

Transcript of remarks by Acting CE at media session before ExCo meeting (with video)

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 (April 9):

Reporter: Mr Cheung, on the "ding" rights under the Small House Policy, what do you mean by whether the Government is planning to appeal? Which grounds are they looking into? Secondly, UK has raised concern on the extradition law, so will the Government withdraw it? Lastly, the coming verdict on some occupy leaders, do you think that will affect public sentiment and how do you think about that?

Acting Chief Executive: The first question, of course it's the Development Bureau in concert with the Department of Justice will very carefully consider and examine the arguments, the reasoning in the court ruling, as far as the so-called "ding" right (legitimate traditional interests of indigenous villagers) is concerned. So we will certainly make our decision clear later on. But in the meantime, we must have a little breathing space to study carefully the judgment before we come to a conclusion on the way forward.

The second question is about what you mentioned about this extradition law and all that. I just want to make the point clear here. We are talking about really filling a void in the legal system. There is a big gap at the moment in terms of extradition with some countries, you know. We don't want Hong Kong to be a haven for criminals, for suspects. We have to make sure that we respect the rule of law, and Hong Kong is very proud to have judicial independence plus the rule of law.

All the concerns in the public arena, in fact raised by international community, are not entirely warranted. If you look carefully into the entire thinking, we've got pretty clear safeguards before a decision is made to allow somebody to be extradited. And all these safeguards are real safeguards. They are not imaginary safeguards. We must not try to think of various scenarios which are not really real in real life. So what I am saying here is we've got clear safeguards, clear barriers, before we actually come to the decision to allow somebody to be sent back. You know, so all these safeguards are real safeguards, including the Department of Justice will be the gatekeeper, including we've got a lot of judicial review procedures in Hong Kong to provide protection, for example, habeas corpus. And finally we've got the Court of Final Appeal. The entire procedure is transparent. And Hong Kong is very proud because, judicial independence, we are number one in Asia, number eight in the world. All these are the factors we've got to consider. We look at the whole picture itself.

Reporter: On the coming verdict of the occupying leaders and figures, what is

your view? And do you think it will affect Hong Kong democracy?

Acting Chief Executive: Well, we have to wait for the judgement to come out in first place, alright. It is premature for us to make any comment on that particular case. Thank you.

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