

Transcript of remarks by Acting CE at media session before ExCo meeting

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Acting Chief Executive, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (December 17):

Reporter: About the new Mainland checkpoint on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, why didn't the Hong Kong Government announce such an arrangement to the public beforehand? And have actually the Mainland authorities informed the Hong Kong Government about this? And the second question is concerning the remarks given by Law Chi-kwong yesterday, saying that the independent review committee would not be able to compel witnesses to give evidence, so how can the Hong Kong Government convince the public that the committee is just and fair? Thank you.

Acting Chief Executive: The first question relates to operational matters, security matters on the Mainland and Macao. It's beyond Hong Kong's control. In fact, it's not Hong Kong's purview. As it is operational matter on the part of the Mainland authorities, so I am not prepared to comment on that. But it's perfectly justified for them to exercise jurisdiction within their own territory. It's entirely legal and justified.

The second question about this independent review committee, we've repeatedly said that it's meant to take a macro view of what happened actually in the lead up to the social events, and in fact the circumstances surrounding the current crisis we are facing – the why's and the what's and so on . In the process, to identify the deep-seated social conflicts, fundamental social conflicts, embedded in community for a long, long time, for example, wealth gap, and also land, housing supply, youth mobility, upward mobility of youngsters and so and so forth. So it's a host, a basket of problems we're tackling. Now this is a mammoth exercise, and calls for independent, so called, high level, high powered, research committee, to head up the whole task. That's why we are identifying suitable candidates to head the committee, and as well as to really to join the committee as well. It's going to be a mammoth task, but it's a very important task that we will pursue, that we need to pursue in earnest.

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