

Representatives of government departments exchanges views with representatives of taxi trade on handling illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward

Further to the meeting between representatives of government departments and representatives of the taxi trade on November 21, representatives from the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB), the Transport Department and Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) met again today (December 20) with representatives of the taxi trade, with a view to listening to the trade's opinions and exchanging views on how to handle the illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward.

A spokesman for the TLB said that the government representatives and representatives of taxi trade discussed at the meeting on how to deal with the illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward more effectively. The Legislative Council (LegCo) passed the Road Traffic Legislation (Enhancing Personalized Point-to-point Transport Services)(Amendment) Bill 2023 at the meeting on December 13, increasing the penalty levels for illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward by motor vehicles. These include increasing the maximum fine, lengthening the period of suspension of vehicle licences and the impoundment of vehicle, as well as increasing the maximum term of imprisonment. The Police will continue to allocate appropriate resources to step up enforcement actions against illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward; and welcomes the public and the trade to cooperate with the Police, including provision of information to report illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward. The Police will follow up and investigate in a serious manner, and will take enforcement actions against relevant activities if there is sufficient evidence.

In addition, the Government has announced earlier that a review of the existing legislation will be launched in order to deal with illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward more effectively. The Government will also explore the regulation of online hire car hailing platforms, so that only taxis and vehicles with hire car permits can provide services through the platform, with a view to combating illegal activities. The Government plans to communicate with and listen to the views from LegCo Members, the trade and other relevant stakeholders in mid-2024 on policy and legal perspectives involved in the relevant regulation, as well as the key considerations derived from study on overseas experiences. The spokesman said, "The Government welcomes the taxi trade's views on the above issues, which will be taken into consideration when conducting the relevant review and study."

The spokesman continued, "The Government is pleased to see

representatives from the taxi trade at the meeting today exchanging views and resolving problems in a pragmatic manner. The Government will continue to proactively listen to the views of the taxi trade and different sectors of the community."