

# Speech by Secretary for Health at opening ceremony of Knowledge Event and Policy Course – Asia Pacific Network for Health Systems Strengthening (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, at the opening ceremony of the Knowledge Event and Policy Course – Asia Pacific Network for Health Systems Strengthening today (December 4):

Professor Francis Chan (Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the Chinese University of Hong Kong), Professor Samuel Wong (Director of the Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care of the Chinese University of Hong Kong), Professor Yeoh Eng-kiong (Director of the Centre for Health Systems and Policy Research of the Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care of the Chinese University of Hong Kong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here with you today to officiate at the opening ceremony of the Knowledge Event and Policy Course – Asia Pacific Network for Health Systems Strengthening (ANHSS). I wish to extend a warm welcome to all of you, especially experts and friends from the Mainland and overseas.

Today's Knowledge Event, entitled "Health System and Community Resilience", is timely for us to take stock of the experiences from COVID-19 and to provide pointers for ramping up resilience in the public health systems in future. I am sure that we will all benefit from the presentations and exchanges today where policy makers and experts from different places gather here to share their COVID-19 journeys and insight on public health system resilience. My best compliments to Professor Yeoh and his team at the Centre for Health Systems and Policy Research of the Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care, as well as the ANHSS for organising this meaningful event. I am sure that it will be a resounding success.

Public health systems are the bedrock to safeguard the life and limb of the general public. They are the bulwark against serious threats to public health, such as the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic was as much an ordeal as providing an opportunity for policy-makers and public health experts to thrash out innovative and effective approaches to tackle novel and emerging diseases, to reinforce healthcare systems, and to weave closer collaboration networks with community stakeholders as well as regional and international collaborators. To this end, enhancing resilience in preparedness, readiness, response and recovery is a lynchpin for effective

actions and reactions in future. Collaboration between the Government and the community has played and will continue to play an indispensable role to safeguard public health. This calls for enhancing the resilience of not just the public healthcare system but also every member of the community.

While Hong Kong has built up resilience and successfully tackled multiple waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are committed to refining our tools and gearing up ourselves to prepare for the next epidemic, which no one knows for sure when will strike. With the support of our long-term community partner, the Hong Kong Jockey Club, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will enhance the local capacity in epidemic surveillance and early warning and prevention and control, strengthen the joint disease prevention and control as well as manpower training with the Mainland authorities, and promote international co-operation in scientific research in various areas.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the critical importance of a strong primary healthcare infrastructure and workforce within the community. At the same time, it has also exposed and exacerbated the financial burden on our healthcare system and the social costs of chronic diseases. A robust primary healthcare system will be an important line of defence against a wide range of potential public health crises. In this connection, the HKSAR Government released the Primary Healthcare Blueprint late last year, setting out the development direction and strategies for coping with the challenges brought about by an ageing population and the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases. We are pressing ahead with our work on various fronts, including the setting-up of District Health Centres in all of the 18 districts, advocating "family doctor for all", enhancing the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme, launching the Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme, better utilising multidisciplinary healthcare services, etc, with a view to providing comprehensive, sustainable and people-centric primary healthcare services in the community. This will help us build a healthier Hong Kong that will be better prepared when the next emerging disease strikes.

Today's Knowledge Event is a great opportunity for key policy makers and academics from the public health sector from different places in the Asia-Pacific region to share their experience on how they collaborated with their community to prepare, respond, mitigate and adapt in the face of one of the greater public health threats in modern history. Like you, I am eager to learn about transformation of health systems and strategies for institutionalising the knowledge gained for health systems and community resilience. At closing, I wish the event a great success and everyone excellent health. Thank you very much.



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## [SJ to visit Vietnam](#)

The Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, will depart for a three-day visit to Vietnam this afternoon (December 4).

During the visit, Mr Lam will attend the 13th China-ASEAN Prosecutors-General Conference and deliver a speech at a plenary session. As a member of the Chinese delegation, he will attend bilateral meetings between the delegation and member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. He will also meet with representatives from the legal and commercial sectors of Vietnam to exchange views with them on issues of mutual interest.

Accompanying Mr Lam on the visit will include the Director of Public Prosecutions, Ms Maggie Yang, and government counsel.

Mr Lam will return to Hong Kong on December 6. During Mr Lam's absence, the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, will be the Acting Secretary for Justice.

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## [2023 District Council Ordinary Election – registration arrangements](#)

## for voting at Near Boundary Polling Stations end tomorrow

The 2023 District Council Ordinary Election will be held on December 10 (Sunday). To enable electors living on the Mainland or those who need to travel to and from the Mainland on the polling day to cast their votes, the Registration and Electoral Office (REO) will set up four Near Boundary Polling Stations (NBPSs) at two schools near Sheung Shui MTR Station (namely Hong Kong Taoist Association Tang Hin Memorial Secondary School and Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Kap Yan Directors' College). Electors of the 44 District Council geographical constituencies (DCGCs) who wish to vote at the NBPSs can register through the online registration system ([www.reo-form.gov.hk/nbps.htm](http://www.reo-form.gov.hk/nbps.htm)). The deadline for registration is 6pm tomorrow (December 5). Late registrations will not be processed.

