

Government implements most stringent boarding and quarantine requirements for eight places in southern Africa

The Government announced today (November 26) that in view of the latest developments of the COVID-19 epidemic situation, the boarding and quarantine requirements for persons arriving from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe will be tightened from 0.00am on November 27. Along with South Africa which is already a specified high-risk place, non-Hong Kong residents who have stayed in these places within 21 days will not be allowed to enter Hong Kong.

A Government spokesman said, "The mutant variant B.1.1.529 has been detected in South Africa and Botswana. Although scientists are not fully certain of its potential effects on the epidemic situation or whether the relevant mutations would affect the efficacies of vaccines, we have to stay vigilant. Therefore, along with South Africa which is currently a Group A specified place, the Government will also specify Botswana, as well as the adjacent Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe as Group A specified places."

With the eight southern African places above specified as Group A specified places, non-Hong Kong residents (including visitors) who have stayed there within 21 days are not allowed to enter Hong Kong. For Hong Kong residents, they can only board a flight for Hong Kong if they have been fully vaccinated and hold a recognised vaccination record. They have to undergo compulsory quarantine in a designated quarantine hotel for 21 days upon arrival at Hong Kong. The control and prevention measures applicable to these places under the prevailing mechanism are more stringent than the measures recently announced by the United Kingdom, Singapore, and Israel, etc.

Details on the relevant boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for respective specified places can be found at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/inbound-travel.html.

The Government will gazette the relevant updated specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to effect the above measures.

To attain the dynamic "zero infection" goal and to follow through on the anti-epidemic strategy of guarding against the importation of cases and the resurgence of domestic infections, the Government will continue to closely monitor the epidemic situation of various places and adopt a risk-based approach taking into account a basket of factors, including public health considerations (such as epidemic situations in particular places, testing rates, vaccination rates, volume of travellers and actual imported cases), as

well as other local socio-economic factors, and will adjust the boarding, quarantine and testing requirements for persons arriving at Hong Kong from relevant places based on the risk levels as the situation warrants.