

Government distributed approximately 28 million locally-produced masks to the public

The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau announced today (August 7) that the Government has distributed about 28 million disposable adult masks to about 2.8 million residential addresses in Hong Kong in the past month, with each household receiving 10 masks. The masks distributed are the first batch procured by the Government under the Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme, reflecting the Government's aim to share these masks with the public as part of Hong Kong's collective fight against the virus.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, said, "With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world at the beginning of the year, there was a very significant surge in the global demand for masks and supply was very tight. As a result, the domestic mask supply market, which relied heavily on imports, suffered from widespread shortages and high prices. In response to these challenging circumstances, the Government broke the mould and took swift action to develop and implement the Scheme, which facilitates the establishment of 20 local mask production lines by providing subsidies, in order to stabilise supply and to build up stock to meet the needs of the Government and the community.

"The Scheme opened for applications in March, and 20 production lines received approval as they successively secured certifications as required by the Scheme to begin mass production. Now there has been the successful distribution of masks to some 2.8 million residential addresses across Hong Kong. All this took place within merely five months. This would not have been possible without the concerted efforts of all parties. It is a true testimony of Hong Kong's adaptability and perseverance during tough times."

Pursuant to the Scheme, the Government will procure masks from the subsidised production lines for a one-year period. As of July 31, the 20 production lines collectively delivered over 56 million masks to the Government, among which about 28 million masks were distributed to the public.

Hongkong Post has completed delivering masks to all residential addresses in Hong Kong into letter boxes or by door delivery. For situations where delivery was unsuccessful, the postmen would have left notification cards. With a notification card, a pack of masks can be collected at the designated post office within 28 working days. Furthermore, the Social Welfare Department and the District Offices have assisted in arranging delivery of masks to some residential addresses currently not covered by Hongkong Post's delivery service, such as subdivided units and village houses.

Anyone whose residential address has not received a pack of masks or a notification card, or has any questions about the mask distribution exercise, should call the dedicated hotline 183 6136 or email to enquiry@maskdistribution.hk starting from next Monday (August 10) at 9am.

Furthermore, as of July 31, the Government disbursed a total capital subsidy of approximately \$14 million to the 20 production lines. For more details about the production lines, please refer to the website of the Hong Kong Productivity Council as the Secretariat of the Scheme, at u.hkpc.org/mask.