

[Transcript of remarks by SCED at media session](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, at a media session after hosting a reception for representatives of consulates and local and foreign chambers of commerce today (October 31):

Reporter: Are there any concerns or challenges from the foreign chambers about whether the measures in the Policy Address are adequate for them? What does the Government think about the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth? It seems slow given the Government had rolled out different activities to boost spending and the economy?

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: When I spoke to the chambers and the Consuls General to explain the Policy Address' different measures in promoting the economic growth, they showed a lot of understanding and appreciated all the initiatives introduced in the Policy Address by the Chief Executive. The GDP growth is increasing in the third quarter, despite the challenging situation all around. And with all the measures and initiatives introduced by the Government like the night market, which I enjoy myself as well, I am very confident that the economy of Hong Kong will be improving and increasing.

Reporter: Do the chambers show any concerns about the measures not being enough?

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: They appreciated all the measures introduced and we have different kinds of funding to help all the SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises).

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

[First Mainland Study Tour for EOs jointly organised by HKSAR Government and Wuhan University commences today \(with photos\)](#)

The first Mainland Study Tour for Executive Officers (EOs) organised by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government in partnership with Wuhan University had its opening ceremony in Wuhan today (October 31).

About 40 EOs of different ranks from more than 20 bureaux and departments will commence their visits and exchanges as well as classroom learning for five days and four nights to know more about the country's latest developments and important directions of governance and policies in the new era.

The Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Clement Leung, and the Director of General Grades, Mr Hermes Chan, led the class to Wuhan for the study visit by the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link this morning. Speaking at the opening ceremony at Wuhan University, Mr Leung said that the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) is committed to enhancing the training for civil servants at all ranks, and the EOs, being the professional managers of the HKSAR Government, are responsible for managing government resources and systems on various fronts, and play a key role in the implementation of policy initiatives, delivery of public services, co-ordination of major events, provision of administrative support and ensuring departmental operations.

Mr Leung pointed out that the Government attaches great importance to the training and career development of the E0 grade, and encouraged the participants to grasp this valuable learning opportunity and actively complement Hong Kong's integration into the overall development of the country by making use of what they would learn upon returning to their respective positions, and to contribute to the country and society.

The study tour is jointly organised by the CSB and Wuhan University with the staunch support of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council. It covers topics such as green development in the new era, national governance empowered by digital technology, as well as regional co-ordinated development. Through on-site visits, research, thematic visits and exchange sessions at units in the areas of home affairs, biotechnology, innovation and technology and logistics in Wuhan, the participants will gain an in-depth understanding of the latest local developments and share and exchange experiences with staff of related organisations. The participants will also undertake classroom learning at the campus of Wuhan University to learn about the country and the development plan for the Wuhan metropolitan area. The CSB plans to continue to launch the study tour next year.

Mr Leung will return to Hong Kong tomorrow (November 1) while members of the study tour will return to Hong Kong on Saturday (November 4).



Cluster of Rhinovirus/Enterovirus cases in Kwong Wah Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Kwong Wah Hospital made the following announcement today (October 31):

One male patient and three female patients (aged 33 months to eight years) and four staff members in a paediatrics and adolescent medicine ward have been presenting with fever or respiratory symptoms since October 15. Appropriate viral tests had been arranged for the patients and their test results were positive for Enterovirus/Rhinovirus. Three of the patients have been transferred to Hong Kong Children's Hospital for further isolation treatment while one other patient is being treated in isolation in Kwong Wah Hospital. All of the patients are in stable condition. One of the staff members is currently on leave, and the other three staff members have recovered and have resumed duty.

Enhanced infection control measures have already been adopted according to prevailing guidelines. Droplet and contact precautions, hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfection of the environment and equipment have also been strengthened.

The hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation in the ward concerned. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for follow-up.

SCED updates representatives of consulates and chambers of commerce on investment promotion work

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, today (October 31) hosted a reception for some 150 representatives of consulates and local and foreign chambers of commerce to update them on the Government's work on investment promotion.

Mr Yau also announced the signing of the Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements (IPPA) between Hong Kong and Türkiye earlier today. The Agreement is the first IPPA signed by the current-term Government and the 23rd IPPA that Hong Kong has signed, bringing the IPPA coverage to a total of 32 trading partners.

Speaking at the reception, Mr Yau said that Hong Kong is renowned as a robust free-market economy and welcomes foreign direct investment from all over the world, while the level playing field and free market mechanism will continue as guaranteed under the Basic Law.

He stressed that it is a priority of the current-term Government to attract enterprises and investments, and updated the guests on the latest developments of investment promotion. Among them, Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) has assisted 300 companies from various sectors around the globe to set up or expand businesses in Hong Kong in the first nine months of this year, an increase of 27 per cent compared to the same period last year, surpassing the KPI announced in the 2022 Policy Address on a pro-rata basis. He expressed appreciation to all the stakeholders for their support, and said that InvestHK would stand ready to continue offering one-stop customised support services to enterprises via its investment promotion network across the world.

