



Implementing International Covenants

Article 39 (which forms part of Chapter III) provides that the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and international labour conventions as applied to Hong Kong shall remain in force.

In addition to the Basic Law, protection for human rights is also provided in local legislation, including the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance, the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance, the Race Discrimination Ordinance, and the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. The anti-discrimination ordinances are enforced by the Equal Opportunities Commission, while the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, which enforces the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, protects the right to privacy with respect to personal data.

Currently, 15 international human rights treaties are applicable to Hong Kong. Seven of them (the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) require states parties to submit periodic reports to the United Nations (UN) treaty monitoring bodies plus other information requested by them. The HKSAR normally submits these reports as part of corresponding reports submitted by China, with the exception of the ICCPR which China has not yet ratified.

The UN Human Rights Council conducts a Universal Periodic Review of human rights in all UN member states. Hong Kong's report is submitted as part of China's report for the review.

Education, Science and Technology, Culture and Arts, Recreation and Sport, and Health

Chapter VI of the Basic Law covers education, culture, science, technology, sports, religion, labour and social services. This chapter covers all walks of life in Hong Kong and is crucial to the maintenance of social stability and prosperity in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong people have long been concerned about the education of their children and have paid close attention to the educational system. They also attach great importance to the medical system, which is critical to our health, as well as culture, arts, recreation and sports, which provide them with a balanced lifestyle and relief from work stress during their leisure time. The



Basic Law has laid down clear provisions on all these matters, ensuring a diversified and liberal way of life for the Hong Kong people.

The Hong Kong Baptist University Founders' Day Reception and Foundation Inauguration in 2009. ★

Education

Education is a very important social investment and has been a key priority of the Hong Kong Government. Hong Kong has devoted a lot of efforts and resources to enhancing the quality and competitiveness of Hong Kong people to meet new challenges.



The University of Hong Kong's Centennial Celebration in 2011. ★



Article 136 prescribes that, on the basis of the previous educational system, the Hong Kong Government shall, on its own, formulate policies on the development and improvement of education, including policies regarding the educational system and its administration, the language of instruction, the allocation of funds, the examination system, the system of academic awards and the recognition of educational qualifications.

The Education and Manpower Bureau and the Education Department merged in 2003 and retained the title of Education and Manpower Bureau. On 1 July 2007, the Education and Manpower Bureau was renamed Education Bureau. The Bureau formulates and reviews education policy, oversees implementation of educational programmes, improves the system, and cultivates and trains talents.

Guaranteeing the Right to Run Educational Undertakings

Charitable, religious and private organisations in Hong Kong have been providing educational services for a long time and making enormous contributions to Hong Kong's education. Article 136 (2) provides that community organisations and individuals may, in accordance with the law, run educational undertakings of various kinds. Hence the right to run educational establishments by organisations and individuals is guaranteed. Additionally, Article 141 provides that religious organisations may, in line with previous practice, continue to run seminaries and other schools. Since the reunification,



The Hong Kong Cup English speech contest in Japan. The four winners in the speech contest take photo together after the awards ceremony in Tokyo in 2010.

the Hong Kong Government has been encouraging and subsidising various organisations in running educational undertakings, and providing support for voluntary and charitable organisations to run non-profit-making local schools.

Apart from schools that are operated by the Government, the Education Bureau also subsidises aided and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools which are run by non-profit-making bodies. Furthermore, financial assistance is



The foundation stone laying ceremony of Harrow International School Hong Kong in 2011.

provided to some non-profit-making private schools including kindergartens and primary and secondary schools. The Government also fosters a friendly environment for organisations that operate and run international schools and private colleges, thus promoting a wide range of educational services.

Enjoying Academic Freedom

Within the limits of the law, higher education institutions in Hong Kong enjoy academic freedom and a high degree of autonomy. As provided in Article 137, these institutions may continue to recruit staff and use teaching materials from outside Hong Kong. These policies and practices remain unaffected by the reunification. In particular, all higher educational institutions have continued to conduct research and academic exchange freely and without interference.

Schools run by religious organisations have continued to provide religious education, including courses in religion as provided for in Article 137.

