

CE's Statement on Pre-ExCo Meeting Media Arrangement

With reference to her remarks at today's (July 3) pre-ExCo meeting media session on simultaneous interpretation and time in answering reporters' questions, the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, makes the following statement:

In all my media sessions, I have been answering questions in the language in which they are asked (Cantonese, Putonghua or English), and I will continue to do so. There is no question of the Government or myself attaching less importance to the use of English. Indeed, since taking office as Chief Executive, I have made sure that important statements are made or released in both languages, such as my announcement (at a pre-ExCo meeting media session on June 12) of the plan to set up a Commission of Inquiry on certain works at the Hung Hom Station of the Shatin Central Link and my speech at the reception to celebrate the 21st Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR on July 1. When a question was asked in English at the media stand-up today, I naturally responded in English. There should be no doubt about my commitment to responding to questions from reporters in the same language that the question is asked.

My remarks on simultaneous interpretation and time in answering questions made during today's usual pre-ExCo meeting media session were prompted by the consideration that such sessions, unlike a press conference, are of short duration (normally lasting 10 to 15 minutes before ExCo meeting commences) and during which reporters often have questions on a wide range of topical issues. If reporters ask the same question in different languages (be it Cantonese, Putonghua or English), and the same reply given also in different languages, that would take up time that might otherwise be used for reporters to raise other questions of interest. Those remarks were not targeted at the English language.

That said, having taken advice from my Information Services Department colleagues, I have no intention to change the way these pre-ExCo meeting media sessions are to be conducted. I apologise for any confusion thus caused.

Opening remarks by SEN at press conference on new Development Plans of

two power companies

Following are the opening remarks by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, at today's (June 3) press conference on new Development Plans of two power companies:

The Executive Council (ExCo) approved today the Development Plans (DPs) of the two power companies.

The new Scheme of Control Agreements (SCAs) reached with the two power companies are the greenest SCAs ever, offering key features on energy efficiency and conservation (EE&C) as well as renewable energy.

In the new DPs under the SCAs, the power companies have included essential capital projects to change the fuel mix for electricity generation which will help combat climate change and further improve air quality, enhance the reliability and security of local electricity supply and assist in turning Hong Kong into a smart city.

The new DPs are also expected to provide an opportunity for us to advance our achievement of the carbon intensity reduction target for 2030, and further improve Hong Kong's air quality.

To support the EE&C initiatives under the new SCAs, both power companies will introduce smart meters to help customers achieve energy saving by providing them with instant power consumption information and enable implementation of demand response schemes. This project will help turn Hong Kong into a smart city.

With the increasing use of natural gas for power generation in the coming years, the power companies have planned to jointly build an offshore liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Hong Kong waters. This will be crucial to the diversification of their source of natural gas and enhancement of their supply security. It will also help them secure natural gas at a more competitive price and hence mitigate the pressure on tariff increase.

Unlike in the past two decades when there have been no plant replacements by the power companies, about ten coal units would reach their scheduled retirement life by 2030. The new DPs include key investment proposals to construct two additional new gas-fired generating units (gas units) to replace coal units which have been operating for over three decades. The overall gas-fired generation of the power companies will increase from the present 26% for CLP Power Hong Kong Limited and Castle Peak Power Company Limited (collectively CLP) and about 34% for Hongkong Electric Company Limited (HKE) to over 50% for CLP and about 70% for HKE by 2023.

Another key project is CLP's enhancement of the clean energy transmission system (CETS) with China Southern Power Grid and Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station. When completed in 2025, the strengthened network will give us the capability and flexibility to use more zero-carbon energy from

the Mainland to manage our local fuel mix, thereby enabling us to advance our achievement of carbon intensity reduction target for 2030 (i.e. reduction of carbon intensity by 65% to 70% as compared to 2005) by as much as five years. In addition, the CETS will delay the plans for and/or reduce the capital investment on new gas units to replace the coal units which are due to retire in 2025 and beyond.

