

Remarks by CE at media session before ExCo (with video)

Following are the remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (March 18):

Reporter: Good morning, Mr Lee. Firstly, about the controversies surrounding the deal by CK Hutchison Holdings to sell the ports that it owns. Firstly, what is the Government's view on the deal itself, and how should the company respond amid this apparent criticism by Beijing? Secondly, you mentioned earlier that any deal made in Hong Kong must adhere to the local laws and legislations. Should you elaborate a little bit on what you mean by that? You know, perhaps, would the Government consider using its own legislation, like National Security Law or potentially something else? And secondly, about the raising of the Hong Kong public hospital fees; when raising the fees of certain medical services provided by the Government, how can the Government itself ensure that residents in need would not have their diagnosis delayed due to these extra charges? And how would you address concerns that private hospitals might also raise their prices in light of this? Thank you.

Chief Executive: In regard to the transaction you mentioned, I have three points to make. First, there have been extensive discussions in society about the issue and this reflects society's concern over the matter. These concerns deserve serious attention. Second, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government urges foreign governments to provide a fair and just environment for enterprises, including enterprises from Hong Kong. We oppose the abusive use of coercion or bullying tactics in international, economic and trade relations. Third, any transaction must comply with the legal and regulatory requirements. Hong Kong will handle it in accordance with the law and regulations.

In regard to your question about reviews of charges and fees of hospitals, I must first emphasise this review is part of the healthcare reform. I have given three principles to the Health Bureau in this healthcare reform in relation to review of fees and charges. First, it is not an expenditure cutting exercise. We shall spend no less money. Just to readjust the spending distribution for the sake of efficiency and effectiveness. Second, priority should be given to the most needy. These include helping those with economic difficulties and those cases in which the patient suffers from an emergency, or the most serious and critical illnesses. Third, reduce waste of resources, including drugs and services waste. I have urged the Health Bureau to finalise the review and announce the details as soon as possible, and we aim at announcing the details within this month.

Reporter: Sorry, do you have anything to say about the legal aspects of the CK Hutchison deal? Thank you.

Chief Executive: We will deal with it in accordance with the law and

regulations.

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