

Security Bureau strongly disapproves of and rejects biased and erroneous remarks by UK Foreign Secretary on Basic Law Article 23 legislation

The Security Bureau today (February 29) strongly disapproved of and rejected the biased and erroneous remarks made by the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom (UK), Mr David Cameron, about the Basic Law Article 23 legislation (Article 23 legislation).

The Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, said, "While making his biased and erroneous remarks, the UK Foreign Secretary, Mr Cameron, deliberately did not mention the extensive public consultation and nearly 30 consultation sessions conducted by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government on the Article 23 legislation. In fact, a majority of the participants and members of the public filing written submissions in response to the public consultation indicated their support for the legislation; and once the Safeguarding National Security Bill is finalised, it will be introduced to the Legislative Council for scrutiny.

"The UK has laws and procedures covering different areas for safeguarding national security. The legislative proposals of Article 23 has made reference to laws of foreign countries, including those of the UK. The UK has more than 10 stringent laws to safeguard its national security. What Mr Cameron said reflected his double standards.

"Under the United Nations Charter, one of the elements of sovereign equality is that each state has the right freely to choose and develop its political, social, economic and cultural systems. No country or region should fantasise that its system is superior to that of another. Moreover, regardless of the systems, every state will enact laws on safeguarding national security. This is an inherent right of every sovereign state, and is also an international practice. Each country or region has the right to enact laws in the most suitable way, having regard to its own circumstances and needs. It should also respect the systems of other countries and regions and their responsibilities and needs to legislate for safeguarding national security, rather than conceitedly attempted to interfere in the legislative procedures of other countries or regions.

"After Hong Kong's return to the motherland, the Chinese Government ruled the HKSAR with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law of the HKSAR as legal basis, rather than the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The UK has no sovereignty, jurisdiction or right of supervision over Hong Kong. The UK should immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs which are internal affairs of China."

"The HKSAR Government will complete the legislative exercise as early as

possible to plug the relevant national security loopholes, and in the process, it will listen to the constructive suggestions from various sectors to ensure that the legislation is in line with the Basic Law, and the relevant provisions on safeguarding rights and freedoms in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong. In formulating the relevant offences and drafting the Bill, we will target acts endangering national security with precision and define the elements and penalties of the relevant offences with clarity. Normal business operations and normal exchanges with overseas institutions, organisations and individuals will be fully protected by the law," Mr Tang stressed.