Enhancing Educational Development

Education not only enhances the quality and competitiveness of our population, but also promotes social mobility. The Government has allocated substantial additional resources to improve the quality of and widen the access to education. Students in Hong Kong can now enjoy 12 years of free education. Subsidies have also been extended to pre-school education. The Government has progressively implemented small-class teaching in primary schools, introduced a new academic structure for the senior secondary and university levels, expanded



The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department organises a variety of countryside learning activities for students every year to enhance their awareness of protecting the natural environment. Picture shows a group of kindergarten students visiting the Lions Nature Education Centre in Sai Kung in 2011.



tertiary education and encouraged tertiary institutions to raise teaching and research standards. Significant efforts have also been made to open up multiple and flexible study and vocational pathways for our young people.

At the start of the 2009/2010 school year, the Hong Kong Government introduced the New Academic Structure from Secondary 4. All students will receive six years of secondary education, including three years of junior secondary and three years of senior secondary education. Undergraduate programmes will be four years so that students will have an extra year at universities to enrich their learning experiences, including student international exchange programmes. Under the new senior secondary structure, all students follow a broad and balanced curriculum, including four core subjects: Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies. In addition, students can choose two or three subjects from 20 elective subjects, a range of Applied Learning subjects and six other language subjects according to their interests. Students are also required to acquire, for whole-person development, other learning experiences, which may include community service and career-related experiences. The ultimate aim is to enable students to develop into balanced individuals with a broad knowledge base and an aptitude for life-long learning so as to stretch individual potential and nurture diverse talents. This will better prepare young people to seize new opportunities, develop diverse talents and live up to challenges in this fast-changing modern world while providing Hong Kong with the human capital necessary to fuel the continued development of the economy.

Hong Kong is developing as a regional education hub. At the tertiary level, there are 15 degree-awarding institutions at present. Nine of them receive recurrent Government funding. Together they offer a wide range of programmes to suit the interests and abilities of all students. By 2015, over one-third of the relevant cohort will have access to degree-level education, and, including sub-degree programmes, over two-thirds will have access to post-secondary education.



A science forum organised by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the Asian Pacific Taiwan Federation .



The Innovation and Technology Commission presents certificates on the naming of asteroids at a 2010 event. ★



A team of five secondary six students achieved the city's best yet results in the 40th International Physics Olympiad in Mexico in 2009, bringing home one gold medal, two silver and two bronze. ☺



Professor Charles K. Kao attends the opening of the "Professor Charles K. Kao: Father of Fibre Optics" Showcase at the Hong Kong Science Park in 2011. ★



Six Hong Kong students won three gold and three silver medals in the Sixth International Junior Science Olympiad, held in Baku, Azerbaijan– the city's best result since entering the competition in 2006. ☺



The Commissioner for Innovation and Technology, Miss Janet Wong (front, centre), attends the HKU/Oxford Isis Technology Transfer Training Workshop 2010 held on 8-11 June 2010. ©



Professor Joseph Lee of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology receives the State Scientific and Technological Progress Award Second-Class Award in Beijing in 2011. ©

Science and Technology

Article 139 provides that the Hong Kong Government shall, on its own, formulate policies on science and technology and protect by law achievements in scientific and technological research, patents, discoveries and inventions. The Government also shall, on its own, decide on the scientific and technological standards and specifications applicable in Hong Kong.

Since reunification, the Government, based on past achievements, has been investing in scientific and technological research and development, creating a friendly environment for industries with added value and high technology. Established in January 2004, the Steering Committee on Innovation and Technology is responsible for co-ordinating the formulation and implementation of innovation and technology policies, and ensuring greater synergy among different elements of the innovation and technology programme.

Protecting Intellectual Property Rights

Intellectual property is an important asset of business enterprises. Hong Kong is a major international port where different kinds of commodities are frequently exported, imported and transshipped. Obtaining intellectual property protection is of vital importance to the enterprises concerned. The intellectual property system in Hong Kong not only encourages local creativity and scientific and technological developments, but also facilitates the international exchange of new products and technology.

Before reunification, applicants for patents were required to obtain a grant of patent from the United Kingdom Patent Office or the European Patent Office (for patents designating the United Kingdom) before they could register their patents in Hong Kong. At that time the law applicable to registration of patents was the Registration of Patents Ordinance (Chapter 42, Laws of Hong



Combating pirated computer software. ★

Kong). Before reunification, the Hong Kong Government established a fully localised framework for the protection of intellectual property rights. The new Patents Ordinance (Chapter 514, Laws of Hong Kong), and the Registered Designs Ordinance (Chapter 522, Laws of Hong Kong) came into force on 27 June 1997. These Ordinances established for the first time a local system for the granting of patents and registration of designs in Hong Kong. In relation to copyright protection, the new Copyright Ordinance (Chapter 528, Laws of Hong Kong), which also took effect on the same date, established a localised copyright protection regime that fully meets international standards.

