

Government statement on 2022 Legislative Programme

With regard to a media report on March 21 claiming the Government would only introduce one Bill into the Legislative Council (LegCo) for first reading in the first half of the year, a Government spokesman said the report has not reflected the facts in full.

The report claims that in this year's legislative programme submitted by the Government, there were 15 Bills in the first half of this year, but owing to the epidemic situation, only one Bill was tabled, i.e. the Employment and Retirement Schemes Legislation (Offsetting Arrangement) (Amendment) Bill 2022. The fact is that the Government has already tabled the Appropriation Bill 2022, as well as the Employment (Amendment) Bill 2022 and the Revenue (Tax Concessions) Bill 2022 to the LegCo for first and second reading respectively on February 23 and March 16. In other words, a total of four Bills were tabled by the Government for first and second reading instead of only one Bill.

The spokesman added, in accordance with established practice, the Government will issue a projected legislative programme to the House Committee of the LegCo at the beginning of each legislative year, reflecting its plan at that moment, to facilitate Members to plan their work ahead. It is clear that the items in the legislative programme and the timetable will be updated from time to time having regard to the needs of the community, the priority of the Government's policy, the drafting progress etc. Such arrangement was already explained in the Government's letter to the Chairman of the House Committee of the LegCo on January 20.

Furthermore, the Government has already announced that the Temporary Protection Measures for Business Tenants (COVID-19 Pandemic) Bill will be introduced into LegCo on March 23. It is expected that bills will continue to be introduced into LegCo in end March and April as well.

The Bills introduced by the Government into LegCo in March are all legislative proposals that the Government decided to introduce in light of the rapidly developing epidemic situation, where it was considered that there was an imminent need to step up the support to the members of the public and businesses who are affected by the epidemic.

As for the other Bills that were originally planned to be introduced into the LegCo in the first half of the year, the spokesman said as of now, the consultation and drafting work of only a small number of Bills have been affected as a result of the epidemic situation. Nonetheless, relevant bureaux have not put the drafting and preparation work on hold; they will continue to proceed in an orderly manner.