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Urban Forestry Support Fund



Have you ever tried growing houseplants? To make them strong and healthy, dedicated care is necessary. The same applies to the trees in our urban area which improve our environment and enhance our cityscape.

Indeed, tree management and maintenance is a specialised field of knowledge. And to keep our trees strong and healthy, we need not only the relevant personnel to look after them carefully, but also an enhanced level of interest and knowledge of the general public in this field.

The Government completed a manpower study in 2017. Its result showed that there would be a manpower shortage in arboriculture, horticulture and landscape architecture. The shortage is particularly serious for qualified arborists and skilled tree workers. Moreover, the varied competency standards of practitioners have raised concern. I proposed in this year's Budget to set up a \$200 million Urban Forestry Support Fund to encourage young people to join the arboriculture and horticulture industries, to provide them with more trainings, and to establish a professional competency system. The objective is to

enhance the knowledge and standards of the practitioners comprehensively thereby ensuring quality tree management. At the same time, we will step up public education and promotion. All these measures will promote better tree care and safeguard public safety.

The forthcoming Urban Forestry Support Fund will introduce initiatives in four aspects:

(1) Encourage people who have career aspirations in horticulture and arboriculture as well as practitioners to pursue relevant studies by providing subsidies or scholarships.

(2) Roll out arboriculture and horticulture trainee programmes to provide more training and internship opportunities as well as subsidies for new recruits. Besides assisting them to accumulate practical experiences, obtain professional qualifications and increase their promotion prospects, the programme will also help employers attract and retain talents systemically, thereby promoting the inheritance and enhancement of the related professional skills.



(3) Organise international urban forestry conferences to provide a platform for worldwide specialities, academics and practitioners to exchange and share relevant skills and experiences, in a bid to upgrade the expertise and practice standards of the local industry and further promote the professional development of arboriculture and horticulture.

(4) Promote community engagement activities to strengthen cross-sector collaboration among the Government, business sector, the community and academia to provide the public with more information on tree planting and maintenance as well as enhance their appreciation for our environment.

I do not expect the setting up of the Urban Forestry Support Fund will solve all problems related to trees and greenery, but this is a starting point. Through active promotion by the Government and cross-sector collaboration, we hope to nurture talents, enhance professional standards and promote a healthy and sustainable development for the industries. The front will pave the way for the introduction of a future registration system for tree management personnel and will promote a more liveable environment.

Development Bureau will widely consult stakeholders to formulate concrete implementation plans and identify suitable partnerships, such as post-secondary institutions and the Construction Industry Council, to implement the various initiatives.

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