

USFH speaks on health quarantine arrangements

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Under Secretary for Food and Health, Dr Chui Tak-yi, after attending a radio programme today (March 14):

Reporter: Can you explain to us the Government's rationale when it decided not to include UK in the announcement last night? Regarding the announcement last night, why is it just home quarantine arrangement instead of an entry ban for European countries? Why home quarantine, not quarantine centre?

Under Secretary for Food and Health: We have been looking very closely at the trend of development of COVID-19 infection since the outbreak happened. According to observation, there is an obvious trend of increase in cases and also sharp increase in cases in a number of countries, especially those in Europe. Of course, apart from Europe, we also notice there are a number of isolated imported cases from other parts of the world, for example, America, and also the tour groups from Egypt and India. Taking into account all observation, we would like to include European countries first at this stage in issuing Outbound Travel Alert to the Schengen Area and also to Egypt because there is a group of tourists involving Hong Kong residents coming back to Hong Kong being infected. We have been watching very closely the trend of development in any part of the world apart from the Schengen Area in Europe. We would not exclude any additional measure towards other countries.

Reporter: Why home quarantine but not quarantine centre?

Under Secretary for Food and Health: Regarding the arrangement of quarantine, we have different locations that we can implement quarantine, that is quarantine centre and the other measure is home quarantine. As the number of quarantine facilities may be limited and also the establishment may need time, we have to prioritise the use of quarantine facilities to cater for those, for example, close contacts of confirmed cases. For the relatively less risky cases, we think home quarantine is also the acceptable measure.

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