

SFST continues to attend UK-Hong Kong Financial Dialogue 2019 in London (with photos)

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, continued to attend the UK-Hong Kong Financial Dialogue 2019 in London, the United Kingdom (UK) yesterday (May 8, London time).

In the morning, Mr Lau co-chaired the "UK-Hong Kong Financial Services Government Dialogue", a session of the UK-Hong Kong Financial Dialogue 2019, with the UK Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Mr John Glen.

Mr Lau said the bilateral government dialogue is an important step to enhancing financial co-operation at the government and regulatory level between Hong Kong and the UK. He hoped that both sides could build on their strong foundation for deeper partnership to pave the way for future discussions on specific technical and regulatory co-operation covering different areas in financial services.

At the end of the Government Dialogue, the two sides issued an outcome statement, committing to significantly enhancing bilateral co-operation and agreeing to continue to discuss specific steps and measures to increase the breadth and depth of the partnership.

The statement also recognised ongoing reforms and initiatives in relation to areas including offshore Renminbi business, capital markets and banking, asset and wealth management, insurance, green finance, financial technology (fintech) and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and welcomed continued growth and enhancements for further developments of the financial services industry on both sides. The full outcome statement is at Annex.

In the afternoon, Mr Lau met with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Philip Hammond, to exchange views on further financial collaboration between Hong Kong and the UK. Noting that London is a pioneer in green finance and environmental, social and governance and has a more mature green investment community, Mr Lau said he in particular looked forward to future collaboration with the UK to jointly promote green finance. Mr Lau extended an invitation for the UK to send a delegation to the Climate Business Forum to be held in Hong Kong in early 2020, co-hosted by Hong Kong with the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank Group.

Mr Lau also visited a Fintech consultancy agency, 11:FS, during which he welcomed the agency to expand its business to Hong Kong to tap into vast markets in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Asia.

Mr Lau concluded his visit in the evening and will be back in Hong Kong

on May 9.



Red flags hoisted at Kiu Tsui Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 9) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Kiu Tsui Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Red flags hoisted at some beaches

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 9) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay First Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, at the Legislative Council Complex today (May 8):

Reporter: Does it mean that the current proposal accepted is still controversial seeing that the votes are quite close as the chairman actually has to cast a vote? How would you say that the current proposal has already ensured fairness in regard to the locally trained doctor?

Secretary for Food and Health: In the past few weeks, I understand that a lot of medical stakeholders have been working very hard on different proposals. Although different parties may have different views, in fact I think we all have a common goal, that is, to increase the manpower in the public healthcare system through the limited registration mechanism and attract more overseas doctors to come back and work in Hong Kong. The Government welcomes the proposal that has just been passed by the Medical Council of Hong Kong (MCHK). We felt that the proposal is more lenient and clear as well as fitting in the principle of "fairness" and "non-discriminatory". We hope that this proposal would be able to attract more non-locally trained doctors to come back to work in Hong Kong so as to alleviate the workload of our doctors working in public healthcare system. Of course, we will continue to work with our stakeholders. The proposal that has been passed is just one of the measures to increase medical manpower in the public healthcare system in Hong Kong. We will continue to work with medical stakeholders to come up with more strategies to attract more doctors to come to work in Hong Kong as well as to alleviate the workload of doctors in the public healthcare system. We plan to hold a meeting on our established platform involving key medical stakeholders

to work out manpower strategies and measures.

Reporter: Why would you say that it is already fair with regard to locally trained doctors? Also, the votes are quite close, does it mean that it is still controversial?

Secretary for Food and Health: As far as "fairness" and "non-discriminatory" concerned, the proposal that has been passed, as I understand, requires one to work for three years in the public healthcare system, either in the Hospital Authority (HA), the Department of Health (DH), or the medical schools of the two universities, and then the six-month assessment period after passing the examination could be waived. That means, all the four institutions, namely the HA, DH and the medical schools of the two universities, will be given equal treatment.

Reporter: One of the Medical Council members, Alex Lam, said that he was threatened to back the Government preferred proposal. How would the Government respond to it?

Secretary for Food and Health: First of all, there is no any sort of Government proposal. The principle of the Government is to have a proposal that is more lenient and also having the principle of "fairness" and "non-discriminatory" so as to attract more overseas doctors to work in Hong Kong. Throughout the past few weeks, the Government has been communicating with many medical stakeholders including through the platform that I have just mentioned. That particular platforms include the Hong Kong Medical Association, the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, the HA, the DH, the medical schools of the two universities and the MCHK. We exchanged views. Of course, we have also expressed the factors to be considered and our principles at all those meetings. On top of those meetings, we have also met with different frontline doctor groups to share our concerns and principles with them. We exchanged views on different proposals which have been put forth by different bodies. We have been very frank in our discussions and the atmosphere is actually satisfactory.

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

HKARG responds to European Commission report

In response to media enquiries, a spokesman for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government made the following response today (May 8) to a report on Hong Kong issued by the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy:

"Since the return to the Motherland, the HKSAR has been exercising 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy in strict accordance with the Basic Law. The 'one country, two systems' principle has been fully and successfully implemented.

"Human rights and freedom in Hong Kong, including freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association, the right to vote and the right to stand for election, etc. are fully protected by the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance and other legislation. The HKSAR Government attaches great importance to them and is determined to safeguard them.

"At the same time, the HKSAR Government has a duty to implement and uphold the Basic Law and to ensure that all elections will be conducted in accordance with the Basic Law and relevant electoral laws.

"The Basic Law clearly stipulates that the HKSAR is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Any suggestion for 'Hong Kong's independence' is a blatant violation of the Basic Law and a direct affront to the national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the PRC. 'Hong Kong's independence' runs counter to the successful implementation of 'one country, two systems' and undermines the HKSAR's constitutional and legal foundations as enshrined in the Basic Law. Relevant international human rights convention and court cases have clearly pointed out that freedom of speech is not absolute.

"For other issues mentioned in the report, including the prohibition of the operation of the Hong Kong National Party, a visa application case and the co-location arrangement of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, etc. the HKSAR Government emphasises that it has all along been handling Hong Kong affairs strictly in accordance with the 'one country, two systems' principle, the Basic Law and the laws of Hong Kong.

"In respect of environmental protection, the HKSAR Government has been taking comprehensive actions to reduce emissions from different air pollution sources including power plants, vessels and motor vehicles to improve air quality over the years. For instance, in addition to the traffic measures cited by the report, we have banned new coal-fired plants and have required the power plants to install control equipment and use more natural gas to reduce their emissions. Concentrations of major air pollutants have been reduced by more than 30 per cent since 2013.

"The HKSAR Government reiterates that foreign institutions should not interfere in any form in the internal affairs of the HKSAR."