Improving Macao through education, preserving cultural heritage and promoting the cultural industry

To support Macao’s economic development, development of tertiary education should focus on quality and diversity. In 2015, the Government held fast to the guiding principle of “Improving Macao through education”, and expedited the legislative procedures regarding the law on the Tertiary Education System, while actively preparing the complementary legislation, including through continuing to improve the contents of the bills on the organisation and operation of the administrative departments responsible for tertiary education, the tertiary education foundation and the Tertiary Education Council; and completing the frameworks of the bills on the Regulations and Rules of Tertiary Education, Academic Credit System in Tertiary Education, and Tertiary Education Assessment System.

To ensure ongoing improvements in tertiary education, the Government actively prepared for the development of the Higher Education Accreditation System, including by launching a pilot accreditation scheme. A study has been conducted and preliminary preparations have been made for developing a set of guidelines for course reviews, while appropriate adjustments and amendments have been made to the general abilities benchmark framework for higher education, with reference to views collected from tertiary institutions.

In 2015, apart from providing institutions with resources for enhancing academic facilities and launching projects to improve teaching and research, the Government also strengthened support to
tertiary students by increasing the number and amount of scholarships and grants, and significantly relaxing the monthly household income limit for loan applicants. Two awards have been established, for excellent conduct and academic improvement, in addition to the existing awards for academic achievements in various disciplines. Additionally, a new type of scholarship was offered, for Integrated Bachelor and Master’s Degrees.

The Government coordinated with the working group formed by several tertiary institutions to prepare for implementation of the joint university entrance examination of Macao (language subjects and Mathematics).

Moreover, the Government has conducted the Survey on Macao College Graduates’ Choices for Further Studies and Occupations in 2015 and Post-graduation Tracking Survey of College Graduates in Macao, to enrich the Higher Education Talent Database.

Continuing to optimise basic education and gradually undertaking curriculum reform

Regarding non-tertiary education, the Government continued to improve the 15 years of compulsory education, by increasing free education subsidies and tuition fee subsidies for students at different education levels, and textbook allowance for primary and secondary students, and extending free education subsidies to senior secondary-one students based on the assumption that there are 25-35 students per class.

The Government carried out a mid-term evaluation of the 10-Year Plan for Non-tertiary Education, to review its implementation and summarise experience over the past five years. Regarding legislation, progress has been made in amending the General Rules for Private Schools, and a public consultation was conducted on the supervisory regulations governing private tutorial centres. The Regulations on Teaching Excellence Awards were also promulgated.

To nurture talents, the first Talent Training Scheme for Outstanding Secondary Students were launched. Under this, students were invited to participate in a study and exchange tour to Singapore, and schools were subsidised so they could provide financially disadvantaged students with opportunities to study overseas.

In July 2015, the Government promulgated the by-law on Requirements for Basic Academic Attainments for Formal Education Curricula, and put in place the requirements for basic academic attainments for kindergartens. It also continued the pilot schemes for primary and junior secondary curricula and launched a pilot scheme for senior secondary school curricula, to lay a solid foundation for curriculum reforms at different education levels.

The Government completed the public consultation on the amendment to the by-law on the Special Education System, formulated Supplementary Guidelines for the Integrated Education Subsidy Scheme, and held interdepartmental discussions regarding the cooperation mechanism for the identification, assessment and placement of people with special education needs.
Advancing heritage conservation and encouraging development of the cultural industry

The year 2015 saw the 10th anniversary of the inscription of the Historic Centre of Macao on the World Heritage List. The Government joined with a number of organisations in holding celebrations, which included 35 activities in five categories: commissioning of historical and cultural facilities, exhibitions, seminars, publications and performances. These cultural activities aimed to raise citizens’ and tourists’ awareness of heritage conservation and cultural succession.

The Government strictly complied with the Cultural Heritage Protection Law during heritage conservation. In 2014, over 100 investigations commenced regarding properties of cultural significance in Macao. More than 70 of the investigations were completed by the end of 2015, and ten of the properties have been selected for an assessment process.

In 2015, the Government continued launching arts and cultural education programmes such as Culture Lectures, Seeds of Art and Cultural Blitz, and provided subsidies to people studying film, music, design or art. It also continued promoting development of the local cultural industry according to the strategies in the Policy Framework for the Development of the Cultural Industry.

Besides, the Government has processed the first batch of 321 valid sponsorship applications, 86 of which were found to be eligible after assessment. Formal agreements were signed with the related parties regarding the 71 projects that received sponsorship.

The Government has also completed the first draft of the Cultural Industry Incentive System, which aims to recognise enterprises, individuals or groups that have made significant contributions to the cultural industry. The industry and academia will be consulted in the second half of this year.

Cultural venues such as the temporary black box theatre of Old Court Building, Taipa Library, Jao Tsung-I Academy and newly renovated historical and cultural facilities such as the Woodcraft World of Master Lu Ban, the Patane Night Watch House, and the Guia Fortress (including the Chapel of Our Lady of Guia and Guia Lighthouse) were inaugurated in 2015. The Government collected public opinion on the reutilisation of the old Hotel Estori and Estoril Swimming Pool, and organised briefing sessions attended by over 2,000 participants. The views collected were then analysed and summarised, for further improvement and optimisation of the project.

Legislative Assembly passes 14 laws to meet society’s needs

During the second session of the fifth Legislative Assembly (from 16 October 2014 to 15 October 2015), 37 plenary meetings and 129 committee meetings were held. A total of 14 laws, two resolutions and nine simple-majority resolutions were passed during the plenary meetings.

1. In accordance with its law-making function, the Legislative Assembly passed a law regarding the anti-corruption system, Law No. 10/2014 - “System for Preventing and Deterring Corruption in External Trade”, to enforce the stipulations of international treaties, ensure the smooth operation of external trade, and prevent and fight all kinds of bribery, and so ensure Macao meets international standards of anti-corruption work;