

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

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (December 11):

Reporter: Mrs Lam, do you see the need to tighten traffic law then? And secondly, about the Meng Wanzhou case, that she holds three SAR passports, what does it mean that the Immigration has been issuing in accordance with law? Does that mean some of them are fake, could be fake? And would you join Beijing's call to demand for her release as well? Thank you.

Chief Executive: As far as how we could enhance road safety in Hong Kong, this is always an ongoing objective of the Hong Kong SAR Government. As a result of the very serious fatal traffic accidents this year, the relevant departments will of course, in light of the investigations of every incident, recommend and take the necessary measures. For example, you may recall that arising from a couple of very fatal bus accidents, franchised bus accidents, we are already tightening up some of the safety measures and I have even suggested and announced in my Policy Address that if we need to put in some public money in order to enhance safety, we will do it for the benefit of the passengers.

As far as the incident concerning the issue of passports to Madam Meng, as we have said on several occasions, it is actually not quite proper for us to comment on individual case because it concerns privacy and personal data. So, what we have done in the past few days is the Immigration Department has already issued two press releases to explain the general policies under immigration laws that at any point in time, one holder of a passport will only hold one valid passport – there is no doubt about that. But there will be occasions where a passport holder will apply for a new passport before the natural expiry date because of various circumstances, like the loss of the passport, or the change of personal particulars, or other specified circumstances. Under those circumstances the passport holder will be issued a new passport with a new passport number before the expiry date comes. What will happen to the old passport? The old passport will have to be cancelled by the Immigration Department. I'm sure you will have this experience that your old passport will be cut, a corner of it will be cut, so it becomes an invalid passport. There are also situations where the old passport contains a valid visa and very often this valid visa is to America. I had that experience previously, and you don't want to apply afresh for another valid visa because that valid visa may have validity of a few years or up to 10 years. So it is not uncommon for the passport holder to use a valid current passport, but at the same time in entering that particular country with visa requirements, to present the old passport with a valid visa. This is what we have explained in public in the last few days about the general policies and

the Secretary for Security has also answered quite extensively those queries. But in light of the very special circumstances and the exceptional nature of this case because it has given rise to even demands and requests from some Legislative Council members, I have agreed that the Immigration Department will look into this particular case and explain or announce the outcome of the Immigration Department's sort of case-file review. The Immigration Department issued another press release last night to confirm that this case is entirely in line with what we have described and explained in public. I can say this again, that in so far as the issue of passports to Madam Meng, all the procedures and arrangements are in order. She has been issued a few passports over a period since she has obtained the Hong Kong Permanent Resident status because of the specified circumstances that I have explained, but at one point in time or at any point in time, she holds only one valid Hong Kong SAR passport. I hope that clarifies the situation.

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