

Opening remarks by SDEV on land sale programme for October to December 2018

Following is the transcript of the opening remarks by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, at a media session today (September 27) on the land sale programme for October to December 2018:

In the third quarter of 2018-19, the Government will sell by tender four residential sites, estimated to produce about 2 630 flats. The sites are located one each in Tai Po and on Lantau, and two in Kai Tak. For the Tai Po site, the successful bidder will be required to develop a 100-place residential care home for the elderly in order to provide more elderly facilities.

Including the supply from other sources, the private housing land supply in the third quarter of 2018-19 has a capacity to produce about 3 360 flats in total. The total private housing land supply in the first three quarters is therefore about 9 840 flats.

The Government will continue to identify suitable sites for sale to meet the demand for private residential units, taking into account other land supply sources and market conditions.

As regards commercial sites, the Government will sell by tender one site for commercial and hotel use in Kai Tak. This site is capable of providing about 56 800 (should be 56 900) square metres of gross floor area, including the provision of 340 to 570 hotel rooms.

As in the past, the Government is firmly committed to increasing land supply through a multi-pronged approach to meet the community's housing, economic and other needs.

Marine traffic control and safety measures to be followed at 2018 National Day Fireworks Display

With regard to the 2018 National Day Fireworks Display to be held on October 1, the Marine Department (MD) will implement marine traffic control and strengthen the inspection of spectator vessels on the event day to ensure that safety requirements are met.

The MD will establish a Closed Area in the waters off the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai, where barges for the fireworks display will be anchored, from 2pm to about 11pm on the event day. All vessels will be prohibited from entering the area. A Restricted Area will be established in the Central Harbour from 8pm to about 10.15pm on the event day. Other than authorised vessels, no vessels will be allowed to enter. Scheduled ferry vessels with permission may continue services until 8.40pm.

For landside crowd control, all public landing steps within the Restricted Area will be closed temporarily from 7.45pm to about 10pm on the event day. Buffer Zones at Kowloon Public Pier, Kwun Tong Public Pier and Central Piers 9 and 10 will be established immediately after the event for safe and orderly disembarkation of passengers.

In addition, to ensure vessels disperse in an orderly manner, the Eastern and Western Cordon Lines of the Restricted Area will be lifted in stages after the event. The Western Cordon Line will be lifted first at about 10pm. Spectator vessels behind the Western Cordon Line and those wishing to move to the east must follow the instructions of officers from the MD and the Police at the scene. The Eastern Cordon Line will be lifted later depending on traffic conditions in Victoria Harbour. It is anticipated that the Restricted Area will be lifted by about 10.15pm.

Officers from the MD and the Police will also maintain order at major landing facilities after the event. In order to ensure the smooth and safe disembarkation of passengers, coxswains and crew members should remind passengers to pack their personal belongings early before the vessels arrive alongside the landing steps, as well as assist passengers to disembark. Coxswains and passengers should follow the guidance of the MD and the Police at the scene.

The MD and the Marine Police will also strengthen law enforcement, especially on speeding and overloading. Coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels should check again and reconfirm that the operating licence, the certificate of survey and the third party risk insurance are valid before setting sail.

Officers from the MD will strengthen the inspection of spectator vessels. Requirements include providing sufficient life-saving appliances on board, ensuring that children wear a lifejacket at all times and that coxswains keep a passenger and crew list on board.

If any vessel fails to meet these requirements, inspecting officers will issue directions at the scene and request the person-in-charge of the vessel to take remedial action. If the person-in-charge of the vessel refuses to comply with the directions, the department will take the necessary follow-up action, such as prohibiting the vessel from departing or considering prosecution.

MD Notice No. 140 of 2018 on the marine traffic control and safety measures has been issued and is available for viewing on the MD's website (www.mardep.gov.hk).

Over 40 organisations pledge support for green events

Over 40 organisations from various sectors pledged their support for green events at a ceremony today (September 27) by committing to make reference to a green event guidebook published by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) when organising and sponsoring future events, in order to enhance their environmental performance and work collaboratively to promote waste reduction.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, thanked the organisations for their support and participation. He said that the three major keys to reducing waste are determination, sincerity and creativity. In addition to being determined to encourage their staff members and stakeholders to implement new green initiatives, organisations need to show their sincerity in waste reduction to motivate others to join them in the green campaign, he said. They are also encouraged to unlock their creativity to help set green values as a major social trend.

