

Transcript of remarks by CS (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at a media session today (July 5):

Reporter: Mr Cheung, the first protester who died because of the anti-extradition protest was on June 15. It's now July 5. Why did the Government have to react so slowly to that death?

Chief Secretary for Administration: The Government did respond by issuing press statements in the last few weeks. But, of course, today I've got a very good opportunity to meet with pan-democrats. We had a very candid and useful exchange, and also sharing of views as well. We also agreed that we should do everything possible to stop people taking their own lives. Nothing is more important than life and we should do everything we can to help people, particularly those suffering from various mental depression in the present environment. If they feel they are in difficulty, they should consult professionals and talk to their relatives, talk to their friends. We stand ready to help them, we have mobilised all NGOs involved in youth services and in family services, and have also promised to provide extra funding, additional resources for all these organisations to help those in need.

Reporter: Mr Cheung, you said you had an useful exchange with the pan-democrats, but we're not so sure because, from what we heard, you did not respond to any of the four demands being placed by the democrats. Do you feel the Government is responsible for the death of some protesters who jumped off their life? The second question being on the pro-establishment camp, you have met them for lunch during lunchtime earlier today. Do you feel the rift and the relations with that camp is also improving?

Chief Secretary for Administration: The entire Hong Kong SAR Government feels deeply sorry and saddened by the recent suicide cases, and we'll do everything we can to stop this trend, of course, by enlisting support – not only volunteers but all NGOs and government departments concerned to help those in need, particularly those suffering from depression. We realise that many people are feeling unhappy at this present moment. That's why we have to work together. Life is very important. Nothing's more important than life.

My meeting with the pan-democrats just now was very useful in a sense that it's the first time we really have an opportunity to sit down and talk candidly and frankly over the issue. Particularly, we spent a lot of time on how to stop this suicide trend. We're all very concerned. That's why the whole Government, as I said, from Chief Executive downwards, we are all very concerned and deeply saddened about the whole thing. That's why we should do everything possible to help those really in need.

As far as my lunch with a few LegCo members is concerned, it's in fact part of the regular liaison meetings. The objective is of course to feel their pulse and also hear their views on the upcoming Policy Address, particularly on how to help youngsters, youths, out of the present situation. This is my major concern. Youth, the welfare, the well-being of youngsters, really tops our agenda.

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