

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 (January 23):

Reporter: Good morning, Mr Lee. From next Monday, the Mainland Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters (Reciprocal Enforcement) Ordinance goes into effect, meaning there can be reciprocal recognition and enforcement of civil rulings by courts in Hong Kong and on the Mainland. Nikkei reports that investors are concerned about the city's common law system and what will happen to their holdings. With the Hang Seng (Index) slumping to handover-era levels, can you reassure investors? Second, last week you told the media to tell a good Hong Kong story. Yet city authorities have repeatedly rejected media efforts to tell positive stories about the Government. Last year, Fire Services rejected our request to write a feature story about their vehicles; the Police rejected a pitch about the canine unit; the Lands Department refused to let us meet a government cartographer; the government lab and flying services rejected story ideas; the Drainage Services Department won't let us tour a sewage plant. In fact, a dozen government departments rejected a dozen stories we tried to tell last year. Why is this and will you instruct your government departments to say yes to media requests?

Chief Executive: First of all, about the arrangement of implementing judgments of courts of the Mainland jurisdiction in Hong Kong, there is a legal process for it to happen. Any judgment from courts in the Mainland will, first of all, has to be registered with the court (in Hong Kong). Relevant parties who have opinions or any objection can also make their grounds known to court. The court will deal with such applications according to legal principles. That means for all these judgments that a particular party wants to have effect in Hong Kong, there will be a legal process for it to be completed and also cleared before it can happen. So the relevant party's rights, and also, his opinions and grounds for objection, will be heard by court according to legal principle to ensure that they operate within all the legal confines and there will be a fair process for all the opinions and reasons to be heard. So that is the rule of law and that is justice ensured in the whole process.

In regard to media requests for interviews of government departments, government departments every day receive a lot of requests from different media, and a lot of requests have been granted. And a lot of interviews have been done. As you can see in a lot of newspapers and TV interviews, as well as in other online forums. So for any media organisation to apply for this request, yes they have to first of all, indicate what they want to do, so as to ensure that the relevant departments, in according priorities to all these long queues of requests, can make right decision. Of course, I will encourage my departments to make as many interviews as possible, but equally, they have

to do this at the same time of doing a lot of other functions and services for society. So the right balance has to be struck.

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