

LCQ3: Hong Kong Girl Guides Association

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Kwok-hung and a reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association (the Association) is a statutory body established under the Hong Kong Girl Guides Association Ordinance. I have uncovered that the statement issued by the Association on September 16, 2010 through the media stating that "the sale of raffle tickets had been conducted for more than 20 years and the percentage of refund to its units had never been in the region of 50%" was not true. I further uncovered in 2010 that the President of the Association had breached the regulations in appointing the Hong Kong's Chief Commissioner of the Association. I raised a question on the aforesaid issues on June 27 this year, but some parents, unit guiders and staff members of the Association have relayed to me that the reply of the Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) to my question paid no regard to the situation that while all girl guides in Hong Kong are endeavouring to sell raffle tickets on the streets, the Association "fattens the top and thins the bottom" and cuts the raffle refund, resulting in insufficient funding for its units, and the Association has also hosted banquets with tens of tables either in hotels or in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) for its annual general meetings (AGMs). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether it will request the Association to immediately revert the percentage of raffle refund to the previous percentage of 50%, starting from the sale of the 1 001st ticket by each unit; if it will, when it will be put into effect; if not, the reasons for that; given that a decrease in the refund percentage means an increase in the Association's proceeds, whether it will reduce the recurrent subvention to the Association according to the increase in its proceeds;

(b) if it knows whether at present the post of Chief Executive (CE) of the Association must be taken up by a university degree holder; if so, of the reasons why SHA, in his reply to my question raised on June 27 this year about the Association's appointment of a person with only secondary education as its CE, pointed out that no specific requirements on the academic qualifications of the Association's CE were set out in the relevant Ordinance, the Constitution of the Association or its internal rules; if not, of the reasons why SHA, in his reply to my question raised on October 27, 2010,

pointed out that according to the information provided by the Association, possession of a degree was one of the entry requirements; whether the incumbent CE of the Association is a university degree holder, the university from which she graduated and the year of graduation; whether SHA will take up the responsibility and step down for his failure in properly monitoring the Association; and

(c) given that the Association is able to solicit sponsorships to host banquets with tens of tables either in hotels or in HKCEC for its AGMs, whether the Government should immediately reduce the recurrent subvention to the Association by the same amount of the expenditure on the AGMs so as to use public funds effectively and establish an image of thrift for charities?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association (the Association) is an independent statutory non-governmental organisation. It operates according to the legislation, its constitution and internal rules. The Government respects its independence. The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) provides subvention for its youth development activities. My reply to the three parts of the question raised by Hon Leung Kwok-hung is as follows:

(a) As indicated in our written replies to the questions raised by Councillor Leung at the Legislative Council (LegCo) meetings on October 27, 2010, June 27 and July 4, 2012, the fund-raising activities of the Association are its internal matters with which we have no intention to interfere. The Association stated that the refund of raffles ticket sale is only a token of encouragement to the units for their participation in the fund-raising activity and it only serves as resources in addition to their basic operational funding. The operation of the units does not solely rely on the raffle refund and the units may seek funding from the Association as and when there are further needs.

(b) The appointment of the Association's personnel is its internal matter of the Association. According to the information provided by the Association, no specific requirements on the academic qualifications of its Chief Executive (CE) are set out in the Hong Kong Girl Guides Association Ordinance, its constitution or internal rules. The above information has been relayed in our written reply at the LegCo meeting on June 27, 2012. However, given the recruitment of the Association's

personnel is the internal matter of the Association, it is normal for the Association to set out its requirements for recruiting the CE in view of its operational needs. In our written reply at the LegCo meeting on October 27, 2010, we have also relayed the information provided by the Association, stating that one of the recruitment requirements of CE shall be, inter alia, a university graduate. Our two replies above are not contradictory.

The detailed academic qualifications of the incumbent CE, as enquired by Councillor Leung, are personal particulars protected by the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. The data subject has indicated to us her disagreement to such a disclosure of relevant particulars in response to Councillor Leung's enquiry in this case.

(c) In our written replies at the LegCo meetings on June 27 and July 4, 2012, we have already pointed out that the holding of annual general meetings and dinner parties of the Association is its internal matter. The expenditure of such dinner parties, as indicated by the Association, is either borne by participants of the event or other sponsors. Neither the Association's daily operational fund nor public money is involved. The sum of money raised will be used by the Association on Girl Guides development and for organising activities. Since the Association is an independent non-governmental organisation, the Government has no intention to interfere with its internal matters, nor will our subvention to its youth development activities be affected by its fund-raising approach.

Ends/Wednesday, July 11, 2012