

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

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Acting Chief Executive, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at a media session today (August 14):

Reporter: Will the Government consider to take back FCC's building?

Acting Chief Executive: Well, the building is in fact under a lease, currently a seven-year lease up to January 2023. We make available the premises to FCC and this testifies to our support of its work over the past decades. In fact, we've been co-operating very, very well with the FCC in Hong Kong. We also value the importance of press freedom, of speech freedom in Hong Kong. No question about it. These two freedoms are also protected under the Basic Law. They also represent the core values of Hong Kong, which underpin our present success as a vibrant, open, inclusive and international centre. But having said all that, this exercise of the freedoms concerned – press freedom and individual freedom, particularly speech freedom – has to be within the confines of the law, within bounds of the law. In other words, there is a limit beyond which you mustn't overstep. OK?

Reporter: Secretary, given the statement today and the Government's position, is the Government prepared to cease to co-operate with FCC given today's talk, that is it damages the relations of your Government and the FCC? And my second question being, are you prepared to, perhaps, arrest Chan Ho-tin or not, because given this express statement he made in the FCC, and could you point us to which parts of his statement particularly concerned you?

Acting Chief Executive: First of all, we have a very cordial relationship with the FCC, and I'm sure that this relationship will continue. We don't see any disruption to this very cordial working relationship. That explains why we support the allocation of the present premises, which is actually a graded building, under a pretty long lease to FCC over the past years. So there's no question of us ceasing relationship at all. I don't think this is a question we should consider at the moment, in fact consider in the future either.

Hong Kong, as I said, is a free place. We pride ourselves on being an open, vibrant, free international city. This is our recipe for success. We'll certainly continue to build on our success. But having said all that, we mustn't forget that Hong Kong has a constitutional responsibility to protect, safeguard, the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and national security of the People's Republic of China, and Hong Kong is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China, so there is no question about independence. That's why we always say that we can't tolerate any discussion, let alone promotion, campaigning, for the sake of pushing forward nationalism, independence in Hong Kong. No question about it.

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