

Remarks by CE at media session before ExCo (with video)

Following are the remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (October 29):

Reporter: Good morning. First, because some dinosaur fossils have been discovered in Hong Kong for the first time, so what's the Government's plan, if any, to develop Port Island into a tourism spot and any targets to make use of the dinosaur fossils to attract tourists? And the second question about the Kai Tak Sports Park, is there a need to stage more and bigger drills at the Sports Park after Sunday's (October 27) exercise, and how many drills should be held at the main stadium where large-scale events are mainly held involving 50 000 spectators? Thank you.

Chief Executive: The dinosaur fossil is the first discovery in Hong Kong, we are all very excited. On Port Island, of course, work is now proceeding to ensure that we will do the best discovery as possible, and also to ensure that we'll maintain the fossils so that it will not only help research, but will also help develop Hong Kong as a place for us to learn more about the history of dinosaurs. And we will also grasp this opportunity to develop it into maybe a tourist attraction. So rightfully, we will be considering how to develop this into a good attraction. First of all, we will be making use of the courtyard of the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui to build a workshop and exhibition area for people to see the work of the experts and also to see the fossils being prepared. We also plan for a long-term display so that we can all learn more about palaeontology.

In fact, what is encouraging is the discovery on Port Island is in the area of our Geopark. And you know that under the UNESCO Geopark, we actually have a very famous and spectacular spot, which is the hexagonal volcanic rock columns. That is, I think, one of the strongest attractions for people who are interested in natural resources, natural heritage, and also enjoying the nature. So indeed, we will be making use of this opportunity to develop some special tourist lines so that they can look at, first of all, the hexagonal volcanic rock columns, as well as all the other attractions of our Geopark, including some exhibitions of the dinosaur fossils. The Tourism Board, and I think those who work in the tourism industry, will be working hard to develop these new attraction lines of visiting.

As regards the drills for the Kai Tak Sports Park, to prepare it for the grand opening on all the subsequent events, it is very important we do all the drills necessary. It has to be progressive so that it will train up, first of all, departmental staff, those who work in the Kai Tak Sports Park Limited and those who are involved, especially in the transport industry. The challenge, of course, is the dispersal of crowds after an event which will comprise 50 000 spectators. That is a challenge we must take up boldly. And that is also why I have been demanding different levels of drills so as to

test different elements of operational procedures, different areas of risks, and also to learn about the experiences of those who may eventually become the final spectators of the audience of 50 000.

We will progress in such a way that will develop the system to ensure that it will operate smoothly. And then we will progress to test the transport system. And then we'll progress to test all the three sports grounds which include, first of all, the Youth Sports Ground, then the indoor sports centre, and eventually the main stadium. The progression will let us refine our plan through the experiences we gain in each step. I do want the drills to progress fast, but it is also important for reviews and improvement measures to be designed so that we can put them in. I will envisage there will be at least 20-plus drills, and depending on the experiences we will gain through the drills, then we will decide whether more will be necessary. That is why I have set up a task force led by the Chief Secretary for Administration, who will oversee the co-ordination and co-operation of all the government departments, the Kai Tak Sports Park Limited, and transportation operators, ensuring that we have all the contingency plans worked out, including emergency or extreme weather conditions, and ensuring that we have bottom-line thinking and increase our safety margin. I'm sure, through all these different drills, people get familiar with the whole running of the system. And I'm thrilled to learn that those who participated in Sunday's drill, they were all very committed, and they all gave a strong impression that they want to do a good job for Hong Kong, for the opening and the subsequent running of Kai Tak Sports Park. Thank you very much.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the remarks.)