

Transcript of remarks of press conference on Cash Payout Scheme (with video)

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, joined by the Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury), Ms Alice Lau; the Co-ordinator (Special Duties) of the Financial Secretary's Office, Ms Jessie Wong; and the Government Chief Information Officer, Mr Victor Lam, held a press conference this morning (June 8) on the Cash Payout Scheme. Following is the transcript of remarks of the press conference.

Reporter: Secretary, can you talk about, like, the privacy issues? I heard you mention that this may be used again, but are you saying that this will only be used for giving money to residents or would there be other occasions where data collected here would be passed on to other departments? And can you briefly talk about the process involving the cash handouts, say, for a person who has been using e-banking, what would be the steps? For a person who is going through the paperwork, the Hongkong Post step, how would that involve, like would that mean people are waiting for a longer period of time for the money? Thank you.

Financial Secretary: The fastest way to receive the money from the Government is to apply through electronic registration via your banks and receive the money through direct transfer into bank account. This is the fastest way. If the registration is to be done in paper form, obviously it will entail more administrative procedures and the time required will be longer. As to your question about data privacy, if I may invite Ms Wong to respond to that.

Co-ordinator (Special Duties) of the Financial Secretary's Office: We will set out clearly in the personal information collection statement in the registration form, stating that the personal data we collected for this scheme will also be used for similar schemes, like cash or non-cash handout or refund, if any, in the future. We will set out clearly that the schemes are for similar purpose(s), say, to relieve people's financial difficulties, boost local consumption and/or share the wealth of the Government. In gist, we will set out clearly the purposes that we may use the data for in future schemes. So, when the registrants make the registration, they will give consent for the purposes.

Reporter: Sorry, just a follow up, of that private bank, like virtual bank asking people to register through them to get an extra \$1,000, do you think people should be concerned about their privacy ...?

Financial Secretary: I understand that there is a virtual bank launching promotional programmes to offer people to open account with them with some financial incentive. In this respect, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority has all along put in place very stringent data privacy requirements to make sure

the banks are using the data collected properly for banking purposes. The requirement in this respect is the same regardless of whether it is a virtual bank or a bank with physical branches. I believe going forward when this cash payout scheme is launched, the business sector may roll out different incentive programmes to attract target customers, but we are very confident in our regulatory framework and requirement with regard to the protection of the integrity of the data collected by these different institutions.

Reporter: Hi, Secretary, can I ask what are your considerations of whether to give out a second round of cash- out payment? Will you consider about the high unemployment rate or the hard-hit situation meanwhile in the society? Thank you.

Financial Secretary: We keep an open mind as to whether to do another round of cash handout. We are monitoring the situation very closely, but I would reiterate that to deal with the economic challenge and to relieve the pressure on our people, we need to have a combination of measures. Cash handout is just one of these measures. In terms of direct assistance to the people, apart from cash payout we have schemes like rebate of taxes, rebate of rates, etc, but we have to tackle the issue in a comprehensive manner, meaning apart from direct payout to our people, we need to support employment, we need to roll out measures to sectors hard hit by the current pandemic situation. All in all, in the Budget as well as the two rounds of Anti-epidemic Fund, the total amount of different measures comes to about \$290 billion, which is quite a lot. In this financial year, 2020-21, we are expecting a very high deficit, to the order of about \$280 billion or more. So we have to be very careful, having due regard to the affordability of the Government in rolling out different measures.

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