The Hong Kong Government has been updating and enforcing the relevant laws and is well-known in the international community for its determination to protect intellectual property rights. The Intellectual Property Department assists the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau in formulating the policy and the relevant laws on intellectual property and provides trademark, patent, designs registration and copyright licensing bodies registration services to the public. It also promotes awareness of intellectual property rights in society so that Hong Kong will continue to be an ideal place for creativity and innovation.

Hong Kong also actively co-operates with Mainland counterparts at the national level, as well as authorities in the Pan-Pearl River Delta region and Guangdong Province to promote the protection and management of intellectual property rights. Hong Kong and Guangdong Province have set up the Guangdong-Hong Kong Expert Group on Protection of Intellectual Property Rights to strengthen co-operation on both sides since 2003. The Intellectual Property Department also collaborates with counterparts in Guangdong and Macao to set up and constantly update the Intellectual Property Database for Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao to assist enterprises (specially Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) in the Pearl River Delta to understand intellectual property laws and regulations, laying the foundation for the development of the Pearl River Delta Area towards a knowledge-based economy.



Promoting Scientific and Technological Development

The Hong Kong Government is fully committed to developing Hong Kong into a hub for innovation and information technology (IT) through a variety of funding schemes and providing the supporting infrastructure.

In 1999, the Government set up the Innovation and Technology Fund to support projects that contribute to innovation and technology upgrading in industry, and to assist companies to transform technological ideas into products and services. By the end of 2011, a total of 2,689 projects were implemented by research and development institutions, universities and enterprises with a total funding of \$6.3 billion.

The Innovation and Technology Commission was set up in 2000 to formulate policies and implement initiatives on innovation and technology development. In addition, the 22-hectare Hong Kong Science Park provides state-of-the-art research and development offices and facilities for technology companies from around the world. The Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute also performs high quality research and development with a view to upgrading the technology level of local industry and stimulating the growth of technology-based industries.

The CPPCC Chairman, Mr Jia Qinglin (centre), accompanied by the Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang (on his right), visits various facilities in Cyberport. Picture shows Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited Chief Executive Officer Mr Nicholas Yang introducing the vision and facilities of Cyberport to Mr Jia.



Advanced information and communications technology are also of vital importance to Hong Kong as an international business and financial centre. The Government in 1998 developed the Digital 21 Strategy, updated every three years to ensure Hong Kong's leading role in the field. In July 2004, the Government set up the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer to co-ordinate the development of information and communications technology within and outside the Government. The Office formulates policies, strategies, programmes and measures under the Digital 21 Strategy to consolidate Hong Kong's position as a leading digital city.

Cyberport, which went into service in 2002, is a flagship for IT in Hong Kong. It aims to be a strategic centre for quality IT and IT-related companies and professionals. Cyberport is becoming one of the major venues for IT and digital entertainment-related conferences in Hong Kong and Asia.

Deciding on Scientific and Technological Standards

Scientific and technological standards ensure quality, compatibility and safety of products, services and business management systems. A good system of scientific and technological standards is conducive to lowering research and development costs, reducing investment risks, and encouraging innovation. Article 139 provides that the Government shall, on its own, decide on the scientific and technological standards and specifications applicable in Hong Kong. While individual Government bureaux and departments are responsible for making decisions on standards under their purview, three sections under the Innovation and Technology Commission – the Product Standards Information Bureau, the Standards and Calibration Laboratory, and the Hong Kong Accreditation Service (HKAS) – provide assistance in this respect.

The Product Standards Information Bureau promotes general awareness of standards and encourages local experts to take part in international standardisation activities. It also provides procurement services and free technical enquiry services relating to scientific and technical standards. The Standards and Calibration Laboratory is responsible for maintaining the reference standards of physical measurements for Hong Kong. These standards are metrologically traceable to the International System of Units. The Laboratory also provides calibration services to users of measurement standards and measuring instruments to ensure accuracy and proper metrological traceability. The calibration certificates issued by the Standards and Calibration Laboratory are recognised by over 225 National Metrology Institutes or relevant organisations in 84 economies. The HKAS confers official recognition to competent laboratories, certification bodies and inspection bodies through granting them accreditation. To facilitate wider acceptance of results issued by accredited organisations to facilitate international trade, the HKAS has concluded mutual recognition arrangements with 67 economies, including all major trading partners of Hong Kong.



