

## Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo meeting (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (November 19):

Chief Executive: I just say a few words in English. In the course of the police operation regarding the Polytechnic University, I have reached an understanding with the Commissioner of Police in dealing with this very difficult operation, which is justified on the basis of putting an end to the violence that we have seen over these months. In fact, the Polytechnic University campus has been seized for quite some time already and we are extremely worried about the dangerous situation in the campus. The two important principles that I have laid out for the police operation – the first is of course to have a peaceful resolution as far as possible. This objective could only be achieved with the full co-operation of the protesters, including the rioters, that they have to stop violence, give up their weapons and come out peacefully and take the instructions from the Police.

The second principle is a very exceptional one. Although the Police have said that after the warning, anyone leaving the campus will have to be arrested. In light of the special circumstances and the age, that is under 18, of a certain number of participants within the campus, and in order to achieve the objective of both a peaceful and sort of a reconciliatory resolution, I have asked that the treatments to these minors should be in a very humanitarian way. We have arranged for principals and religious groups' representatives to go into the campus to encourage and persuade these minors to come out peacefully. And if they come out peacefully, we will just put down their data. We make a record of their personal data and they may then leave the campus and return to home. We have not done any immediate arrests of these underage protesters or other participants within the campus, but of course we will have to reserve the right to undertake further investigations in future.

At the moment, as far as I could gather, there were about 600 people within the Polytechnic campus who have come out. About 200 of them are minors, and they have been subject to the special arrangements that I have just referred to. Of the other 400 over 18, they will be or they have been immediately arrested, whether they came out peacefully on their own, surrendered themselves to the Police, or they came out using various methods and were caught by the Police during this operation. The latest assessment given to me is that perhaps there would be about a hundred or so people still on campus, so I made a very strong plea that for every one of us who are concerned about the situation, we will use whatever means to continue to persuade and arrange for these remaining protesters to leave the campus as

soon as possible so that this whole operation could be able to end in a peaceful manner, and lay the basis for the subsequent work by the Police to stop violence in Hong Kong. Thank you very much.

Reporter: At the weekend, the PLA were seen on the streets of Hong Kong for the first time since the protest began, cleaning up debris. In a statement to CNN, your government said that they were there purely for community, volunteer activity, and this was something that they did out of their own initiative. Does it concern you that the PLA did this unilaterally? Do you anticipate that we will see the PLA again on the streets of Hong Kong? And at what level, new level of violence needs to be reached for you to call upon the PLA to become involved in what's happening here in Hong Kong, including the ongoing standoff in Hong Kong Polytechnic University, which as you say has turned into a war zone?

Chief Executive: First of all, as you have referred to in our response to enquiry about the garrison's voluntary participation in clearing the roadblocks and the debris on the streets, we have made it very clear, and I repeat here, the garrison's stationing in Hong Kong is of course to perform defense functions, but it is not uncommon from time to time for the garrison to undertake some voluntary and charitable activities in Hong Kong. There are very clear rules and circumstances governing those situations. I can give you a list of examples of the garrison's participation in such charitable and voluntary activities. Like last year when we have a Super Typhoon Mangkhut, they came out to help clear the collapsed trees which of course was much welcomed by the people of Hong Kong, and from time to time, they also visited some elderly homes and they arranged training activities for some of our youngsters and so on. I would suggest that we do not over-interpret this particular act of voluntary involvement, particularly if you look at the actual circumstances – the ordinary Hong Kong citizens, they were taking part in clearing roads right in front of one of the military facilities of the garrison, that is Kowloon East. For any ordinary people, if people are helping to clear the road in front of your building, then you feel more obliged to give a helping hand, so that's the situation.

As we have also clarified, this voluntary act of the garrison did not come under any provisions in the Basic Law – that is it is not in response to my request. That is the second point. You asked about when we would resort to formally inviting the garrison to help. I would assure you that we remain very confident that we are able to cope with the situation, and that's why operations like that happening in the Polytechnic University is a very important one. I for one appreciate that it is a very difficult one. It is a very complicated operation, but if we were not able to undertake any operations to arrest these rioters, who are resorting to escalating violence, and who are damaging Hong Kong from one place to another, from one campus to another, and manufacturing more and more life-threatening weapons and petrol bombs and so on, we will not be able to demonstrate and display that competence in dealing with the situation. Right now, we are still sort of displaying and demonstrating that competence to handle the situation ourselves.

