

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session (with photos)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session after receiving her second COVID-19 vaccination dose today (March 22):

Reporter: Chief Executive, you just said that the Government is considering to choose the fourth type of the vaccines. Which vaccines are you considering, and do you have a timetable when it will arrive? And secondly, government experts say that there's currently no data to show whether the Sinovac vaccine is effective against any of the mutant variants. So are you worried that people who receive the vaccine may not develop enough protection against these variants? And what would you say to people who still have concerns about the Sinovac vaccine?

Chief Executive: First of all, at this moment the Hong Kong SAR Government, with the support of the experts, has authorised two different vaccines using two different technologies for members of the public to use. Because these vaccines are available at a lot of venues, members of the public actually have a choice. They could decide for themselves which vaccine to use. As far as the Government is concerned, both vaccines are authorised, which means that they are safe, they are of quality and they are effective. I don't really want to go into why a particular person would like to use a particular vaccine, because as far as the Government is concerned, both are safe.

As far as the advance purchase of another, that is a fourth vaccine for use by the Hong Kong community, that is part of the plan that has been approved by the Legislative Council when we obtained funding for the Government Vaccination Programme. One is at that stage we did not know the effectiveness of each vaccine so for security we have to buy more for the safety of Hong Kong people. Secondly, up to this moment, nobody could be very authoritative about the validity of the effectiveness, that is how long the vaccine could protect the individual and the community, and that's why we need to go for four different vaccines, each with a volume of 7.5 million doses. At the moment I think Department of Health colleagues and the experts are still discussing about the fourth vaccine, so I'm not in a position to disclose the details. Actually, I don't know the details because this is a very professional matter. Since funding has been approved, it is now up to the experts both within and outside of the Government to decide on how to do it in light of the changing situation globally. I would suggest that members of the public should come forward to receive the vaccination and we will continue to supply the needed vaccines for the community.

We are seeing variants of this COVID-19 virus from time to time. It started off in UK, it's now gone to Brazil, South Africa and other places, and so all these vaccines that have been made and manufactured over the period are all geared up to see how effective they are in tackling these new

variants. The vaccine situation is evolving on a daily basis. The government experts will keep on monitoring the situation.

As far as the confidence of the people, I think transparency and full disclosure will help to boost confidence, and the Hong Kong SAR Government will spare no effort in raising the transparency in providing as much data as possible to the people of Hong Kong. We are now doing this on a daily basis. At the same time, I would condemn a very small minority of people who try to sabotage our efforts by going the other way. They are spreading fake news, misinformation and rumours on the social media and also through other means. Especially when these people are health professionals, I am extremely disappointed, because at the end of the day if Hong Kong has a major outbreak again, the people who suffer will be our healthcare professionals, especially those working in the Hospital Authority facilities. I will appeal to all to look at this issue in a scientific, objective manner, and join the Government Vaccination Programme as soon as possible.

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

