

[DH supports WHO's technical consultation on public health and social measures \(with photo\)](#)

The World Health Organization (WHO) today (June 27) held a technical consultation on public health and social measures (PHSMs) for mitigating the risk and impact of epidemic and pandemic influenza in Hong Kong. The three-day event, with the support of the University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, gathered global experts in public health and epidemiology to review the most up-to-date scientific evidence and to develop a consensus on PHSMs. The Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, attended the meeting today and delivered his opening remarks, sharing his insights on PHSMs.

Addressing the meeting, Dr Lam remarked that PHSMs were important tools to protect the vulnerable with a view to reducing morbidity and mortality. He said, "To combat the COVID-19 pandemic, countries across the world rolled out a host of PHSMs. Despite the development of vaccines and antivirals at an unprecedented breakneck speed, PHSMs had continued to be the main bulwark against the pandemic in addition to other interventions, including vaccination."

Dr Lam also shared the experience in Hong Kong where five waves of COVID-19 infections took place. He said, "The Government responded to COVID-19 based on the cardinal principles of science-based and targeted anti-epidemic measures, while balancing health risks versus the livelihood of citizens. In fact, most of the PHSMs set out in the WHO's guidance for pandemic influenza were implemented locally during the pandemic in different phases. From containment to mitigation, the practice of PHSM had evolved rapidly to include contact tracing, quarantine and isolation, travel restrictions, universal masking, social distancing measures, technological innovations, and school closures, etc."

Dr Lam added that Hong Kong has contained the spread of COVID-19 with the tireless efforts of healthcare workers and support from citizens. He also expressed his gratitude towards the Central People's Government and the WHO for the unwavering support to Hong Kong.

Dr Lam said he believed that the abundance of experience and data gained from the COVID-19 pandemic would help chart a better course to deal with the next pandemic influenza and other epidemics.

