

Opening remarks by Chairman of LegCo Finance Committee at end-of-session press conference

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

Following is the opening remarks by the Chairman of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Finance Committee, Mr Chan Kin-por, at the end-of-session press conference at the LegCo Complex today (July 18):

During the 2017-2018 legislative session, the Finance Committee has held 54 meetings spanning about 184 hours. The Committee has deliberated and approved 98 financial proposals involving a total commitment of \$251.4 billion, a record high since the 2012-2013 session. The approved proposals include:

(a) public works projects such as Central Kowloon Route Main Works costing \$42.3 billion and (development and) redevelopment of five hospitals costing \$29.6 billion;

(b) non-works proposals such as a commitment of \$30.3 billion for promoting innovation and technology in Hong Kong and a provision of about \$10.3 billion for six universities to build student hostels; and

(c) establishment proposals to create 68 directorate posts.

I notice that there is obvious improvement in efficiency in the Finance Committee. On average, the Committee spent a shorter time on an item this year, which is 1.4 hours per item versus four hours last year. This is mainly attributed to the amendments made to the Rules of Procedure and the Finance Committee Procedure in the year, achieving a saving of 26.5 hours. It is also worth mentioning that the Government and Members have adopted a pragmatic approach to the Committee's work.

On the other hand, the proportion of proposals already discussed and endorsed by the two Subcommittees (i.e. the Establishment Subcommittee and the Public Works Subcommittee) taken out for separate discussion in the Finance Committee is still high; 50 per cent of Public Works items endorsed were taken out versus 89 per cent last year, while 75 per cent of Establishment items were taken out versus 79 per cent last year. On this, I have to say that we need to avoid repetitive discussions and dwelling on wide policy issues.

In face of the Committee's heavy workload and the aspirations of Members to perform their gate-keeping role, I have strived to ensure smooth and orderly conduct of meetings and made conscientious efforts to facilitate communications among different political parties outside meetings. Looking ahead, I would like to call on both Members and government officials to get

well prepared before meetings and maintain close communications outside meetings, so as to enable the Committee to perform its functions effectively and efficiently.

Lastly, I am most grateful to the Deputy Chairman, Members and the Secretariat staff for their support over the past year.