

JULY 17, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to detail Hong Kong's recent efforts to protect human rights amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, during which we experienced five severe waves of infection. The government and various non-governmental organisations have implemented a variety of measures to aid those impacted by the pandemic.

To ensure transparency, the government launched a dedicated website displaying the local COVID-19 situation, including case numbers, vaccination rates, and the latest prevention measures. In an effort to increase the vaccination rate, the government provides free vaccinations to all residents, regardless of their resident status. For elderly and disabled individuals, a Home Vaccination Service (HVS) has been established, offering door-to-door vaccinations. The government has also distributed Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits to high-risk groups and launched an Approved RAT Kits Search Tool to help the public locate available kits.

In the educational sector, universities have adopted a hybrid teaching model, allowing for flexible online course delivery, ensuring safety protection while preserving teaching effectiveness.

Recognising the challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and other industries, the government has provided several rounds of anti-epidemic fund measures. These include substantial subsidies to the retail, food, tourism, property management, construction, arts and culture, and transport trades industries. The government also issued consumption vouchers to subsidise daily expenses and stimulate the local economy. Rental concessions, fee waivers, and loan deferrals were also provided to SMEs. The aviation industry, which was particularly hit hard, received a HK\$2 billion relief package.

To address unemployment, the government has implemented wage subsidies to employers, encouraging job retention. Additionally, they announced an investment of HK\$6 billion to create around 30,000 time-limited jobs in both public and private sectors for the next two years.

Non-governmental organisations have also contributed significantly. For instance, the Hong Kong Community Anti-Coronavirus Link has been active since 2020, collecting and distributing necessary supplies to local residents. Commercial banks have also introduced financial relief measures to support SMEs and start-ups.

The pandemic has significantly impacted Hong Kong's public health, economy, and social development. However, governmental and non-governmental measures have helped mitigate the financial and operational burdens suffered by individuals and businesses, aiding in the economy's recovery. As Hong Kong announced further easing of quarantine and isolation measures in December 2022, we are hopeful for a swift recovery and a brighter future for our city.

Thank you for your attention.

Best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Cheung Yuk Man

Tai Po Rural Youth Group