

Transcript of remarks by SLW on “Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2018” and unemployment rate

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on "Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2018" and unemployment rate after attending a radio programme this morning (December 14):

Reporter: About the poverty rate. Some critics say the Government's anti-poverty measures do not seem to be working. So you then have a decade high (rate). What do you think of that? Secondly, on the unemployment rate, do you expect to go higher? How much higher? And what will the Government do?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: If we are going to look at the government policies and its impact on poverty, we then have to look at the difference between the figures where there is no Government intervention versus those figures where there is government intervention. If we take into account of the government intervention in terms of its regular or irregular type of programmes, then the number of people below the poverty line would drop to around 910 000, which is substantially lower than the figure of what is called the 1.4 million people before the government intervention. Somehow the 1.4 million people (figure) is not real in a sense because it is only a hypothetical figure if the Government has not done anything at all, but in fact the Government has different types of programmes. So that is the figure (910 000) that we should look at.

Regarding the question related to unemployment, it is very difficult to predict how much the unemployment rate will increase in the coming months. According to some of those analysts in the community, the number of the rate (will range) from something around 4 per cent to 5 per cent. We sincerely hope that it will not go up that high, but it is all up to the circumstances. We heard the good news yesterday evening that the negotiation between China and the United States has reached some agreement and I hope it will have some impact on global economy and also the economy of Hong Kong, but that is all we have to wait and see.

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