Reporter: Mrs Lam, the Police have been besieging the Polytechnic University since Sunday, and many people, as you said, are still trapped inside. Will you as the Chief Executive make sure that the people trapped inside can return home safely and will not receive any unfair treatment even if they are to be arrested?

Chief Executive: Thank you for that question. As I have said, I have agreed with the Commissioner of Police. In handling this very difficult and complicated but necessary operation, there are two important principles. The first will be able to address your question. The first is we all want to achieve it in a very peaceful manner, but we are very much, our police colleagues are very much, on the reactive side. If the protesters are coming out in a peaceful manner, in other words they stop violence, they give up their weapons, they take the advice of the policemen, then there is no situation that that sort of violence will happen, and the Police will of course render fair treatment to everybody, both arrested or those recorded and allowed to go home without being arrested. By this, I mean those under the age of 18, and we have about 200 of these under 18 who have come out of the campus and have been dealt with in a humanitarian manner. That is something that we will continue to adopt as a very important guideline. The reason I cannot give you an absolute guarantee is because the situation is changing. For argument's sake, if we were suddenly seeing some very major, life-threatening incidents on the campus, then – as I said, the Police are on the reactive side – the Police have to take the necessary action to prevent any tragedies from happening in Hong Kong.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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## Special announcement by Education Bureau

Since the road and traffic conditions have gradually become stable, classes of primary schools, secondary schools and some special schools will resume tomorrow (November 20).

Regarding kindergartens, schools for children with physical disability and schools for children with intellectual disability, classes will remain suspended until Sunday (November 24). Nevertheless, these schools must keep their premises open and take proper care of students who have arrived at school. They should maintain contact with parents and allow students to return home only under safe conditions.

As some roads and public transport services have not fully resumed or diversions are needed, the Education Bureau (EDB) reminded students and parents to plan their journey in advance and pay attention to traffic news and relevant announcements before leaving home tomorrow morning. Schools are

advised to adopt contingency measures according to school-based mechanisms and exercise flexibility in handling individual students' lateness or absence due to traffic problems.

If individual schools affected by recent incidents need more time to prepare for class resumption, they may work out school-based contingency measures and notify parents as soon as possible. If individual schools are under special situations, they may also take the initiative to contact the bureau and appropriate support will be provided as necessary.

The EDB reminded students again to return home as soon as possible and not to wander in the streets after school. They should stay away from danger and must not participate in unlawful activities.

The EDB will continue to monitor the latest development and provide schools with timely advice and support.

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## **EDB clarification**

In response to an online circulation of a "press release" which stated that classes of all schools in the territory will remain suspended tomorrow (November 20), a spokesman for the Education Bureau (EDB) clarified that the so-called "press release" was entirely a fabrication. The bureau condemned such an act and called on members of the public to pay attention to the formal announcement to be issued by the EDB later.

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## **Opening remarks by STH at Asian Logistics and Maritime Conference (English only)**

Following is the opening remarks by the Chairman of the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board and Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at the Asian Logistics and Maritime Conference (ALMC) today (November 19):

Margaret (Executive Director of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Ms Margaret Fong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. On behalf of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, I extend my warmest welcome to you all to the 2019 Asian Logistics and Maritime Conference. It gives me great pleasure to join you at this flagship event of the Hong Kong Maritime Week which is also the largest of its kind in Asia.

The ALMC is now in its ninth edition. Throughout the years, I have always been proud to witness this home-grown conference growing in size and influence. The Conference has served as a pivotal platform for global logistics and maritime industry leaders to connect, and to exchange innovative ideas on how the industry can excel. The theme this year, as Margaret has highlighted, is "Connect and Innovate: Navigating Challenging Times", that captures fully the spirit and cannot be more fitting for what we are facing now.

Indeed we are standing at one of the most challenging junctures in recent memory. Globally, rising protectionism and geopolitical uncertainties have been weighing down economic outlook. At home, we face our technical recession, as we are dually hit by slowing economy and social unrest. The sea is rough. At times like this, we look for our strong fundamentals as an anchor. We are committed to supporting free trade and maintaining a level playing field for all. We spare no effort in honing our competitive edge and have always been recognised by the international community.

We have been ranked the world's freest economy by the Heritage Foundation for 25 consecutive years, and came third on the World Bank's ease of doing business rankings. Coupled with our robust institutional strengths, such as rule of law, judicial independence and quality talents, Hong Kong remains one of the world's best places to conduct business.

