

Economic Development Commission holds sixth meeting

The Economic Development Commission (EDC), under the leadership of the Chief Executive, Mr C Y Leung, held its sixth meeting at the Central Government Offices today (November 19).

The meeting discussed issues relating to vocational education in Hong Kong.

"Vocational education plays a crucial role in nurturing and supplying talents with the required skillsets in response to industry needs, hence it is important to sustaining the long-term development and competitiveness of industries in Hong Kong. I am very grateful for EDC members' insights on the current vocational education system in Hong Kong," said Mr Leung.

The EDC was also briefed on the work progress of its four working groups, namely the Working Group on Transportation (TWG); the Working Group on Convention and Exhibition Industries and Tourism (CETWG); the Working Group on Manufacturing Industries, Innovative Technology, and Cultural and Creative Industries (MICWG); and the Working Group on Professional Services (PSWG).

The MICWG has submitted a report by the Expert Group on Fashion Industry with 10 recommendations on support policies and measures, including nurturing of talents and promoting collaboration between the traditional manufacturing industry and the fashion-related design industry, and promotional activities to strengthen and promote the fashion industry in Hong Kong so as to sustain its longer term growth. The Expert Group, comprising members from the textiles and clothing industry, fashion design and related industries and relevant institutes, was specifically set up by the MICWG to study the potential and competitive edge of the fashion industry and make recommendations on the support policies and measures needed. The recommendations were endorsed by the EDC.

The PSWG has submitted four specific proposals under three themes, namely (i) to promote the Hong Kong brand and elevate the competitiveness of Hong Kong's professional services; (ii) to support the professional service sectors to access emerging and other potential markets; and (iii) to foster cross-sectoral support to professional services. The proposals were endorsed by the EDC.

The TWG has noted that the Government is considering its recommendation on

promoting aerospace financing in Hong Kong as well as the progress of the Government's feasibility study on establishing a civil aviation training institute. It has also discussed the Government's measures to support and promote logistics development in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the Government has taken on board the suggestion by the TWG and industries in stepping up overseas promotional efforts in raising Hong Kong's profile as an international maritime centre (IMC). In addition, the TWG noted that negotiations with Greece on a double taxation relief arrangement covering shipping income has recently commenced which, when concluded, would add to the competitiveness of Hong Kong as an IMC.

The CETWG has discussed the latest tourism development on Lantau, which is considered to have good potential for developing into a multi-purpose destination to appeal to our preferred visitors with high spending power. The CETWG was also briefed on the key findings of the demand study for new convention and exhibition facilities in Hong Kong, including recommendations on measures to address the demand for convention and exhibition space in the longer run.

The terms of reference of the EDC are to provide visionary direction and advice to the Government on the overall strategy and policy to broaden Hong Kong's economic base and to enhance Hong Kong's economic growth and development; and in particular, to explore and identify growth sectors or clusters of sectors which present opportunities for Hong Kong's further economic growth, and recommend possible policies and other support for these industries. The Government will consider whether, and if so, how to take forward the recommendations as endorsed by the EDC.

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