the international fashion industry on one hand, and propelling Hong Kong's economic development on the other, whether the Government will support such proposal; if it will, of the implementation details of the proposal; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) given that the Advisory Group on Implementation of Fashion Initiatives established by the Government will launch a series of measures on a pilot basis in the next three years to promote the development of the fashion industry, whether the Group will study issues relating to the sustainable development of the fashion industry, and how the

various government departments concerned will dovetail with the work of the Group?

Reply:

President,

In response to the four parts of the question, my replies after consulting the Environment Bureau are as follows:

(1) and (2) Since its establishment in 2013, the Economic Development Commission (EDC), personally led by the Chief Executive, has been studying how to make use of Hong Kong's existing advantages and the opportunities made available by the country, conducting in-depth discussions and studies on the visionary direction on the overall strategy and policy to broaden Hong Kong's economic base and enhance economic growth, and identifying sectors or clusters of sectors which present opportunities for Hong Kong's further economic growth, with a view to recommending policies and other support measures for facilitating the sustained development of industries concerned.

In the past two years, the four Working Groups under the EDC (namely, the Working Group on Transportation; the Working Group on Convention and Exhibition Industries and Tourism; the Working Group on Manufacturing Industries, Innovative Technology, and Cultural and Creative Industries (MICWG); and the Working Group on Professional Services) have progressively submitted to the EDC specific recommendations on promoting the sustained development of the relevant industries, which were endorsed by the EDC and accepted by the Government. For example, in respect of the innovation and technology industry, the MICWG has made recommendations on improvements to the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF), including extending the funding scope of the ITF etc., so as to enhance funding support for private and downstream research and development (R&D) projects and promote commercialisation of R&D outcomes, with a view to promoting the sustained development of the industry.

The Government agrees that while promoting the development of industries and the economy, it is necessary to save energy and reduce waste in order to reduce the environmental burden on neighbours and safeguard the well-being of Hong Kong's future generations, thereby contributing to the long-term sustainable development of Hong Kong. Therefore, when formulating relevant policies or measures, the

Government will carry out sustainability assessments to consider the implications of proposals concerned on sustainable development so as to integrate and balance the needs for economic and social development as well as environmental protection in the planning and formulation process.

The Government in collaboration with the Working Groups of the EDC will continue to study possible directions for supporting industries concerned and promoting their sustained development, and submit specific recommendations as appropriate.

(3) On promoting the sustainable development of the fashion industry, the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel (HKRITA) set up by the Government has included sustainability as an R&D focus in its technology development plan. The HKRITA promotes and provides solutions and technologies to the industry in respect of zero discharge, waterless technologies, energy efficiency, and for the advancement of manufacturing technologies, with a view to increasing efficiency of the overall supply chain to enhance competitiveness.

The Government will continue to promote the sustainable development of the industry and review the support measures from time to time to provide the industry with suitable assistance.

(4) In the 2015 Budget, the Government indicated agreement with the recommendations of the EDC, and would launch a series of measures on a pilot basis in the next three years to promote the sustained development of the fashion industry, including promoting Hong Kong's fashion designers and brands through improving local fashion events and participating in those held overseas, providing technical training and support for the industry, and setting up a fashion incubation programme. The Advisory Group on Implementation of Fashion Initiatives (AGF) established by the Government and participated in by industry practitioners will essentially advise on, guide and co-ordinate the implementation of the above measures. The AGF is currently discussing the implementation details of the measures concerned. Upon completion of the discussion, the relevant bureau and departments will examine the proposals in accordance with the established procedures and make arrangements for the resources required.

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