

Government committed to promoting youth development and national education (with photos)

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The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, said today (September 22) that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government would take the opportunity of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China to promote youth development and national education.

Mr Tsang met members of the All-China Youth Federation, youth federations of various provinces and cities, and the Hong Kong United Youth Association this morning to discuss and exchange views on youth development and national education.

Mr Tsang said: "Young people are the future pillars of our society. The Home Affairs Bureau is committed to strengthening youth development and training, as well as promoting civic and national education, with youngsters being the target."

He explained that such work was of two types. Locally, work has been done to provide young people with more opportunities to obtain related information, through the media or public participation, to enable them to have a better understanding of our motherland. Young people were also encouraged to visit the Mainland and take part in exchange programmes to see for themselves the latest developments in China.

Mr Tsang said the Government encouraged non-government organisations to organise various youth activities and national education programmes such as flag-raising and parades to help strengthen the public's, in particular youngsters', sense of national identity.

The sub-committees under the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education would continue to carry out various projects to promote national and civic education. The committee would also produce TV documentaries on the latest situation on the Mainland and set up a dedicated website.

"Apart from joining local activities, we also encourage young people to visit the Mainland to see for themselves the development of our motherland," Mr Tsang added.

Noting that the Commission on Youth's "Community Participation Scheme for Organising Study Tours to the Mainland" has been operating for 11 years, Mr Tsang said the amount of subsidy granted and the number of participants had increased over the years.

During 2008/09, the Home Affairs Bureau has approved a total of \$15.62 million to subsidise 214 projects, with an estimate of more than 8,000 participants.

Mr Tsang said long-term efforts and support from different sectors were required to promote youth development and national education. He thanked the Hong Kong United Youth Association and other non-government organisations for their hard work and enthusiasm over the years.

Ends/Monday, September 22, 2008