Possible options of utilising more zero carbon energy will be covered by the Public Engagement exercise on Long-term Decarbonisation Strategy to be carried out by the Council for Sustainable Development later this year.

The ExCo has also approved the new average tariff rates on commencement of the new SCAs as part of the power companies' new DPs. CLP's new tariff adjustment covers 15 months from October 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019 whereas that of HKE covers 12 months from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019.

Both the power companies will reduce their Basic Tariff Rates, CLP by 3.7% and HKE by 7.1%, as a result of the reduction of the permitted rate of return from 9.99% to 8% on commencement of the new SCAs.

The average Basic Tariff Rate during the entire new DP is projected to increase at an annual rate of 1.4% for CLP and 1.2% for HKE while the average Net Tariff Rate before rebates is projected to increase at an annual rate of 3.5% for CLP and 2.8% for HKE. The actual tariff level payable will depend on a number of factors including the actual fuel cost at the time.

To help alleviate the impact of tariff increase on households during the transition to a lower carbon future, the Government proposes to grant an electricity charges relief of \$3,000 over 60 months (i.e. \$50 per month) to each residential electricity account when the new SCA period commences, i.e. from October 1, 2018 for CLP and from January 1, 2019 for HKE.

The electricity charges relief is expected to roughly cover the projected cumulative tariff increase over the five-year period for about half of the households in Hong Kong.

The Government plans to seek funding of about \$8.7 billion from the Finance Committee of Legislative Council before the summer recess with a view to distributing the electricity charges relief to residential electricity accounts when the new SCA period commences, with a hope to make Hong Kong greener, low carbon while balancing the environmental concerns with the tariff pressures. We hope to have your support. Thank you.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the opening remarks.)

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HyD's response to media enquiries on water leakage at basement of Passenger Clearance Building of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port (with photos)

Regarding media enquiries made yesterday (July 2) on a news report about water leakage previously found at the basement of the Passenger Clearance Building (PCB) at the Hong Kong Port (HKP) of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), the Highways Department (HyD) today (July 3) responded as follows:

The basement of the PCB at the HKP of the HZMB does not only house the electrical and mechanical equipment for the PCB, but also accommodates the district cooling system for the HKP. The district cooling system supplies chilled sea water via underground conduits to the air conditioning systems of the building cluster in the vehicle clearance plaza, so as to achieve the energy saving objective. Therefore, it is a reasonable arrangement to house the plant room of the PCB at its basement.

Soon after the contractor and the HyD's resident site staff discovered the leakage problem at the PCB in early 2018, they had swiftly followed up the issue and arranged rectification works. According to the records kept by the resident site staff of the consultant appointed by the HyD, after the structural and fitting-out works of the PCB were completed, some underground cable ducts had not been sealed up timely after cable installation, thus leading to leakage of rainwater into the basement via these ducts on April 15, 2018. The contractor had subsequently rectified the problem by properly sealing up the relevant ducts. After recent rainstorms, including the amber rainstorm yesterday (July 2), the HyD has not observed any noticeable water leakage during site inspections at the basement of the PCB.

As regards the news report about smoke emission from the pillar box, the incident occurred on June 20, 2018 according to the records. During testing and commissioning for the PCB, the resident site staff found that there had been smoke emission from the pillar box of the air conditioning system. The incident was believed to have been caused by malfunctioning of a component, leading to over-heating of the equipment and subsequently smoke emission. The contractor has completed the rectification works for the malfunctioned component and the system is currently in normal operation. The HyD emphasised that this incident of smoke emission from the pillar box and the earlier water leakage incident at the basement are two independent incidents which are completely unrelated to each other.

The PCB is undergoing testing and commissioning at present. The HyD will strictly conduct the testing and commissioning with a view to ensuring that

the works would only pass the acceptance procedures if their qualities meet the required standards.

For the present conditions inside the PCB basement, please refer to the photographs attached.