Mr Wong expressed the hope that the green event guidebook will be used by more organisations to jointly promote waste reduction at their events, and would further enhance the image of Hong Kong from being a "city of events" to "city of green events" and encourage a green culture among the community. He added that government departments will set a good example by making reference to the green event guidebook when holding events and help disseminate the message of "dump less, save more, recycle right".

Also speaking at the ceremony, Deputy Director of Environmental Protection, Mrs Vicki Kwok, said that the EPD will tap into the experience of promoting green events in previous months to foster even closer collaboration with the business sector, local district organisations and non-profit making organisations, so as to continue with efforts to further reduce event-generated waste. To this end, through cognitive education, award promotion and enhanced supportive measures, the EPD will help event organisers and other stakeholders to formulate and implement various waste reduction initiatives, thereby enabling a green culture to take root at the community level. The EPD will also collaborate with the Environmental Campaign Committee and major local business associations to launch the Green Outdoor Event Commendation Scheme to encourage event organisers to jointly protect the environment by adopting green practices when holding outdoor events.

Also at today's ceremony, a representative of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department shared details of the Department's successful experience in waste reduction during Hong Kong Flower Show 2018; a representative of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (Management) Limited provided a briefing on newly adopted

green measures; an AsiaWorld-Expo Management Limited representative told participants about their waste-reduction approach as a venue provider; and a representative of Wofoo Social Enterprise gave a briefing on its wide range of activities to encourage primary, secondary and tertiary students to promote waste reduction with local partners. The ceremony was attended by representatives of banks, property developers, convention and exhibition industry, public and non-profit making organisations, community groups, universities and district organisations. In addition, a mini green services exhibition was also held at the event venue to allow attending organisations to learn more about the available companies providing green services on the market.

The EPD and the Business Environment Council (BEC) jointly launched a guidance booklet on waste reduction for major community events last December to assist event organisers and related stakeholders in formulating waste management strategies to achieve waste reduction and clean recycling as well as to enhance environmental performance.

The green event guidebook and information relating to waste reduction at events have been uploaded to the newly launched one-stop portal at www.greenevent.gov.hk/.

External merchandise trade statistics for August 2018

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (September 27) the external merchandise trade statistics for August 2018. In August 2018, the values of Hong Kong's total exports and imports of goods both recorded year-on-year increases, at 13.1% and 16.4% respectively.

In August 2018, the value of total exports of goods increased by 13.1% over a year earlier to \$376.3 billion, after a year-on-year increase of 10.0% in July 2018. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 16.4% over a year earlier to \$428.5 billion in August 2018, after a year-on-year increase of 14.0% in July 2018. A visible trade deficit of \$52.1 billion, equivalent to 12.2% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in August 2018.

For the first eight months of 2018 as a whole, the value of total exports of goods rose by 9.9% over the same period in 2017. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 11.8%. A visible trade deficit of \$373.6 billion, equivalent to 12.2% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in the first eight months of 2018.

Comparing the three-month period ending August 2018 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of

goods increased by 0.2%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods increased by 1.6%.

Analysis by country/territory

Comparing August 2018 with August 2017, total exports to Asia as a whole grew by 12.0%. In this region, increases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in particular Malaysia (+42.5%), Vietnam (+21.5%), India (+18.2%), the mainland of China (the Mainland) (+13.6%), Thailand (+8.9%) and Singapore (+7.8%). On the other hand, a decrease was recorded in the value of total exports to Taiwan (-24.2%).

Apart from destinations in Asia, increases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations in other regions, in particular the United Kingdom (+31.2%) and the USA (+17.9%). Concurrently, a decrease was registered in the value of total exports to Germany (-1.1%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Malaysia (+79.0%), the USA (+31.4%), India (+22.0%), Korea (+20.8%), Thailand (+16.7%), the Mainland (+16.0%) and Japan (+5.5%).

For the first eight months of 2018 as a whole, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in particular the Mainland (+12.3%), Singapore (+11.1%), the USA (+10.3%), the Netherlands (+10.1%), Germany (+9.1%) and Thailand (+8.7%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of total exports to India (-14.1%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Malaysia (+90.3%), Korea (+21.6%), Taiwan (+12.8%), the Mainland (+9.9%), the USA (+9.4%) and the Philippines (+8.3%). On the other hand, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of imports from India (-14.1%).