Culture and the Arts

Hong Kong is a vibrant and dynamic international cultural hub blending the best of East and West, characterised by flourishing cultural and arts activities. Protected by the Basic Law, practitioners in the field of culture and the arts have every opportunity to develop their potential and show their talents, while citizens enjoy and participate actively in various cultural and arts activities.

Article 140 provides that the Hong Kong Government shall, on its own, formulate policies on culture and protect by law the achievements and the lawful rights and interests of authors in their literary and artistic creations. In 2003, the Government accepted the Policy Recommendation Report submitted by the Culture and Heritage Commission and adopted it as a blueprint for the long-term development of culture and the arts in Hong Kong. The Government's policy is to provide an environment conducive to freedom of expression and artistic creation while encouraging free participation in all aspects of cultural life. The Government has the important role of providing the necessary environment and conditions such as facilities, funding, education and executive support for the development of arts and culture, thereby

*Ms Deanie Yip (second from left), Mr Andy Lau (right) and Ms Ann Hui (second from right) celebrate their award-winning movie *A Simple Life*. ★*



*The Celebration Dinner for the 2010 film *Echoes Of the Rainbow*. ★*



*Ms Deanie Yip won the Best Actress award at the 68th Venice Film Festival in 2011 with the movie *A Simple Life*. ★*

enhancing public exposure and participation and contributing to the sustainable development of arts and culture in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong has a long-established tradition in Chinese culture. It has also absorbed many other cultural elements from around the world, blending East and West as well as traditions and modernity to create Hong Kong's unique characteristic of "cultural diversity rooted in traditional Chinese culture".



The fifth day of the Hong Kong Book Fair in 2011.★



A visitor attends the Hong Kong Book Fair.★

With Article 34 as the cornerstone, Hong Kong people continue to enjoy the freedom to engage in academic research and literary and artistic creation, as well as pursue other cultural activities. Citizens continue to enjoy a rich and vibrant cultural life embracing literature, arts, music, drama, film, mass media, publishing, design, architecture and many other aspects. Nurtured in an open and free environment, these activities have grown, developed and diversified.



As a world-class events capital, Hong Kong offers a wide range of quality entertainment and cultural programmes. Apart from exciting local draws, major foreign attractions regularly visit the city. One such programme was “Walking with Dinosaurs – The Arena Spectacular”, which gave visitors an opportunity to get up close with prehistoric creatures in 2010.



The Exhibition entitled “In Search of the Ideal Nation—Dr Sun Yat-sen and Guangzhou after the 1911 Revolution” held in 2011. ★

Following the inception of the Hong Kong Literature Festival in 1997, the Hong Kong Public Libraries has endeavoured to make Hong Kong become a hub of literary activities, providing meeting points for literary talents. The annual Hong Kong Book Fair organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council is also a major cultural event attracting readers not just from Hong Kong, but also those from the Mainland and Taiwan as well.

Visual and performing artists and arts groups have become much more active, and the Hong Kong Art Biennial Exhibition is an important event in the city. This event provides a platform for local artists to demonstrate talent and showcase accomplishments. The major performing arts groups, including the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, the Hong Kong Dance Company, the Hong



The First Day of the exhibition “Animated Version of the Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival” in 2010. ★

Kong Ballet, City Contemporary Dance Company, the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, Zuni Icosahedron and Chung Ying Theatre Company, alongside the small and medium-sized arts groups and individual artists, hold regular public performances. Apart from presenting local artistes, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department also invites artists from the Mainland and overseas to perform at major cultural events like the annual Chinese Opera Festival, the International Arts Carnival, the New Vision Arts Festival and the World Cultures Festival. The Department also provides subvention to the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society for organising its annual festival.



The Cheung Chau Bun Scrambling Competition. ★



The Tam Kung Festival and Parade is held at Shau Kei Wan. ★



The Yuen Long Shap Pat Heung Tin Hau Festival Grand Parade. ★



The Tam Kung Festival and Parade at Shau Kei Wan. ★



The Overview of Phase One of the West Kowloon Development Plan ©

The Secretary for Development, Mrs Carrie Lam (right), presides over a meeting about the West Kowloon Cultural District, which will be developed into an integrated arts and cultural district with world-class facilities.



