

LCQ13: Appointing young people to advisory and statutory bodies

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Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (January 27):

There have been comments that with heightened education levels and civic awareness among young people, some of them have recently expressed various views on specific social policies, and this phenomenon has aroused the community's concern. Moreover, there have also been comments that the Government should take on board more and listen more to the views of young people in implementing its policies. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the current number of advisory committees to which persons aged 30 or below have been appointed (young members), and the percentage of such number in the total number of advisory committees;

(b) among the advisory committees in (a):

(i) of the respective five committees with the largest number and highest percentage of young members, as well as the average age of members of these committees; and

(ii) whether there is any committee the chairman of which is a young member; if so, of the names of such committees; if not, the reasons for that, and whether the authorities will encourage advisory committees relating to youth affairs to implement the arrangement for their young members to serve as chairmen; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(c) given that young people nowadays favour the Internet as the platform for expressing their views, how the authorities will act correspondingly in order to grasp their views and suggestions on specific policies?

Reply

President,

(a) According to the information provided to the Central Personality Index (CPI) by the Government appointed non-officials members of advisory and statutory bodies

(ASBs) on a voluntary basis, as at November 30, 2009, 25 (or 6.4%) out of these ASBs had appointed non-official members aged 30 or below.

(b)(i) According to the information kept in the CPI, ASBs with the highest number of appointed non-official members aged 30 or below are as follows:

- (I) Panel of Film Censorship Advisers
- (II) Award Council of the Hong Kong Award for Young People
- (III) Commission on Youth
- (IV) Appeal Board Panel under the Rabies Ordinance (Cap.421)
- (V) Registration of Persons Tribunal
- (VI) Personalised Vehicle Registration Marks Vetting Committee

[Note: The number of appointed non-official members aged 30 or below is the same for (IV), (V) and (VI).]

The average age of appointed non-official members on these ASBs is around 47.

ASBs with the highest percentage of appointed non-official members aged 30 or below are as follows:

- (I) Dogs and Cats Classification Board
- (II) Committee on Services for Youth at Risk
- (III) Appeal Board Panel under the Rabies Ordinance (Cap.421)
- (IV) Award Council of the Hong Kong Award for Young People
- (V) Commission on Youth

The average age of the appointed non-official members on these ASBs is around 44.

(b)(ii) As at November 30, 2009, none of the chairpersons of ASBs were aged below 30. Each appointment to ASB is made on the basis of the merit of the individual concerned, including a candidate's ability, expertise, experience, integrity and commitment to public service, with due regard to the functions and nature of the board or committee concerned as well as relevant statutory requirements of the statutory bodies concerned to ensure that the composition of ASBs should broadly reflect the interests and views of the community. In appointing chairpersons to ASBs, the Administration will make suitable consideration under the principle of

appointment by merit if young persons suitable for the chairmanship are identified as appropriate.

(c) The Administration has always placed great importance on engaging the public during policy formulation. In order to engage Internet users, including young people, we have set up several online discussion forums, such as the one on the West Kowloon Cultural District. Nonetheless, we recognise that young people increasingly use other types of Internet platform - such as social media sites - to express their views. In the 2008 Policy Address, the Administration made a commitment to collect public opinion from the Internet more actively. Since then, we have carried out an internal study with a view to identifying various options and tools to motivate the public, especially young people, to provide views online on policy formulation. In the process, we have consulted the information and communication technologies industry through the Digital 21 Strategy Advisory Committee and its Task Force on E-government Service Delivery. We will continue to explore how to make the best use of Web 2.0 technologies to engage the public and will progressively implement various e-engagement initiatives.

Ends/Wednesday, January 27, 2010