

Transcript of remarks of joint press conference on extensive flooding caused by torrential rain brought by low pressure associated with remnants of Haikui

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, held a joint press conference today (September 8) on the Government's work to cope with the extensive flooding caused by the torrential rain brought by the low pressure associated with the remnants of Haikui. The Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Cheuk Wing-hing; the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung; the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun; the Director of Highways, Mr Jimmy Chan; the Director of Fire Services, Mr Andy Yeung; the Director of Home Affairs, Mrs Alice Cheung; the Commissioner for Transport, Ms Angela Lee; the Acting Director of Drainage Services, Mr Chui Si-kay; the Acting Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, Mr Lee Lap-shun; and the Acting Head of Geo Engineering Office and Deputy Commissioner of Mines, Mr Cheung Ping-yip, also attended. Following is the transcript of remarks of the press conference:

Reporter: Hi, a few questions. First, comparing to the Government's advanced preparation in handling super typhoon Saola, is the Government unprepared for the flooding and reacting too late this time, when officials only meet the public 15 hours after the rainfall broke history record, and why isn't the Chief Executive meeting the press? Second, why hasn't the Government used the \$150 million emergency system to remind residents on the flooding? Third, why does Hong Kong suffer from flooding severely this time? Why is Wong Tai Sin hit in particular and are the drainage systems clogged? If so, why aren't they fixed before the storm? Thank you.

Chief Secretary for Administration: Thank you for your questions. First of all, I think as our colleague from the Hong Kong Observatory has just mentioned, this heavy rain's predictability is very low when compared with a typhoon. In a typhoon, we can make an early prediction, so we can make early preparation. But for this heavy rain, it was really so big that, as mentioned by our colleague, it was once in 500 years. It's so big and so sudden and the predictability is so low. That's why we cannot act as (in the case of) the former typhoon Saola that we can do the announcement very early beforehand.

For the Chief Executive, as I mentioned, he did issue the (social media post) as early as around 1.30am, reminding members of the public to be very careful because of the heavy rain. Throughout the night, the Chief Executive has always been giving us the steer and directives on how to tackle the problem.

For the \$150 million (emergency alert) system, actually this time, we

have issued different heavy rain signals to the public. I think the announcement is already enough to alert all members of the public.

For the flooding drainage system, may I invite our colleague to reply to this question.

Acting Director of Drainage Services: The flooding problem this time during last night is mainly due to heavy rainfall. The drainage system has been operated according to our performance and design standard. During the rainfall event, we have mobilised our emergency gangs to attend to over 60 flooding cases. Most of them has been rectified before noon today.

Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration: The purpose of issuing emergency notification via SMS is really to alert the public to very sudden emergencies such as power failure, but in this present case, the onset of the Black Rainstorm is very clear. I think any members of the public who are still awake would have noticed this heavy rainstorm situation, so it won't be necessary to use that system to send SMS (messages) to individual citizens to just really stating the obvious.

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