

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 today (December 1):

Reporter: Hi, Mrs Lam. Firstly when you mentioned that you will not amend the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance to cover the Chief Executive, you mentioned there are difficulties and that would change the constitutional status of CE, can you elaborate on how difficult is that for you to do the job that you have promised? Secondly on the oaths that need to be taken by people in public office, you mentioned schools or organisations subsidised by the Government could also be covered. How is that necessary? And thirdly, you told the SCMP in your interview that you are not sorry over last year's social unrest. Does that mean that you don't think you have any responsibility over the violence seen last year? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Again, three questions. First of all, the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance has certain provisions applicable to the Chief Executive. The crux of the matter now is arising from a review committee's recommendations. There was a further recommendation to amend section 3 and section 8. The Government's position regarding sections 3 and 8 has always been, they were far more complicated and they could end up with a very difficult situation for the Chief Executive to discharge his or her duties, and that's why over the years despite attempts being made, we could not overcome those difficulties. By now, I considered first, it's not a priority; secondly, I do not intend to take this forward within my term. If there are other brighter ideas on how we could do this without violating the constitutional position of the Chief Executive, then of course in a future administration they could always look at the issue again.

The second issue was about the National Security Law which has a wider application at least according to what was written in this article in the National Security Law that people in public office have to take the oath, swear allegiance to the Hong Kong SAR of the People's Republic of China and uphold the Basic Law. This by itself clearly is wider than Article 104 in the Basic Law which is very specific, referring to the Chief Executive, principal officials, members of ExCo, members of Legislative Council and judicial members of the Judiciary, so this article is much wider. It's much wider for a very good purpose because if you look at the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, there are at least a couple of articles which require nationals to safeguard national security. When we need to apply this in Hong Kong, we have to be very precise about the scope- Who are going to be regarded as "a person in public office" under this provision? Because Hong Kong's legislation, as far as public office, I would say is pretty loose and

wide. We are still deliberating very carefully on this issue. I was just referring to some approaches that have been discussed. One is that position has to be a statutory position. The other is that position may have some relationship with the Government in terms of funding. It's a government-funded institution or maybe that is a public office that discharges public powers. But we have not decided, so don't take those as being the scope. When you refer to "somebody has suggested the schools should be put under this category", there has been no decision yet. But you know, "schools" include government schools. Government schools are staffed by civil servants, so they are certainly public office and we already have plans to require each and every civil servant to take the oath. For those who joined after July 1 this year, they have already done so by signing the declaration. For existing civil servants, the Secretary for the Civil Service will announce the detailed arrangements. At the moment we have not come to a decision on how wide the scope of public office in the National Security Law should be.

As far as what happened last year, I think it's now very clear. We were hit by riots and violence that endangered not only the safety of this city, but also national security. That's why the various actions have to be taken to restore Hong Kong from the chaos that we have seen and people have been suffering. As the Chief Executive, I am leading the Hong Kong SAR Government to restore Hong Kong from that chaos, and for that I have no regret. That is the duty of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

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