

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

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (November 21):

Reporter: Good morning Mr Lee. For the first question, following the Financial Secretary's attendance at the APEC summit, has the Hong Kong Government achieved its goals at the summit, and could the city expect more friendly relations with the United States following the meeting of President Xi Jinping and Joe Biden? And the second question, with regard to the District Council Election, in the run-up to the District Council Election, multiple government officials have downplayed the importance of voter turnout. In your view, does the voter turnout actually matter and would a low voter turnout discredit the new electoral system? And do you have any measures to encourage people to vote? Thank you.

Chief Executive: I thank the Financial Secretary's attendance at APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation). I think he achieved three goals very successfully, which were, first of all, to explain the advantages, strengths, and attractions and opportunities of Hong Kong to the world. Second, to build friendship and relationship, and the third is to establish co-operation, particularly regional co-operation. We are a strong advocator of free trade, free economy, and we are also a strong advocator of people-to-people exchange. I am very glad that all these goals have been achieved, and achieved with good results. Obviously, with the meeting of the two leaders of our country and of the US (United States), there have been some indications of co-operation in different areas. These two great countries, coming together to lead some co-operation, is a very positive indication to everybody. Hong Kong being our country's Special Administrative Region, of course, will play its role actively to fulfil what has been agreed between the two leaders. I have always been advocating for good trade relationship and also good business-to-business relationship. We will of course, try to encourage more trade between Hong Kong and the US. In fact, the US has been enjoying one of the biggest returns in bilateral trade between Hong Kong and the US. I think that should be something that the US should pay serious attention to, because trade will benefit people of both places. And, of course, we see the trade surplus goes very much to the US side. So I will, together with my team and government officials, continue to promote trade relationship between Hong Kong and other economies, whether it is in this region, new markets, Europe or the US.

In regard to District Council Election, it is a very important election because it is an enhanced and improved electoral system which will produce very hardworking District Council members who will really be attached to the district to make district affairs good for the citizens of that district, and will also ensure that it will stay in its right purpose in accordance with

the Basic Law, in other words, a consultative body. And also, we will be ensuring that all these District Council members will be patriots and will not betray the interests of Hong Kong and the country.

We have been doing all we can to promote people to come out and vote, first of all, for the reason that it will ensure improved administration of district affairs, resulting in good districts for us to enjoy. Second, it is also a civic responsibility to vote. That is why we have asked civil servants to demonstrate that civic responsibility to come out to vote. And the third thing is, civil servants in the process of consultation with the future District Council, will be able to grasp and understand more of the needs and wants of individual districts. That of course will help fulfil their purpose of serving the people of Hong Kong, in particular the people of individual districts. I encourage all citizens, all voters, to come out to vote on that day because you all live in one of the 18 districts and these 18 districts are our home. We all want to make this home a better place to live in. Your participation will ensure that you will produce the right District Council members to help you build that home district. So it is of benefit to all. Come out and vote. We will try to make everybody appreciate and enjoy the success of District Council Election. We will do everything we can.

Also, I think the merit of the new District Council Election is seen both in the election process as well as the final delivery of outcomes by the actual running and conduction of the improved running of the District Council meetings. We will have expectations of District Council members' performance, and there will be process not just by the public to monitor their performance, but of course the system itself will have a monitoring system so that the elected District Council members will do their duty dutifully. I am sure that all those who now stand for election have the heart and passion to do their job well. I have strong faith in their performance in due course.

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