

Transcript of remarks by SFST at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, at a media session before attending the Legislative Council (LegCo) meeting today (March 25):

Reporter: Why are you saying that if this sum is not passed by today, the Government's fight against the coronavirus will be affected? Second, many lawmakers have pointed out that during these critical two weeks, LegCo shouldn't have any meetings at all, so does it make sense to have the meeting today?

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury: Let me take the second question first. The question was, during this particular critical period with the coronavirus, why do we have this special meeting. The whole point is that, actually, last week when we had the two days of LegCo sitting, the President already emphasised the importance of dealing with this Vote on Account Resolution in order that it would enable the Government to make payments for discharging obligations from the first of April onwards, so that was the critical point. If we do not get it passed this week, then we will have a serious problem of the Government being unable to meet its obligations in terms of payments for services and goods. For that reason, if we have orders for what we call personal protective equipment, like masks, isolation gowns, face shields or protective coveralls, a lot of these would require cash payments or payments immediately upon delivery of the goods, that's why we believe that if the Vote on Account Resolution is not passed this week, there will be a very serious adverse impact on the anti-epidemic work that we undertake. Thank you very much.

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