

CE's Statement on Pre-ExCo Meeting Media Arrangement

With reference to her remarks at today's (July 3) pre-ExCo meeting media session on simultaneous interpretation and time in answering reporters' questions, the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, makes the following statement:

In all my media sessions, I have been answering questions in the language in which they are asked (Cantonese, Putonghua or English), and I will continue to do so. There is no question of the Government or myself attaching less importance to the use of English. Indeed, since taking office as Chief Executive, I have made sure that important statements are made or released in both languages, such as my announcement (at a pre-ExCo meeting media session on June 12) of the plan to set up a Commission of Inquiry on certain works at the Hung Hom Station of the Shatin Central Link and my speech at the reception to celebrate the 21st Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR on July 1. When a question was asked in English at the media stand-up today, I naturally responded in English. There should be no doubt about my commitment to responding to questions from reporters in the same language that the question is asked.

My remarks on simultaneous interpretation and time in answering questions made during today's usual pre-ExCo meeting media session were prompted by the consideration that such sessions, unlike a press conference, are of short duration (normally lasting 10 to 15 minutes before ExCo meeting commences) and during which reporters often have questions on a wide range of topical issues. If reporters ask the same question in different languages (be it Cantonese, Putonghua or English), and the same reply given also in different languages, that would take up time that might otherwise be used for reporters to raise other questions of interest. Those remarks were not targeted at the English language.

That said, having taken advice from my Information Services Department colleagues, I have no intention to change the way these pre-ExCo meeting media sessions are to be conducted. I apologise for any confusion thus caused.