A spokesman for the REO said today (December 4), "The arrangements are only applicable to DCGC electors. District Committees constituency (DCC) electors must cast their votes at the 18 DCC polling stations across the territory. DCC electors on the Mainland should plan their return trips to Hong Kong as early as possible so that they can cast their votes on the polling day."

When registering, electors are required to provide their names in both Chinese and English, Hong Kong identity card (HKID) number and contact telephone number which can receive SMS in Hong Kong or the Mainland. Electors are also required to choose to vote at a specified timeslot to complete the registration. If electors wish to receive the notification of registration result through email, they can provide an email address during the registration.

After submitting the registration application, the REO will send a notification of registration result to the electors concerned via SMS and email (if applicable) instantly to confirm whether they have successfully registered to vote at NBPSs. Only upon receipt of the notification of registration result confirming their successful registration can electors cast their votes at the relevant polling stations. In case the email address and/or phone number provided by the electors during registration is/are different from the electors' particulars maintained by the REO, the REO will also inform them of their successful registration to vote at the NBPSs via the email address and/or phone number kept in the REO's records to prevent fraudulent registration.

In case registrants have to change their itineraries on the polling day, they can simply cancel the registration and change back to their originally allocated polling stations for casting their votes through the online registration system before the deadline of 6pm tomorrow. However, if the registration period has already expired when the change of itinerary is made, the electors concerned may contact the REO at 2891 1001 to make appropriate

arrangements.

On the polling day, registered electors are required to bring the original copy of their HKID cards to vote at the allocated NBPSs at the specified timeslot. DCGC electors of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon need to vote at Hong Kong Taoist Association Tang Hin Memorial Secondary School while DCGC electors of the New Territories need to vote at Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Kap Yan Directors' College. Electors may choose to walk for five to six minutes from Sheung Shui MTR Station to the NBPSs. The REO will also arrange shuttle bus services to carry electors to and from Sheung Shui MTR Station and the NBPSs. Please refer to the election website ([www.elections.gov.hk/dc2023/pdf/Annex1\\_Shuttle\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.elections.gov.hk/dc2023/pdf/Annex1_Shuttle_Eng.pdf)) for the location of pick-up and drop off points.

The spokesman said, "To ensure the smooth and orderly implementation of the arrangements, a pre-registration system is adopted with a quota limit. The maximum number of the registration quota for the NBPSs is set at 38 000 which will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis."

If a registrant would like to ascertain whether he/she is a registered elector, he/she may log in to the Online Voter Information Enquiry System ([vr.gov.hk](http://vr.gov.hk)) or call the election hotline (2891 1001) for checking. For details of the NBPS arrangements, members of the public can visit the dedicated election website ([www.elections.gov.hk/dc2023/eng/nbps.html](http://www.elections.gov.hk/dc2023/eng/nbps.html)). They can also email to [reoeng@reo.gov.hk](mailto:reoeng@reo.gov.hk) or call the election hotline (2891 1001) for enquiries. The service hours of the hotline from December 4 to 10 are as follows: 8.45am to 8pm from December 4 to 7; 8.45am to 9pm on December 8 and 9; and 7.30am to 11pm on December 10 (polling day).

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## **2023 District Council Ordinary Election – registration arrangements for voting at Near Boundary Polling Stations end tomorrow**

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## **Appointments to Management Committee of Consumer Legal Action Fund announced**

The Government announced today (December 4) the reappointment of Ms Theresa Lena Chow and the appointment of Ms Stephanie Hung Yu-jie as members to the Management Committee of the Consumer Legal Action Fund for a term of two years with effect from December 6, 2023.

A Government spokesman thanked the outgoing member, Mr Alex Fan Hoi-kit, for his contributions to the Management Committee during his tenure.

The Consumer Legal Action Fund was established in 1994 to facilitate consumer access to legal remedies by providing legal assistance to consumers in cases involving significant consumer interests.

The Consumer Council is the trustee of the Fund. The Management Committee assists the Consumer Council in managing the Fund and determining the eligibility of applications under the Fund.

The membership of the Management Committee with effect from December 6, 2023, is as follows:

Ms Astina Au Sze-ting  
Ms Theresa Lena Chow  
Ms Stephanie Hung Yu-jie  
Mr Richard Khaw Wei-kiang, SC  
Mr Eugene Liu  
Mr Johnny Ma Ka-chun, SC  
Mr Raymond Mak Ka-chun

Mr Alan Ng Man-sang  
Dr Karen Shum Hau-yan  
Ms Gilly Wong Fung-han (ex-officio member)  
Mr Philip Wong Wing-cheong  
Mr Selwyn Yu Sing-cheung, SC