

Transcript of remarks of SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, after attending a radio programme today (June 16):

Reporter: If your ultimate goal is to build a smoke-free Hong Kong, so why don't you start with banning e-cigarettes? What is the consideration of not completely banning e-cigarettes for the first step?

Secretary for Food and Health: Regarding e-cigarettes and heat-not-burn cigarettes, the Government thinks that they are harmful. Therefore, we have to strengthen our existing regulation on these products. In terms of regulation, we have already proposed a number of strengthening measures, in addition to the existing measures. There is a range of regulatory measures that we can do. Of course, banning is also one of the measures in terms of regulation. Our pragmatic approach is to quickly strengthen our existing measures. For example, people who are under 18 would not be able to get these products and advertisements on these products will not be allowed. This is our first step. We will continue to monitor the situation, including international regulations, the recommendations from the World Health Organization, any new or existing research, and also our local smoking prevalence and the use of these products. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and work very closely with medical and health professionals to see if we should come up with an even more stringent regulation.

Reporter: How many years do you think that Hong Kong would be completely smoke-free?

Secretary for Food and Health: It is very difficult to project the number of years to achieve a smoke-free Hong Kong. This is towards the endgame of building a smoke-free Hong Kong. It is definitely our long term goal. We will continue to protect the health of our citizens and to safeguard them against all these different harmful products. We will come up with a plan of different measures of tobacco control so that our citizens will be protected. We will eventually arrive at decreasing smoking prevalence, and ultimately a smoke-free Hong Kong.

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