

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, after attending a radio programme today (January 11):

Reporter: Does Hong Kong Government see the need to further step up or enhance the measures in light of the new death case just announced by the Mainland? If so, in what direction? Second question, regarding the DNA sequence of the virus, is that really nothing that the Government can do rather than wait for the Mainland authorities? Can't Hong Kong authorities head to Wuhan to do something?

Secretary for Food and Health: I think the Government has always been active and proactive in getting information. We have an existing mechanism of communication. Regarding this communication, the Government has always been proactive in trying to get information and having communication with the Mainland authorities. In terms of getting the genome sequence, we have already requested and we are waiting for the reply of the Mainland authorities. An important point to note is that according to our infection control experts, right now with our laboratory competence, actually we can also test given the information of the novel corona virus but it takes slightly longer time. If we can get the whole genome sequence, obviously the time can be cut short. So, it is not something we can't do but we are, at the same time, trying to get information in terms of preparing and also controlling any public health issues in relation to infectious disease.

Reporter: Regarding the new death case, does Hong Kong Government see the need to enhance measures?

Secretary for Food and Health: First of all, we got some new information from the Mainland authorities this morning regarding the number of cases. As you can see from the information provided, actually the number of confirmed cases is now down to 41 given the novel corona virus confirmation. Secondly, according to the information, the Wuhan authority and the health department are doing a lot of work currently in terms of trying to get more epidemiological information, public health surveillance as well as treating the cases in the hospital. Of note is that there are still some serious cases, but there are also some that have already been discharged from hospital. According to the Mainland authorities, there is no evidence of human to human transmission and there is also no healthcare professional being infected. These are the information that we have collected so far. And also of note is after the closure of the concerned market in Wuhan, there is no new case since January 3. I think these are important epidemiological information for us to do further assessment. I will be chairing a meeting later on. We are also trying to invite experts. And also I will be receiving reports from the Centre for Health Protection and the Hospital Authority about the latest assessment and whether there is any latest information.

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