

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (May 4):

Reporter: I have two questions. The first is it is understood that the Government is scheduled to launch the Come2hk Scheme in the middle of this month to allow the Mainland residents to visit Hong Kong quarantine free. So could you please update us on the progress of the scheme, and whether there will be reciprocal arrangement for fully vaccinated Hong Kong residents to visit Mainland without being subject to a compulsory quarantine? The second question is on this National Youth Day. What's your message to the young people in Hong Kong and what's your plan to level our playing field for those from underprivileged backgrounds so that they could have more access to the opportunities presented by the national development? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Thank you for the two questions. The first question is about the scheme that we have announced to enable non-Hong Kong residents – they could be Mainland people, they could be expatriates living and working in the Mainland – to come to Hong Kong under this Come2hk Scheme. This is a first step to facilitate people flow between the two places. I understand we should be ready to implement the scheme later this month. Things are ready, particularly when many of them should be coming via the airport so we should have the needed arrangements in the airport to welcome these non-Hong Kong residents coming from different parts of the Mainland to come to Hong Kong. There are at the moment no reciprocal arrangements because when it comes to public health, it is not a question of reciprocity, it is a question of whether our anti-pandemic situation has reached a stage that the other side is willing and happy to allow access of Hong Kong people without being subject to the quarantine arrangement. At the moment, the position is "not yet", so this is only a single way. Non-Hong Kong residents could come to Hong Kong under our stipulated conditions without being made subject to 14-day quarantine, but when these people return to the Mainland, they will be subject to the Mainland quarantine requirements.

Today, May 4, is Youth Day. I congratulate every young person in the country for what they have been doing during the period of pandemic and doing voluntary services and doing e-learning at a very difficult time when face-to-face teaching is not possible. My aspiration for young people in Hong Kong is one, they should have a very strong sense of national identity. Second is they should love this city called Hong Kong. Third is I'd love them to have a global perspective, and finally is to have a citizenship and responsibility. The Hong Kong SAR Government has been doing things along those four directions to raise awareness amongst young people of the country's development, including the 14th Five-Year Plan, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and other initiatives. We have also gone a step further by

running a scheme called the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme, providing government subsidies to wages for employers to recruit Hong Kong university graduates to work in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, and I'm pleased to say that the response has been very enthusiastic. The 2 000 places have all been taken up and I understand that young people have been recruited and will be posted to the Mainland cities to work pretty soon.

As far as civic responsibility, from September this year, we will replace the Liberal Studies subject by a Citizenship and Social Development subject, and with that particular objective in mind that we hope to nurture our young people with a strong sense of civic duty and responsibility and to respect the rule of law, which has been misrepresented to many young people in recent years.

About globalisation and the global perspective, we will be doing more on arranging youth ambassadors to go out of the country to see the world. With the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a few young colleagues have actually been sent to the United Nations to work under a JPO (Junior Professional Officer) Programme. These are the initiatives which, with the support of the Central Government, that we will continue to do. My final word to young people is, under "One Country, Two Systems", Hong Kong enjoys unique advantages, and the Central Government has given us full support in the 14th Five-Year Plan, and we have abundant opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. It is time for them to seize these opportunities and to plan for their own future. Thank you.

Reporter: With RTHK starting to remove archive content from its YouTube channel yesterday, fears are growing that all government bodies might start deleting historical content. In your 2017 election manifesto, you declare support for an archives law and said you place great importance on the integrity of records. Given your past view, and your new role on RTHK, what are you doing to ensure that the taxpayer-funded channel maintains all archive content in a way that is easily accessible to public? And second question, on the fake news law, what is the latest update and what department or who to decide what is fake news? And can the decision be judicial reviewed? Thank you.

Chief Executive: On the first question about RTHK, RTHK is both a Government department and a public broadcaster. As far as the latter function of being a public broadcaster, it has to operate under the Charter signed between RTHK, the Government and the Broadcasting Authority. How RTHK's senior management is going to perform on matters that you have mentioned is not a matter for the Chief Executive. I am sure that the senior management will operate in accordance with the Charter and the mission of RTHK. By the way, nobody has given RHTK a new role. RTHK has been performing the role of a public broadcaster and it should continue to perform that role properly as a public broadcaster, which is being objective, fair, and to support the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. That doesn't mean that RTHK could not have programmes that also criticise the Government but it has to be done in an objective and fair manner without bias and prejudice.

About my own commitment to the archives law, work is still being undertaken by the Law Reform Commission's special committee. Once it is ready with recommendations, we will, as the Administration, take forward all recommendations from the Law Reform Commission in the usual manner. There should be no worry about getting my manifesto. If you need a copy, we will give you a hard copy; if you want a soft copy, my Assistant Director (Media) will give you the link. What I have said and what I have written during my days as a candidate and as CE-elect could be found on the website.

I have nothing to update you on the fake news law because, as I said in LegCo, when I said that there were five areas which we will need to look at legislation, on this particular subject, it's not just about fake news law, it's about privacy and so on. I said the priority is to get the privacy law in place which has the full support of the Legislative Council as well as the Privacy Commissioner herself. The fake news law needs a lot of research, especially how overseas governments are tackling these increasingly worrying trend of spreading inaccurate information, misinformation, hatred and lies on the social media. The current situation is still that a Bureau is looking into the overseas practices and doing research. We have no timetable whatsoever about this subject but we will continue to be very serious about doing this issue because of the damage it is doing to many people.

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