

Transcript of remarks of media session (with video)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee; and the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, met the media this morning (February 19). Following is the transcript of remarks of the media session:

Reporter: Mr Lee, can you update the situation in Japan right now? How many Hong Kong people are going to be brought back from Japan to Hong Kong today? How are you going to persuade Japanese authorities to bring back all Hong Kong people as soon as possible? And also do you have similar plans for the people stuck in Hubei right now?

Secretary for Security: First of all, we have contacted all Hong Kong residents (on board the Diamond Princess cruise) and over two hundred (residents) have indicated they will be taking our chartered flight. We have been pressing the Japanese authorities to give priorities to the treatment of Hong Kong residents. The Japanese authorities have indicated they will start allowing passengers on board the cruise to disembark today after the passengers have been tested negative. So far we know that between 20 and 30 Hong Kong passengers should have been tested negative. We are pressing for more results today, so hopefully the number of Hong Kong people who are confirmed to be negative will increase. We are pressing the Japanese authorities to allow them all to come down. Our aim is to allow all Hong Kong residents to be allowed to disembark today so that they will all be sent back to Hong Kong as soon as possible. But there is still a lot of information that we have asked for but the Japanese authorities have not provided answers. For example, how many Hong Kong residents have been tested positive? And how many are negative? How many are regarded as close contacts who may have to continue to stay in Japan? How many, if they are required to quarantine, are quarantined on the ship or on land? And we have asked the Japanese authorities to allow Hong Kong residents even if they stay to be quarantined, that should be done on land. The Director of Immigration and the Under Secretary for Security have been pressing the Japanese authorities for all these things. Today I will be in touch with the Japan CG (Japanese Consul-General) in Hong Kong to reflect the concerns of the stranded Hong Kong residents on the cruise and to explain that because we have a large number (of Hong Kong residents on board). So it is in everybody's interest that priority is given to Hong Kong residents, so that they can come back as soon as possible. And I will be reflecting the full demands of the Hong Kong Government so as to ask the Japan CG to assist us.

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