

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo (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 (July 6):

Reporter: Any update on the quarantine-free travel plan with Singapore, and are we planning to have that arrangement with any other cities like Macao or Shenzhen? Second question, Regina Ip said yesterday that offering flowers can be a form of venting and the Government needs to understand the deep-rooted issues in Hong Kong. What's your take on that? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Specifically on facilitating travel on a bilateral basis, that is, between Hong Kong and other places, I would say that Singapore is still our priority candidate for consideration. Now that Singapore's situation has stabilised, we certainly will revive the earlier scheme that we have devised. I understand that Edward Yau, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, has been discussing with his Singaporean counterpart recently on when and how we could commence the Air Travel Bubble arrangement with Singapore. But the fact is there are some new factors. One is we heard that Singapore is moving into a new strategy and so we need to understand more about that new strategy and whether it will have any impact on the arrangements that we have devised. Secondly, because both Singapore and Hong Kong are now pressing ahead with vaccination – you'll remember that when the scheme was first announced, it was a unilateral requirement on the part of Hong Kong people travelling to Singapore that they need to be vaccinated – now that Singapore also has a very high vaccination rate, another factor that we need to consider on top of what we have agreed previously is whether both sides should require vaccination as a condition for participating in the Air Travel Bubble. I would say that we accord a lot of importance to having travel resumed with Singapore because we have a lot of contacts, the two governments are very friendly and the situation is very stable on both sides. This is something that we will be working very closely on.

As far as Macao and Shenzhen, they fall within the whole discussion within China, especially the Mainland and Macao. That has to be taken forward in the overall scheme that I am putting forward to the Central Government, having regard to, one is the latest pandemic situation in Hong Kong; second is the enhanced capacity of the Hong Kong SAR Government to tackle any outbreak, that we have proven that we do have this capability; and third is the continued problem of no travel on the local business. All these will be presented to the Central People's Government but at the moment we don't have a timetable. I hope you will appreciate that there are new variants emerging almost on a regular basis. Every government has to be very cautious in opening up their borders for other people to come in.

Whether a certain act in relation to a violent offence is itself a

criminal offence has to be determined in the context of the law, and which piece of legislation we are using to judge that sort of behaviour or act. It has also to rely on the evidence and whether it has a motive to do a certain thing, for example, to continue to incite people to do that sort of violent acts or not. At the end of the day, it is based on the law, the evidence, and the independent prosecution decision to decide whether a certain act is an offence. But other than judging whether a certain act or behaviour commits a crime, there are things which are not just about crime. There are things about morals. If you look at the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, individual rights and freedoms could be restrained by law under certain circumstances, and the three sets of circumstances are national security, public health and morals. One has to ask yourself whether it fulfils that moral standard for somebody to mourn a person who deliberately attacked and wanted to kill a policeman on duty. I think that's very obvious. You don't need a lot of public education to come to a view. And if that is immoral, then certainly I would want to see Hong Kong people refraining from conducting that sort of immoral acts, which might intentionally or unintentionally have the undesirable impact of inciting more people to do that sort of acts or behaviours, or sending a very wrong message to the community at large that it is okay to attack a policeman, it is okay to behave in such an immoral way.

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