

Transcript of remarks by LegCo President on First Reading and Second Reading of Safeguarding National Security Bill

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

Following is the transcript of remarks by Mr Andrew Leung, the President of the Legislative Council (LegCo) at a media briefing at the LegCo Complex today (March 8):

At the Legislative Council meeting just now, the Safeguarding National Security Bill was introduced into the Council for First Reading and Second Reading. The Subcommittee to Study Matters Relating to Basic Law Article 23 Legislation has been turned into a bills committee, which will commence scrutiny of the Bill immediately this afternoon.

To legislate for Article 23 of the Basic Law is a constitutional duty of the entire Hong Kong SAR. Both the Government and LegCo must make every effort to complete the legislative process as soon as possible. I also fully agree that there is a genuine and urgent need for the legislation. We will spare no effort and work together to plug the national security loophole as soon as possible. As the President of LegCo, I called a meeting of the Council today in accordance with section 14(1) and (2) of the Rules of Procedure to fulfil our constitutional duty.

As mentioned in the Government's consultation document, each country enacts laws to safeguard national security. It is the inherent right of a sovereign state and an international practice. I note that 98.6 per cent of the views received during the consultation period supported the legislative exercise and gave positive comments. Meanwhile, LegCo Members also reflected the views of the people truthfully, and gave specific and constructive advice to the Government during meetings of the Subcommittee and joint panel. I believe that the Government will continue to listen extensively and study carefully Members' views to enhance the legislation.

Enactment of legislation to safeguard national security is the constitutional duty of the Hong Kong SAR and we have failed to do so in the past 27 years. The Seventh LegCo is honoured to be able to shoulder this historic mission at this critical juncture, with a view to contributing to the stability and development of our country and Hong Kong. I have every confidence that upon completion of the enactment of the legislation for safeguarding national security, the Hong Kong SAR will be able to focus on developing the economy and improving people's livelihood, and ensure the steadfast and successful implementation of "one country, two systems."

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