

Transcript of remarks by SLW on “Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2019”

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on the "Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2019" after attending a radio programme this morning (December 24):

Reporter: One English question. So, you said people should not pay too much attention to the record-high number of 1.49 million people in poverty. Could you explain a little bit more and how do you think the Government is doing to help those people?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: The number of people living below the poverty line basically means those who have received assistance from the Government and income on their own, so that figure is basically around 640 000 people. On the other hand, the figures that represent the pre-Government intervention tell us something else. It doesn't tell us how many people are actually living below the poverty line. It tells us that if the Government does nothing at all, then how many people will be living in poverty. It also tells us the impact of the downturn of the economy, its impact on different sectors of the community.

So, just looking at that particular figure is not very meaningful, but looking at what's behind those figures will be more useful, in particular in terms of evaluating government policy, no matter they are regular recurrent expenditure or whether there are some relief measures. Those figures will help us evaluate the extent of impact and the differential impact on the relief of poverty and they are more useful. I believe that the Report is a very important instrument for us to review the policy and have people reading them and giving us constructive suggestions.

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