

Transcript of remarks by STH on bus fare increases

Following is the transcript of remarks at a media session by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at the Legislative Council Complex today (March 17):

Reporter: Some lawmakers said increasing the monthly maximum rebate to \$500 is not helpful to alleviate burden triggered by the bus fare rise, as not all citizens can enjoy the offer. How would you respond to this? The second question is are we foreseeing an increase in other transport fares, such as taxis as well?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: As far as the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme is concerned, we are offering subsidy for Hong Kong residents who are taking the service of public transport, irrespective of whether or not they are taking bus, minibus or other transport modes. The important point is as long as they take public transport for any expenditure over \$200, we would give them one-third subsidy of the amount of expense. Therefore, for those who are taking public buses for their daily commuting, they will be entitled to the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme sponsorship, and it would alleviate the hardship or pressure on their transport expenses. Therefore, the argument that the Government is extending the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme in respect of the threshold and the ceiling of subsidy to the end of this year would certainly be helpful to all those who take public transport in their daily commuting.

Reporter: Are we expecting other transport fares to rise, such as taxis?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: First and foremost, I must say that we are not taking the public buses fare adjustment as a pilot. As far as the policy is concerned, it is only for those public transport which has a genuine need for fare adjustment, then we would consider. For example, if any bus company or any public transport mode is making reasonable profit, we would not be considering their application for fare adjustment.

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