

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session today (June 25):

Reporter: Hello, Mrs Lam. My first question is since Mr Lee joined the police force in the '70s, his only experience was in policing and security areas. You just now cited an example of Henry Tang, but most of the CS since the handover had experience leading different policy bureaux. So how can you convince the public and the civil service that he was capable? The second question, is the reshuffle related to the Article 23 legislation? Why does the Government think that the NSL (national security law) is still not sufficient in safeguarding national security? Could you please explain to us? Thanks.

Chief Executive: At the politically appointed official level, one is looking for leadership, vision, diligence and also a commitment to serve the community of Hong Kong. Of course for people who have extensive experience in a diversity of areas, that may be helpful but I don't think that is a prerequisite. The mere fact that a particular candidate does not have that full range of experience is not one of the most important factors. But to be fair to John Lee, he has been in the Government for almost four decades, and the Security Bureau is perhaps one of the biggest in terms of significance and in terms of the number of civil servants under its supervision, so one could not say that as Secretary for Security for many years, his experience is limited to the police background or limited to the law enforcement. As you have heard the new Secretary for Security just mentioned, his future work will include a range of areas, including facilitating the flow of people, the flow of goods and other areas. I have every confidence that with John's rich experience and leadership and capability as demonstrated in various positions in the Government, he will be able to perform very well in this new appointment as the Chief Secretary for Administration.

The reshuffle has nothing to do with what we are planning or preparing for the enactment of local legislation as required under Basic Law (BL) Article 23. I have already answered that in public that it is a requirement both under the Basic Law and also under the national security law that the Hong Kong SAR Government has to continue to do two things: one is to put in place local legislation as required under the Basic Law, that is Article 23; the other is to enhance and improve existing legislation that will help us to prohibit activities and acts that will endanger national security. What we are doing is exactly what we are required to do.

You mentioned that national security law is already in place, why do we need Basic Law Article 23 local legislation. Because the coverage of the national security law is not entirely the same as BL 23. There are clearly areas that we are required to enact local legislation under Basic Law Article 23 which are not in the national security law. In order to have a

comprehensive legislative regime in place, we need to continue to work on the two areas that I have just mentioned.

Reporter: Good morning. Two questions. How will the government reshuffle serve Hong Kong's development in context of the city's closer collaboration with the Chinese Mainland? Secondly, this week the national top aerospace scientist visiting Hong Kong said the city can play a bigger role in the nation's deep-space explorations, so what's your take on this? And what are Hong Kong's advantages in joining the nation's cutting-edge research and science programmes? Do you think we will have more such exchange in the future? Thank you.

Chief Executive: On the first question, now that we have restored law and order in Hong Kong, and have in place both the national security legislation and also an improved electoral system, I feel very strongly that the next 12 months are very important for Hong Kong to do exactly one of the things that you have mentioned, and that is closer collaboration with the Mainland, as far as the economic integration is concerned. This year is the beginning of the 14th Five-Year Plan and we are moving into the third year of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. There are abundant opportunities under these two national documents that Hong Kong could seize and bring benefits to our people, whether they are professionals or young people. The new appointments announced today, in my view, will help us to seize those opportunities in a more efficient way, and that's exactly what I and the Chief Secretary for Administration will do jointly in the months ahead.

For the second question, we are very fortunate and very privileged to have this delegation from really experts involved in the nation's space technology coming to Hong Kong. They have been to universities, secondary schools, and tomorrow I will officiate at an exhibition about the nation's space technology, about very renowned scientists involved in space technology and also the soil that they have brought back from the moon – I am sure it will excite many people. My take from it – one is Hong Kong's development of innovation and technology could actually take on a national dimension. As you may notice, I have actually hosted a dinner for the delegation and talked quite in depth with the scientists and they all told me they were very proud and they were very pleased with the participation of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in one of those space expeditions. And they encouraged our universities to continue to offer their service to the space technology development in the country. This is my first takeaway from this delegation's visit. Secondly is while we are promoting innovation and technology development in Hong Kong, we do need our young people to be more interested in STEM, so popular scientific education that is outside of the classroom is equally important. To have more of these delegations coming to Hong Kong, talking to the young students and showing their work, I believe will be very helpful. To answer your final question, I certainly would wish to see more of these delegations coming to Hong Kong in future.

Reporter: Has the role of the Chief Secretary now changed to only focusing on national security over the experience on handling welfare for the people of Hong Kong? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Definitely not. I'm sure you have heard what John has told you about his mission and various activities that he will do as the Chief Secretary for Administration. There is definitely no change in the role and responsibility of the Chief Secretary for Administration. He will continue to deputise the Chief Executive and act in my capacity when I'm away. He will co-ordinate the various bureaux in terms of their policy work, in terms of operations. He will support the Chief Executive in continuing this fight against COVID-19. The mere fact that a particular candidate is coming from a particular background doesn't mean that the job will fit in by asking him only to perform in an area that he is most familiar with. That's not the situation. I have gone through this process. I have been a Permanent Secretary in charge of home affairs and planning and lands, and then I was made Secretary for Development in charge of infrastructure and development and conservation. Then I was appointed as the Chief Secretary, overseeing the whole range of areas that I have just described to you, and now, today, as the Chief Executive, I'm responsible not only to Hong Kong, but also to the Central Government, performing national duties, particularly in safeguarding national security and ensuring the accurate implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" in Hong Kong. For people with commitment, integrity, leadership and a spirit to serve the nation and Hong Kong, in whichever position we are put in, we will put in our best to discharge our function in that particular position. I have no doubt whatsoever that the three colleagues that are joining the team in their new positions will serve Hong Kong in that spirit that I have just mentioned.

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