

Transcript of remarks by SCS

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, at a media session in the Legislative Council Building this morning (April 23):

Reporter : (inaudible) the second question is how could the Government have misunderstood (Basic Law) Article 22 for almost three decades (inaudible) or change the stance on the matter?

Secretary for the Civil Service: Firstly, I think the Chief Executive in yesterday's press conference had made it very clear. The movement in my position has nothing to do with the incident relating to the Basic Law (Article) 22. That's the first point. The second point is that, as a political appointee, a cabinet reshuffle is not an uncommon phenomenon and actually every political appointee is always prepared for that. The most important thing is that we support the Chief Executive in implementing her policy blueprint. For whatever the movement that's appropriate, we would be happy to do so. So I am actually very honoured to take up the new position as the Secretary for the Civil Service. The job is also very challenging and is very meaningful, and I would dedicate myself to do the job especially in this challenging time to lead the civil service to continue performing their duties in a professional, in a very impartial and politically neutral manner to serve the public.

Reporter: My follow-up question is about the government's understanding about Article 22. How could it have been wrong for almost three decades or are you just saying that to please Beijing?

Secretary for the Civil Service: On that point, I think the Chief Executive had already explained. If you look at the Government papers during different periods, the interpretation or the Government's position on the matter, the presentation may not be very clear, and apparently inconsistent. But now I think the issue on the status and position of the CPG Liaison Office in Hong Kong is very clear, as laid down in the press statements and also as explained by the Chief Executive and the relevant officials.

Reporter: Could you just clarify whether or not the Liaison Office is bound by Article 22 and is it a department of the Central People's Government (CPG)?

Secretary for the Civil Service: I would not further comment on this issue.

Reporter: But this is not clear by now. People are concerned about whether the Liaison Office is bound by Article 22 or not, so you should make it clear for the record.

Secretary for the Civil Service: We have already made it very clear about the Government position on the Basic Law Article 22 and also the position of the

CPG Liaison Office. So I have nothing further to add.

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