

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 (February 12):

Reporter: Mrs Lam, how much can Hong Kong people expect from the Greater Bay Area Development Plan? And secondly, regarding the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge construction, do you yourself think it is serious that some 10 000 RISC forms have been submitted late? And you mention that the proposal to limit Link REIT rent prices is a bit special- using a private bill, can you explain that?

Chief Executive: First of all, about the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, this latest discovery about the absence of a large number of RISC forms, the Requests for Inspection and Survey Checking forms, in the process of building this infrastructure, the Director of Highways has already appointed an independent consultant some time ago to review the construction process and has issued a press release to confirm the safety and the integrity of the construction works, so I hope there is no question about the safety of this piece of infrastructure which is now being patronised by thousands of passengers on a daily basis. But in the process of monitoring the project, whether there is room for improvement, whether there are lessons to be learned as a result of this incident, I have asked the Secretary for Transport and Housing together with the Director of Highways to thoroughly review the process and once they have some findings I have asked them to explain in public.

As far as the Greater Bay Area, if I may just repeat in English, I am very pleased to say that this Outline Development Plan for the Greater Bay Area will be formally promulgated by the Central Authorities within days. And as a result, we have already planned to organise a symposium on February 21, and that is next week, which means that the promulgation will take place before February 21. The benefits of the Greater Bay Area to Hong Kong and also to Guangdong and Macao are multiple because we are all very committed to building a Bay Area economy which is open, which is international, which will consist of an international innovation and technology hub which has the personal support of President Xi Jinping himself. So, there's a lot to be talked about on the Greater Bay Area, but the important thing is- it should emphasise on complementarity- that is the nine cities in Guangdong Province and Hong Kong and Macao should each of us leverage on our strengths and advantages in order to create a much bigger economy. Anything that is just fierce competition should be avoided as far as possible.

The second thing is we want the people – the people of Hong Kong, Macao and Guangdong – to share the benefits of this Bay Area economy, so one of the

first things that we have agreed to do together with Guangdong and Macao is to facilitate the flow of people, goods, capital and information within the Greater Bay Area. Some of the helpful initiatives, as far as facilitating Hong Kong people to live and work in the Greater Bay Area and beyond, have already been announced in the last 12 months or so, but we will continue to work on that.

I am as concerned as some of the members of the Legislative Council and the public about the way that the Link conducts its business. And this is not only my concern as the Chief Executive. You will recall that when I was Chief Secretary for Administration, I had talked about this subject. I had met with the two successive chairmen of Link with a view to impress upon them that the Link properties are not just any commercial property in Hong Kong. They are properties supposed to be serving the residents of our public housing estates. But in light of the continuous concerns about the way that Link conducts its business and manages its assets, I can fully understand why some Legislative Council members have contemplated to use another instrument, and that is a legislative means through a private member's bill. But using legislation to regulate business activities, after all, is very unusual, so I'm sure we need to look at it in detail and the members of the Legislative Council will also need to examine and study this idea very thoroughly before we go down this route.

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