

# CEDB responds to media report on Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme

In response to a media report on the implementation of the Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme today (April 16), a spokesman for the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau said the following:

"The policy objective of the Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme established under the Anti-epidemic Fund by the Government is to provide subsidies to facilitate local mask production with a view to stabilising mask supply as well as building up stock to meet contingency needs. The Government is pleased to note that the Scheme has attracted a considerable number of applications since its launch and many manufacturers have already indicated their interest and are prepared to commence local mask production.

"According to the Scheme, an applicant is required to state in its application the target commencement date of supplying certified masks to the Government, and the date is one of the application criteria. After approval in principle is given, the Government will sign an agreement with the approved applicant. If the applicant cannot supply certified masks to the Government by the target commencement date, it may apply for extension of not more than one month. Any extension beyond one month without exceptional reasons and full justifications would result in revocation of the subsidy. In other words, the exact date of the Government's procurement of certified masks supplied by a subsidised production line depends on when that production line can meet the requirements.

"As of now, the Government has approved in principle eight production lines and will sign agreements with the approved applicants. Prior to the signing of agreements, no subsidy has been disbursed to any applicant and procurement of certified masks has not yet started.

"For local masks produced outside the Scheme, including those produced by an approved applicant before an agreement is signed, or those produced by the same company with a non-subsidised production line, manufacturers can make their own arrangements on testing and certification, sales or other matters. All masks sold in Hong Kong, whether they are produced locally or the production of which is subsidised by the Government, must comply with relevant legislations, such as the Trade Descriptions Ordinance and the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance.

"The Government is concerned about the difficulties faced by the elderly and the underprivileged in buying masks. So far, the Government has passed 3.5 million masks donated by various sectors to the Government to non-governmental organisations for their distribution to the elderly and underprivileged. The Government will continue to pass on donations in order to share resources with the community and to fight the epidemic together."