

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session (with photo/video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session this afternoon (February 23):

Reporter: HKMAO (Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council) mentioned that Xia comes to the city to plan ahead new development together with the Government. What could that new development be? And the second question is that, what does Xia think of Hong Kong's current situation and regarding Hong Kong's economy, what aspect did he think needs to be improved?

Chief Executive: The study team on this occasion, led by Director Xia Baolong (Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council), focuses on two main issues. One is economic development, the other is district administration. The study team impressed me as a team which listens in great interest to views expressed by both the Government and those who were received by the study team. And there have been very good exchange of opinions. One thing that has been shared is the actual situation for Hong Kong. And both myself, the Financial Secretary and the various Principal Officials have explained in great detail to the study team. The conclusion of all these meetings indicates that the study team is satisfied with the overall situation of Hong Kong and the way that the Hong Kong government is handling it. And they have strong faith that the Hong Kong government's approach will deal with it appropriately.

And also, the study team is keen to listen to views about what requests we have for the Central Government, so that they will consider it. We have, as always, been making a lot of proposals in different regards for economic development. But a lot of them, of course, involve different issues that have to be ironed out, particularly when it may involve more than one responsible authority. So there's a very strong common will that we should lay out our priority requests, and also we should spell out some of the details of the request, so that they will be addressed as quickly as possible. That is the first thing.

The second thing is there is a strong will. I have strong confidence to believe that with this strong will, they will look at our proposals very seriously and try to work out practical solutions for the benefit of Hong Kong. The announcement of these new cities under the Individual Visit Scheme is a reflection of the Central Government taking the views and the proposals of the Hong Kong SAR Government seriously. After addressing the different concerns, they had it approved and announced to be implemented very soon. And I would envisage that this smooth process and the good communication between the Hong Kong SAR Government and the Central People's Government will continue to see results that will actually bring overall benefits to Hong

Kong in the long run. Some may come earlier, some may take a longer time to come, because some actually involve some research work, and some also will require analysis of the different implications that may be involved.

But one thing I must emphasise is I'm very grateful to the Central Government's willingness and enthusiasm in listening to the views of Hong Kong and being very serious in helping Hong Kong, and also sometimes looking at things both at the micro and macro level. In due course, I'm very confident that we will be getting a lot of new plans of action that will be helpful to the overall economic development of Hong Kong. Thank you.

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

