

# Progress of Retail Sector Subsidy Scheme and Subsidy Scheme for Beauty Parlours, Massage Establishments and Party Rooms

A Government spokesman said today (April 24) that over \$1.5 billion in subsidies have been approved so far for eligible retailers under the Retail Sector Subsidy Scheme (the RSSS) of the first round of the Anti-epidemic Fund, involving more than 19 000 applications. Meanwhile, the Subsidy Scheme for Beauty Parlours, Massage Establishments and Party Rooms (the BMP Scheme) of the second round of the Fund is expected to be open for application early next month.

About 93 000 applications were received within the three-week application period of the RSSS, and disbursement of subsidies to approved applicants has already commenced since April 9.

The BMP Scheme will largely adopt the arrangement of the RSSS, under which collection and vetting of applications will primarily be conducted through an online platform. Beneficiaries of the BMP Scheme are beauty parlours, massage establishments and party rooms (BMPs), which have been ordered to close pursuant to the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F).

Under the BMP Scheme, a one-off tiered subsidy will be paid to each eligible beauty parlour or massage establishment depending on its scale of operation (at \$30,000, \$60,000 and \$100,000 respectively), and a one-off subsidy of \$40,000 will be paid to each eligible party room. The BMP Scheme, expected to benefit about 8 400 beauty parlours and massage establishments as well as about 500 party rooms, is expected to be open for application in early May.

The Chief Secretary for Administration and Chairman of the Anti-epidemic Fund Steering Committee, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, said, "The Government has been striving to speed up the implementation of the measures under the Fund. We were able to launch the RSSS within one month after the Legislative Council approved the setting up of the Fund, providing timely relief to retailers hit by the epidemic. The Government will apply the experience gained during the implementation of the RSSS in ensuring the early launch of the BMP Scheme, with a view to helping tide BMPs over during this challenging period."