

LCQ11: Filter masks produced by Correctional Services Department

Following is a question by Dr Hon Helena Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (March 18):

Question:

The Government stated on February 1 this year that before the occurrence of the novel coronavirus epidemic, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) had supplied face masks produced by it to certain non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the quantity of face masks produced by CSD last year; among them, the quantity of those supplied to NGOs, with a breakdown by name of NGO; and

(2) whether NGOs are required to pay for the face masks supplied; if so, of the criteria for determining the charges; if not, whether the Government has established a mechanism for monitoring the use of such face masks to prevent such face masks from being sold for profits or transferred to non-specified users; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Filter masks produced by the Correctional Services Department (CSD) are mainly supplied to the Government Logistics Department (GLD) for allocation to government departments. My reply to Dr Hon Helena Wong's question is as follows:

(1) In 2019, CSD produced about 1.1 million filter masks per month on average, which were mainly supplied to GLD. Moreover, some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as social welfare organisations and schools procured a total of about 120 000 masks during the year from CSD, amounting to less than 1 per cent of the total production. CSD is unable to disclose details of the NGOs which procured masks from it as third party information is involved.

In the light of the development of COVID-19 infection, there is a rapid increase in demand for filter masks from government departments. As such, CSD has ceased to take orders other than from GLD since January 2020. Moreover, the mask production facilities in Lo Wu Correctional Institution gradually increased the production and has reached 24-hour operation. CSD has also recruited over 1 200 off-duty or retired CSD officers as volunteers to participate in the production of masks, increasing the production to about

2.5 million masks per month. Among them, 1.8 million masks are supplied to GLD, whereas the remaining 700 000 masks are set aside for distribution to cleansing workers engaged by outsourced cleaning service contractors through relevant departments (including the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Housing Department, Government Property Agency, Marine Department, Customs and Excise Department (in respect of the Shenzhen Bay Port Hong Kong Port Area)).

(2) The price of the masks sold to NGOs is determined by cost, which is about \$0.13 each. The handling of the masks after-sales rests upon the NGOs which procured them.