Mr Yau added that Hong Kong is also committed to enhancing protection and guarantees for foreign direct investment, and has been making relentless efforts in expanding the network of IPPAs.

"The signing of the IPPA between Hong Kong and Türkiye today sends a very positive signal to the investment community that Hong Kong and Türkiye are committed to enhancing protection and guarantees for foreign direct investment," he said.

The Agreement, which will enter into force after the fulfilment of relevant internal requirements by both sides, will enhance the confidence of investors and expand investment flows between Hong Kong and Türkiye.

Following the signing of the Hong Kong-Türkiye IPPA today, the geographical scope of the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales is also extended to cover Türkiye, as the 38th eligible economy, with immediate effect to further support Hong Kong enterprises in developing their businesses there.

Stressing the Government's long-standing commitments and dedicated efforts in strengthening bilateral trade and investment ties by forging IPPAs with other economies, Mr Yau highlighted the commencement of IPPA negotiations with Bangladesh and the ongoing IPPA negotiations with Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

Mr Yau also took the opportunity to brief the guests on initiatives related to commerce and trade in "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address". Among them, InvestHK and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council will set up more consultant offices along the Belt and Road to strengthen efforts on investment and trade promotion.

CHP investigates confirmed Mpox case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) said today (October 31) that it is investigating a confirmed Mpox (also known as Monkeypox) case, and urged the public to heighten vigilance and avoid close physical contact with persons suspected of contracting Mpox. Meanwhile, high-risk target groups are advised to receive Mpox vaccination.

The case involves a 30-year-old male patient with an underlying illness. He had developed localised skin ulcer since October 21. He visited the Yau Ma Tei Male Social Hygiene Clinic of the DH on October 25 and 27. He is in stable condition and arrangements were made for him to be admitted to Princess Margaret Hospital.

An initial investigation revealed that he had visited the Mainland during the incubation period. According to the patient, he only had high-risk exposure in Hong Kong during the incubation period. No epidemiological linkages between this case and other confirmed cases recorded in Hong Kong earlier have been found so far. The CHP is continuing its epidemiological investigations of the case and will report the case to the World Health Organization.

A total of 51 confirmed Mpox cases have been recorded in Hong Kong so

far. The CHP appeals again to high-risk target groups to receive Mpox vaccination with a view to lowering the risk of infection or the possibility of having more severe symptoms after infection. Persons who experience Mpox symptoms (including rashes, fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, exhaustion, muscle pain, and severe headaches) or suspect themselves of being infected are advised to seek medical attention and receive treatment at once, and they should not engage in activities with others during which other people may have contact with their skin rash or body fluids. Members of the public should maintain good personal and hand hygiene to prevent virus transmission or infection through contact. They should also avoid close physical contact with persons or animals suspected of infection.

The CHP had earlier set up an Mpox telephone hotline (2125 2373). The hotline operates from Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) from 9am to 5pm, which enables those who suspect or are concerned they have had high-risk contact with confirmed patients, in particular men who have sex with men or those who have sexual practices with strangers, to make enquiries and receive relevant health advice.

The Government has activated the Alert level of the preparedness and response plan for the disease in September last year and will continue to assess the risk in view of the latest scientific evidence and situation, and implement corresponding control measures.

The Mpox vaccination programme for high-risk groups commenced on October 5 last year. Under the programme, the following high-risk target groups can receive Mpox vaccination on a voluntary basis:

1. Individuals with high-risk sexual practices, e.g. having multiple sexual partners, sex workers, or having a history of sexually transmitted infection within the past 12 months;
2. Healthcare workers responsible for caring of patients with confirmed Mpox;
3. Laboratory personnel working with zoonotic pox viruses; and
4. Animal care personnel with high risk of exposure in case of Mpox occurrence in animals in Hong Kong.

High-risk target groups can receive Mpox vaccination at the designated Mpox vaccination centre (situated at 2/F, CHP building, 147C Argyle Street, Mong Kok), by appointment through email (mpv_booking@dh.gov.hk) or telephone booking line (2547 1900) during office hours. They can also receive Mpox walk-in vaccinations at all of the DH's Social Hygiene Service Clinics (SoCHS) (namely Chai Wan SoCHS, Wan Chai Male SoCHS, Wan Chai Female SoCHS, Yau Ma Tei Male SoCHS, Yau Ma Tei Female SoCHS, Yung Fung Shee SoCHS, Fanling SoCHS and Tuen Mun SoCHS). Further information of the clinics including their locations is available at www.dh.gov.hk/english/tele/tele_chc/tele_chc_shcf.html and www.dh.gov.hk/english/tele/tele_chc/tele_chc_shcm.html.

Meanwhile, the DH's Integrated Treatment Centre in Kowloon Bay, and the Hospital Authority's Special Medical Clinics at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and

Princess Margaret Hospital will continue to provide Mpox vaccination services for their clients.

For more details, please visit the CHP's page on [Mpox](#).