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Replies to supplementary questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-25

Secretary for Justice
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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SV-SJ001****(Question Serial No. SV001)**Head: (92) Department of JusticeSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not SpecifiedProgramme: (-) Not SpecifiedControlling Officer: Director of Administration and Development (Jessie WONG)Director of Bureau: Secretary for JusticeQuestion:

Would the Government provide the following supplementary information:

- (a) the percentages of overseas or Mainland lawyers who passed the local qualification examination in the past 5 years; and
- (b) the numbers of registered foreign lawyers in Hong Kong in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon LAM So-waiReply:

According to the information published by The Law Society of Hong Kong (the Law Society), the overall pass rates for the Overseas Lawyers Qualification Examination (OLQE) were as follows¹:

| Year | Overall pass rate for the OLQE |
|------|--------------------------------|
| 2022 | 20% |
| 2021 | 39% |
| 2020 | 52% |
| 2019 | 45% |
| 2018 | 49% |

¹ According to the information published by the Law Society, the overall pass rates for the OLQE are updated to 2022 only. A new batch of data is expected to be released next month.

According to the Law Society's statistics, the numbers of registered foreign lawyers in Hong Kong in the past 5 years were as follows:

| Year | Number of registered foreign lawyers in Hong Kong |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 2024 (as at 31 March 2024) | 1 489 |
| 2023 | 1 476 |
| 2022 | 1 442 |
| 2021 | 1 465 |
| 2020 | 1 546 |

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SV-SJ002

(Question Serial No. SV010)

Head: (92) Department of Justice

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (-) Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration and Development (Jessie WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Justice

Question:

- (a) The estimated total expenditure for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) mediator training courses and the GBA lawyers' practical legal training course in 2024-25 is only \$100,000, far lower than that for the talent training programmes in other sectors in the same year. What are the reasons?
- (b) The number of beneficiaries of the Understudy Programme launched by the Department of Justice for training legal talents is less than 100 each year, which is significantly lower than the annual number of graduates from the 3 law schools in Hong Kong. What are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan

Reply:

- (a) As talent training programmes in different sectors vary in scale, criteria and budgets, direct comparison amongst the programmes may not be appropriate.

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) mediator training courses will be held for the first time in 2024-25. As the venue and manpower required will be provided by the Department of Justice (DoJ), we have initially earmarked \$100,000 for the other expenditures of the training courses. Should additional resources be required, they will be absorbed through deployment of existing resources of the DoJ.

With regard to the GBA lawyers' practical legal training course to be co-organised by the DoJ and relevant Mainland bodies, the course is non-profit making and it is expected that the expenditure will mostly be borne by the co-organisers. The DoJ's relevant expenditure will be absorbed by its existing resources.

- (b) The Understudy Programme of the DoJ targets at qualified barristers and solicitors with less experience (i.e. lawyers with less than 5 years of post-call/admission experience), and not all law school graduates who become lawyers will apply to join the Programme. The DoJ has to consider and select suitable cases/legal research work before inviting

these barristers or solicitors to take part in them. As such, the number of beneficiaries each year depends on the number of participants of the Programme and the availability of suitable work. Since the launch of the Programme in mid-2020 to 29 February 2024, over 60% of eligible participating barristers and solicitors have taken part in various civil and criminal work through the Programme. The DoJ will continuously review and select suitable work to provide more training opportunities to participating barristers and solicitors.

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