Analysis by major commodity

Comparing August 2018 with August 2017, increases were registered in the values of total exports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$26.1 billion or 21.2%), "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$6.5 billion or 9.9%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$4.2 billion or 26.1%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases were registered in the values of imports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$24.9 billion or 18.1%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$9.9 billion or 32.3%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$8.8 billion or 44.9%).

For the first eight months of 2018 as a whole, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$163.9 billion or 18.8%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$42.6 billion or 16.9%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$23.9 billion or 18.4%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of total exports of "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$15.3 billion or -11.8%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$172.6 billion or 17.4%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$56.6 billion or 26.1%) and "petroleum, petroleum products and related materials" (by \$16.3 billion or 35.8%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of imports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$1.4 billion or -0.3%).

Commentary

A Government spokesman noted that the value of merchandise exports registered double-digit year-on-year growth in August, along with the continued expansion of global economic activities. Exports to many major markets, including the Mainland and the US, recorded further notable increases.

However, the spokesman commented that, while the impacts of the US-Mainland trade conflicts on Hong Kong's exports were seemingly limited thus far, they are likely to turn visible in the period ahead. If the trade conflicts are to escalate further, the global economy and Hong Kong's exports would face more notable downward pressures. The Government will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Further information

Table 1 at the annex presents the analysis of external merchandise trade statistics for August 2018. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2015 to August 2018, and Table 3 gives the seasonally adjusted series for the same period.

The values of total exports of goods to 10 main destinations for August 2018 are shown in Table 4, whereas the values of imports of goods from 10 main suppliers are given in Table 5.

Tables 6 and 7 show the values of total exports and imports of 10 principal commodity divisions for August 2018.

All the merchandise trade statistics described here are measured at current prices and no account has been taken of changes in prices between the periods of comparison. A separate analysis of the volume and price movements

of external merchandise trade for August 2018 will be released in mid-October 2018.

The August 2018 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in August 2018 and will be available in mid-October 2018. Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp230.jsp).

Enquiries on merchandise trade statistics may be directed to the Trade Analysis Section (2) of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 5042).

EDB announces details of Special Grant on Typhoon Disturbance for schools

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (September 27) issued a circular memorandum to all public sector schools, schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), and kindergartens which have joined the Kindergarten Education Scheme (KG Scheme), announcing details about the provision of the Special Grant on Typhoon Disturbance.

An EDB spokesman said, "Typhoon Mangkhut wreaked havoc in Hong Kong and at the same time caused varying degrees of damage to school premises. To help schools pay the extra cost to be borne as a result of their recovery works subsequent to the typhoon, the EDB will provide the Special Grant on Typhoon Disturbance to all government schools, aided schools including special schools, caput schools, DSS schools and kindergartens which have joined the KG Scheme according to the actual expenses of schools."

The basic ceiling of the special grant for public sector schools and DSS schools is \$150,000 each, and that for kindergartens which have joined the KG Scheme is \$50,000 each. Schools can submit applications to the EDB based on their actual needs on or before November 30, 2018. The special grant is expected to be disbursed to schools in January 2019. In case of special circumstances whereby schools need to apply for an amount of subsidy exceeding the basic ceiling, they are required to explain their special circumstances and the EDB will consider such applications prudently on a case-by-case basis.

Public sector schools can use the special grant to cover the expenditure incurred from the cleaning up, repair works, replacement of standard facilities/equipment within school premises, or procurement of necessary items as a result of the typhoon, and which cannot be covered by the Emergency Repairs mechanism but have to be carried out as soon as possible. These include emergency restoration works which need to be conducted out of

safety concerns or for enabling expeditious resumption of normal school operation, such as removal and trimming of fallen trees, clearing of waste from school campus, minor repairs and cleaning of school premises/facilities and equipment, etc.

Caput schools, DSS schools and kindergartens which have joined the KG Scheme can also use the special grant to pay for the costs of emergency repairs and replacement of standard facilities within their school premises, including repairs of doors, windows, fences, pipes on external walls, outdoor lighting facilities, etc, which have been damaged by strong winds.

The spokesman said that with the concerted efforts of various parties, all schools have now resumed classes. The EDB will continue to maintain close contact with schools and the sector to better understand their needs and offer support.