In addition, traditional Chinese holidays and Western festivals, temple fairs, float parades and firework displays help enhance the cultural diversity of Hong Kong.

In 2012-13, the Government will allocate over \$3 billion for the development of culture and the arts. The Home Affairs Bureau formulates and coordinates the policy for the development of the arts. The Bureau also actively develops cultural links with the Mainland and other countries. The Government signed an Agreement on Closer Cultural Partnership Arrangement with the Ministry of Culture of the Central Government in November 2005, and an Agreement on Enhancing Exchange and Co-operation in the Area of Cultural Heritage with the State Administration of Cultural Heritage in December 2011 to further promote cultural exchange and co-operation with the Mainland. Since the handover, Hong Kong has also hosted several Asian Cultural Cooperation Forums. All these measures have helped promote cultural exchange between Hong Kong and other places.

An upfront endowment of \$21.6 billion has been granted to the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority for the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) project, a strategic investment by the Government to meet the long term infrastructural and development needs of the arts and culture. The WKCD will be developed as an integrated arts and cultural district

with world-class facilities. It aims to support the long-term development of the arts and culture, foster the organic growth of cultural industries, and promote Hong Kong as an international metropolis with a vibrant arts and cultural landscape. Catering for the development needs of various art forms, the WKCD will house a good mix of arts and cultural facilities to be commenced in phases starting from 2014-15.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department provides quality arts and cultural services, promotes professionalism and excellence in these pursuits and preserves cultural heritage while enhancing the interests of Hong Kong people in culture and the arts. The Hong Kong Arts Development Council plans, promotes and supports the broad development of the arts in Hong Kong. It is also committed to facilitating community-wide participation in the arts and arts education, encouraging arts criticism, raising the standard of arts administration and strengthening the work on policy research. The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts is a leading tertiary institution in performing arts in Asia, having nurtured many professionals over the years.

Protecting the Achievements of Culture and Arts

Fully protected by law, cultural and artistic creations in Hong Kong have continued to develop and flourish. Article 140 provides that the Government shall, on its own, formulate policies on culture and protect by law the achievements and the lawful rights and interests of authors in their literary and artistic creation. In this connection, the Copyright Ordinance is the main legislation that provides the necessary protection.

The Copyright Ordinance came into force on 27 June 1997. Original literary, musical, dramatic and artistic works, as well as sound recordings, films, broadcasts, cable programmes and the typographical arrangement of published editions of literary, dramatic or musical works, are protected by the Ordinance. Copyright works made available on the Internet are also protected. The Ordinance further protects works of authors from any place in the world, and works first published anywhere in the world. Copyright owners have the exclusive rights to do various acts in relation to their works, such as copying, issuing to the public, performing in public, broadcasting and making adaptation of their works. The owners also have the right to restrict others from doing without licence any of the above restricted acts.

Through the application of many international copyright conventions in Hong Kong, the works created in Hong Kong are also protected in most countries and regions around the world. These conventions notably include the Berne Conventions; the Universal Copyright Conventions; the International Convention for the Protection of Performers; Procedures of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations of the World Trade Organisation; the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights; the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) Copyright Treaty; and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty.



The Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, hands the Olympic flame to the first torchbearer, Ms Lee Lai-shan, at the Olympic Torch Relay launching ceremony at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre on 2 May, 2008. Hong Kong was the first Chinese City to welcome the Olympic flame on its return from its relay across five continents. ©

Elite Athletes, Outstanding Achievements

The Amateur Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong was set up in 1950, and was formally recognised as a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1951. On 8 March 1999, it was renamed the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC). At present, there are 74 member associations under the SF&OC. It is a key player in the sports community in Hong Kong.



Hong Kong's Patrick Lam clears a hurdle in the Olympic jumping event at Sha Tin. It was the first time Hong Kong had competed in this Olympic event. ©



Britain's winning Paralympic team poses for the crowd following a lap of honour after the team dressage event in 2008. ©



Ludger Beerbaum of Germany in action during the final round of the individual jumping competition in the Olympic Equestrian Event in 2008. ©

In accordance with Article 149, the SF&OC is a member of the IOC, the Olympic Council of Asia and the Association of National Olympic Committees under the name of “Hong Kong, China”. The SF&OC is a bridge between Hong Kong and the international sports community and is responsible for the participation of Hong Kong’s delegation at major multi-sports events such as the Olympic Games, the Asian Games, the East Asian Games and the National Games. Through the SF&OC, top athletes and coaches receive training and sponsorship from the IOC. The SF&OC organises the annual Festival of Sports, a major sports event which has a history of half a century, and, since 2000, has held the annual Hong Kong Sports Stars Awards to recognise the achievements of top athletes.

