

Chief Executive meets with hotel sector to press ahead with Community Isolation Facility Hotel Scheme (with photo)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (February 16) conducted a webinar with The Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners (the Federation), represented by its Executive Director, Mr Michael Li, and a group of hotel owners to seek their support for the Government's Community Isolation Facility (CIF) Hotel Scheme to provide the much needed accommodation to isolate people who test positive for COVID-19 but have no or mild symptoms. It was a highly constructive meeting at which good progress has been made.

Mrs Lam expressed thanks to the Federation and its members. She said that the hotel sector had been a close partner of the Government's anti-epidemic work in the past two years by providing designated hotels for arrivals from overseas or close contacts of locally confirmed cases who had to undergo quarantine. In view of the unprecedented surge in confirmed cases which had surpassed the Government's isolation capacity, the CIF Hotel Scheme was critically important to address the current bottleneck and redress the unsatisfactory situation of many people who had tested positive and were waiting at home for transfer to isolation facilities.

"I am touched by the enthusiasm and support indicated by the hotel representatives at the webinar and their forthcoming willingness to join the CIF Hotel Scheme. While I expressed a wish to identify some 7 000 to 10 000 hotel rooms for the purpose of isolation, I am optimistic that, through the joint efforts by the Government and hotel sector, at least 10 000 hotel rooms could be made available for the CIF Hotel Scheme."

Prior to the webinar, the Government has already secured about 4 400 rooms, of which some 1 700 will be made available for use before the end of this week and the remaining before the end of next week. The operational details about the Scheme including the respective responsibilities of the participating hotel and the Government team which would take over the management of the hotel were discussed at the webinar.

"The Government will provide the essential infection control training to the staff of the participating hotels and we expect suitable arrangements to be put in place to provide the necessary medical support. We are extremely grateful to the frontline hotel staff in supporting the operation of the hotel as an isolation facility, but where the participating hotel prefers the Government team to take over the day-to-day activities like checking-in and out, allocation of rooms, cleansing and security, this is also acceptable in order to facilitate participation by more hotels. I look forward to your positive response within the next day or so," said Mrs Lam.

Mrs Lam also disclosed at the webinar that she had assigned the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, to the task of overseeing the operation of the CIF Hotels with the support of the relevant Government departments and some 1 000 retirees of various disciplinary forces recruited to help. The Government will maintain close liaison and co-operation with the participating hotels to ensure the transfer of people thereto, their isolation in the designated hotel rooms and subsequent discharge in an orderly manner.

"With the utmost concern and staunch support of President Xi Jinping as conveyed to me by Vice Premier of the State Council Han Zheng, all in society must now join hands in riding out the fifth wave of the epidemic, displaying the Hong Kong spirit in full. May I once again appeal to the people of Hong Kong to remain confident and support the Government's anti-epidemic measures."

