

## CS meets with Ombudsman to discuss strengthening departmental management system and performance accountability (with photo)

To enhance governance efficiency and strengthen performance accountability, the Chief Executive has instructed the Chief Secretary for Administration to lead a working group to conduct in-depth reviews of the direct investigation operation reports issued by the Office of The Ombudsman from time to time. This aims to ensure that all heads of government departments proactively follow up on the recommendations from these investigations while strengthening the establishment of departmental management systems and reinforcing performance accountability among departmental managerial staff to enhance public service management.

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, met with the Ombudsman, Mr Jack Chan, today (May 9) to follow up on the Direct Investigation Operation Report on Government's Regulation of Occupational Safety and Health in Construction Industry, published by the Office of The Ombudsman on April 16, and discussed extensively the Ombudsman's findings, analyses and recommendations. At the meeting, both sides had in-depth discussions on the bottlenecks and inadequacies in the occupational safety and health (OSH) regulatory system for the construction industry. They also held candid and pragmatic exchanges on strengthening the management systems of government departments, particularly focusing on the leadership and supervisory responsibilities of management personnel, as well as issues such as performance accountability among departmental managerial staff.

The Government attaches great importance to OSH in the construction industry. The Labour Department (LD) and the Buildings Department (BD) have been taking a number of follow-up actions on the recommendations in the report. The LD has amended the relevant OSH legislation to increase the penalties. It also plans to start a trial of using small unmanned aircraft for inspections, investigations and evidence collection in the second half of 2025 and to explore the adoption of automatic speech recognition to assist in taking statements, thereby improving the efficiency of frontline officers in law enforcement. The LD and BD have strengthened communication and collaboration and improved the inter-departmental referral mechanism. The BD has improved the internal monitoring system for case handling in early 2025 and speeded up processing of previously omitted cases, and is reviewing lowering the threshold for instigating disciplinary actions to enhance deterrent effect. In addition, the Government will introduce a bill into the Legislative Council to amend the Buildings Ordinance in the first half of 2026 to further enhance the regulatory regime for registered contractors.

Mr Chan said, "The Government attaches great importance to the Office of The Ombudsman's investigation operation report and appreciates the valuable

observations and recommendations put forward by the Ombudsman. In accordance with the Chief Executive's instruction, the working group will ensure that all government departments conscientiously and proactively follow up on the recommendations, while strengthening the establishment of departmental management systems at source and reinforcing performance accountability of the management to effectively improve governance efficiency, with a view to continuing to provide high-quality and efficient services for the public."