One of the key policy objectives in sports development is to promote elite sports in Hong Kong. Over the years, Hong Kong has identified and nurtured many high-performance athletes who have achieved outstanding results in different national, regional and international events.

Hong Kong actively participates in international competitions and hosts many international sporting events such as the Hong Kong Marathon, the Hong Kong Sevens and the FIVB Volleyball World Grand Prix. These events have attracted many top-ranking athletes and teams to Hong Kong, and have helped promote the sports events locally.

In 2009, Hong Kong successfully hosted the 5th East Asian Games. It was the first international multi-sports event ever held in Hong Kong, opening a new chapter in Hong Kong’s sporting history, showcasing to the world Hong Kong’s appeal as a capital for international events. Hong Kong athletes achieved their best-ever results in the Games, winning a total of 110 medals, including 26 gold medals.



A tense moment at the Hong Kong Tennis Classic in Victoria Park at which international stars put on an electrifying performance each year. ©



The Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, and senior officials join the reception organised by the Government and the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China at Charter Garden to celebrate the outstanding performance of Hong Kong athletes at the Guangzhou 2010 Asian Games. ©



Health

Hong Kong has a quality health-care system that is supported by a highly professional team of health-care workers. Both Chinese and Western medical practices are promoted to suit practical needs. Health indices compare favourably with those of most developed countries. This is underpinned by Article 138, which provides that the Hong Kong Government shall, on its own, formulate policies to develop Western and Chinese medicine and to improve medical and health services. Community organisations and individuals may provide various medical and health services in accordance with the law.



The Secretary for Food and Health Bureau, Dr York Chow (left), tours the HKU-Shenzhen Hospital.

The Secretary for Food and Health Bureau, Dr York Chow, attends WHO Executive Board Meeting. Dr Chow (second right) poses for a photo with the WHO's Regional Director for the Western Pacific, Dr Shin Young-soo (first left); the Director-General of the WHO, Dr Margaret Chan (second left); and the Assistant Director (Health Administration and Planning) of the Department of Health, Dr Cindy Lai (first right), after the meeting. Dr Chow congratulated Dr Chan for being re-elected. ©



Under the public health-care system in Hong Kong, the Food and Health Bureau is responsible for policy formulation and resource allocation. The Department of Health is the Government's health advisor and agency that carries out policies and statutory functions. The Hospital Authority is a statutory body that manages all public hospitals, providing medical treatment and rehabilitation services through hospitals, general out-patient clinics, specialist clinics and outreaching services.

Since reunification, Hong Kong has experienced a number of unprecedented public health challenges, which the Government and community overcame by working together. The public health authorities have learnt from the experiences and are continuously seeking to strengthen the public health-care system to prepare for future challenges.

Avian Influenza

In 1997, Hong Kong identified a human case of influenza A (H5N1), a virus which was previously known to infect only birds. A total of 18 cases were eventually confirmed, resulting in six deaths. This aroused concern among health-care authorities around the world. The Government co-ordinated a number of decisive measures to combat the disease and brought it under control.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

In early 2003, an unknown virus began to cause widespread outbreaks of respiratory infections in Hong Kong. The disease, subsequently named SARS by the World Health Organization (WHO), eventually infected 1,755 people in Hong Kong, of whom 299 died. Among the fatalities were a number of selfless and brave doctors and nurses who remained devoted and committed to their duties despite the unknown dangers of the disease.

SARS was a new and major threat to public health worldwide. In response, the Government put in place a wide range of public health measures, such as comprehensive investigation and surveillance; quarantine and isolation of confirmed and suspected cases; infection control in hospitals; border health declaration and temperature screening at border control points; a territory wide clean Hong Kong campaign; and public education programmes for the general community. With the concerted efforts of the community, the infection risk in Hong Kong was successfully brought under control. On 23 June 2003, the WHO removed Hong Kong from the list of areas with local transmission. Hong Kong was given a clean bill of health.