On top of excellent software, our hardware is equally impressive as a global trade and logistics hub. We boast the world's busiest international air cargo airport, with throughput totalling 5 million tonnes per annum in 2018. We are also home to one of the world's top 10 busiest container ports, with our total container throughput standing at 19.6 million TEUs in 2018. Every week, the Hong Kong Port sees 310 liner services connecting to 450 locations worldwide. Our shipping register is the fourth largest in the world, with a gross tonnage of more than 128 million as at end-September 2019.

The trading and logistics industries have always been our top economic pillars. Together, they account for 21 per cent of our GDP and 19 per cent of our total employment.

This is why Hong Kong is home to over 800 shipping-related companies, providing top-notch maritime services including ship broking, marine insurance, as well as maritime legal and arbitration services. We are also proud to host 12 out of 13 members of the International Group of Protection and Indemnity Clubs, seven out of the world's top 10 bookrunners on syndicated marine finance loans, as well as a good number of world-renowned classification societies. Recognising our institutional strengths and other

advantages, the International Chamber of Shipping has set up the China Liaison Office in Hong Kong, being its first office outside London.

Connectivity, as we all know, is key to the logistics game, and we never stop to improve our infrastructure. We are making good progress on the construction works for the third runway of the Hong Kong International Airport and its associated facilities, which are expected to come into operation by the end of 2024. Upon full commissioning, the system is expected to increase our airport's handling capacity to around 9 million tonnes of cargo annually by 2030 and up to 100 million passengers too. This will further strengthen our standing as the world's premier cargo airport.

In this era of e-commerce, there is fast growing demand for express and small-parcel delivery. Our Airport Authority is collaborating with its business partners to expand the express air cargo terminal to enhance Hong Kong's capability in handling these shipments. The relevant works have just commenced last month. When completed in 2022, the cargo handling capacity of the express cargo terminal will increase significantly by some 50 per cent to over a million tonnes per year. The premium logistics centre to be developed on our airport island will on other hand increase our capability of warehousing and shipment distribution. Scheduled to commence operation in 2023, the centre is expected to bring an incremental 1.7 million tonnes of air cargo to Hong Kong per annum when it operates in full capacity. So there is a lot to look forward to.

As for the development of high-value air cargo business, the Hong Kong airport has been recognised by the International Air Transport Association as a centre for excellence for pharmaceutical logistics since July 2017. Earlier this year, we were also the first airport ever to have obtained the same recognition for perishable logistics. These recognitions clearly showcase our airport's capability in processing pharmaceutical and perishable logistics.

The success of a trading hub like Hong Kong is demonstrated not only by the amount of cargo it processes each year, but, more importantly, by its connectivity. Last month, we celebrated the first anniversary of the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. The Bridge, apart from linking Hong Kong to the west bank of the Pearl River, provides a more far-reaching transport network that links to the entire Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. A journey from the Hong Kong International Airport to Zhuhai, one of the fastest-growing cities in southern China, now only takes 45 minutes. I am confident that the Bridge, synergising with our international airport, will consolidate our role as a double gateway to the world and also to the Pearl River Delta Region. This will further expand Hong Kong's cargo hinterland and bring more business opportunities for our logistics industry.

On top of existing policies to underpin our logistics and maritime industries, this year we have also rolled out a host of measures to support further development. They include tax concessions for ship leasing companies and marine insurance providers, as well as setting up regional desks to better support ship owners covered by our shipping register. Through these

and other facilitating measures, the logistics and maritime industries are well placed for success.

Ladies and gentlemen, I began my speech with a reference to the dark undertones of what the future holds for the global economy. Tough as it is, let's not forget that we are the ones who shape the future. It's what we're going to do to change the world together. With our resilience and can-do spirit, Hong Kong will rise, as we always have, above the waves and prove to the world that Hong Kong remains the ideal place for your businesses.

Last but not least, I am grateful to the Hong Kong Trade Development Council for braving the difficulties of organising the ALMC this year and making it happen. It's indeed a very challenging task and very well executed. I am even more grateful to all of you – your presence here is a vote of confidence to Hong Kong and one well cast. Your presence speaks for itself and means a lot to us. On that note, I wish you all a most fruitful, enjoyable and rewarding conference. Thank you.

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## **Immigration Department clarifies rumours on Internet**

Regarding the recent rumours that there has been dispute between Immigration officers and Police officers while Immigration officers were performing duty in Tsim Sha Tsui, the Immigration Department stressed today (November 19) that such rumours is totally unfounded.

Officers of both departments have been upholding professionalism during the course of duty and will continue to support and co-operate with each other.