

CS speaks on “The Chief Executive’s 2018 Policy Address”

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at a media session on "The Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address" at the Legislative Council Complex today (October 10):

The theme of the Chief Executive's second Policy Address is "Striving Ahead, Rekindling Hope". This well-chosen theme underlines the determination of the current-term Government to propel Hong Kong forward in face of increasing fierce regional and global competition. We also need to bring hope to all sectors of the community and vigorously promote upward social mobility.

We have rolled out altogether 244 new measures. They fully reflect the Government's political courage to tackle difficult tasks head-on. We are resolute and persistent in confronting the various long-entrenched and deep-seated problems.

Land and housing supply is the most thorny issue. The Chief Executive has announced a package of measures to boost housing supply in the short to medium term. With the completion of various major infrastructure projects, Lantau will become the "Double Gateway" to the world and the Greater Bay Area. In order to capture various competitive advantages and opportunities of Lantau and for the long-term benefits of Hong Kong's future, we are going to launch the Lantau Tomorrow Vision project which will provide 260 000 to 400 000 housing units of which 70 per cent are for public housing, accommodate 700 000 to 1.1 million people and provide 340 000 jobs.

We will continue to care, listen and act on the basis of the principles of "Innovative, Interactive and Collaborative" to implement people-oriented measures for a better and more harmonious Hong Kong. We will roll out a number of major initiatives to improve people's livelihood on all fronts. The key examples include:

- (i) Enhance substantially financial support for employers and micro, small and medium enterprises in preparing them for the abolition of the Mandatory Provident Fund "offsetting" arrangement. This would cost the Government \$29.3 billion over 25 years;
- (ii) Provide \$1.5 billion in recurrent funding to implement the all-graduate teaching force policy;
- (iii) Provide \$800 million in recurrent funding to enhance educational psychologist and speech therapist services for students with special educational needs;
- (iv) Extend statutory maternity leave from 10 weeks to 14 weeks;

(v) Legislate for a ban on electronic cigarettes;

(vi) Strengthen primary healthcare services by setting up the first District Health Centre in Kwai Tsing, and extending this model to other districts;

(vii) Recognise the positioning of Chinese medicine services in Hong Kong's healthcare system and set up a \$500 million fund to promote Chinese medicine applied research;

(viii) Waive or pay for the tolls charged on franchised buses for using government or franchised tunnels/roads to ease fare increase pressure particularly on the commuters; and

(ix) Draw on over HK\$500 million in funding allocation to enhance support for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

The current-term Government will continue to perform our roles as "facilitator" and "promoter" to proactively foster Hong Kong's long-term economic and social development, provide more land for housing and future economic activities, reinforce Hong Kong's advantages by stepping up investment in education as well as innovation and technology, scale up our established industries, improve people's livelihood and promote quality living. In short, our aim is for the Government to join hands with the whole community to forge and build a future full of hope and opportunities. Thank you.

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