Although these two outbreaks aggravated the economic downturn following the financial crisis of 1997, Hong Kong demonstrated to the international community the perseverance of its people against adversities, and the professionalism and selflessness of the medical and health-care staff. The concerted efforts of the community strengthened the people's sense of belonging and solidarity. Related research conducted by the local medical sector, effective infection control measures and a transparent reporting system contributed significantly to the global understanding of the unknown disease, as well as subsequent efforts to prevent further outbreaks. This was recognised by the international community, including the WHO.

Disease Prevention and Control

To prevent and control various communicable and non-communicable diseases in Hong Kong, the Government established the Centre for Health Protection under the Department of Health in 2004 as a multi-disciplinary agency to carry out real-time surveillance, rapid intervention and responsive risk communication.

The health authorities of Hong Kong have also reinforced collaboration with their counterparts on the Mainland, Macao and the international arena to share professional knowledge and experience in combating diseases. In 2005, the Co-operation Agreement on Response Mechanism for Public Health Emergencies was signed by Hong Kong, Macao and the Mainland, which put in place reporting and contingency response measures to tackle situations with significant community health implications.



Guests leave a Wan Chai hotel after a seven-day quarantine period to prevent the spread of swine flu in 2009. ✦



The Financial Secretary, Mr John C. Tsang, tours the laboratory of the Centre for Research into Circulating Fetal Nucleic Acids at the Prince of Wales Hospital campus in 2008.



Promoting the Development of Chinese Medicine

The practice of Chinese medicine has a long history and is used widely by the Hong Kong public. Chinese and Western medicine complement each other, and their synergy is conducive to the further development of Hong Kong's health-care. Taking into account the actual situation in Hong Kong and the views of the Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs), the Drafting Committee of the Basic Law incorporated both the development of Chinese and Western medicines into Article 138.



The Director of Health and Chairman of Chinese Medicines Board, Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong, Dr Lam Ping-yan (centre), points out that the Chinese Medicine Ordinance aims to protect the health of citizens. ★

To strengthen the protection of public health and to foster the development of Chinese medicine, the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (the CM Ordinance) was passed in 1999 to provide a legal basis for the establishment of an effective regulatory regime for Chinese medicine. The Government then established the Chinese Medicine Council (CMC) to implement the regulatory provisions of the CM Ordinance.

The Government has adopted a phased approach in implementing this regulatory system. The registration system for CMPs was first implemented in 2000. Under the CM Ordinance, anyone who wishes to be registered as a CMP must pass the licensing examination held by the Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board (Practitioners Board) under the CMC. The CM Ordinance provides for transitional arrangements by which CMPs who were already in practice on 3 January 2000 could apply to the Practitioners Board as listed CMPs. As at January 2012, there were 6,409 registered CMPs and 2,746 listed CMPs.

Licensing of Chinese medicines traders and registration of proprietary Chinese medicines (PCMs) were implemented in April and December of 2003 respectively. The legislative provisions relating to the licensing of Chinese medicine traders came into effect in January 2008. With the commencement of mandatory registration of PCMs and the requirements for labels and package

inserts in December 2010 and December 2011 respectively, the regulatory regime of Chinese medicines has been fully implemented.

In recent years, Chinese medicine has been developing along the direction of evidence-based medicine. Since 2003, the Government has been setting up Chinese medicine clinics in all 18 districts in phases. There are now 16 such clinics.

In 2002, the Department of Health launched the Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica (CMM) Standards project with the aim of establishing reference standards on quality and safety of Chinese herbal medicines commonly used in Hong Kong. As announced in the 2009-10 Policy Address, the Government has been expediting the development of standards for CMM, to cover up to a total of 200 commonly used Chinese herbs, for completion by end 2012.

Maritime and Civil Aviation

Hong Kong has a superb geographical location, with a unique position as a cosmopolitan city and China's southern gateway. With well-developed and extensive transportation and information networks, and a highly efficient and reliable international airport and a deep water port, Hong Kong has developed into one of the busiest container ports in the world, as well as a major international civil aviation and air cargo hub. Hong Kong's renowned airport and port services have provided a good foundation for the steady development of its trade and logistics industries. Achievements in these areas stem in no small part from the implementation of the Basic Law since the reunification.



Travellers line up at airline check-in counters at the Hong Kong International Airport. ★

Maritime Industry

International Maritime and Logistics Hub

Hong Kong is a long-established free port practising a free and open multilateral trade system. Ships fulfilling the requirements stipulated under the laws of Hong Kong and the relevant international conventions can freely enter and leave the port after going through the necessary procedures.