

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 (June 10):

Reporter: Good morning Mr Lee. So you have chaired a senior meeting and instructed officials to follow up in response to the fresh water supply to housing estates in Fanling. What do you think the Government can learn from this incident, and are there any areas that should be improved on? And secondly, with Aristo Sham being the first Hong Kong-born pianist to win the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, what does his win mean, in your opinion, and are there any plans to take this opportunity, perhaps, to review support to the industry? Thank you.

Chief Executive: In dealing with water matters, we have to ensure not just that it is safe to drink, but also that people drink it with their mind at ease. I'm highly concerned about the water matter in Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court, and that is why I held a meeting and gave four directives and 10 tasks for the relevant bureaux and departments to implement. I repeat the four directives: to trace the source; to set up an expert group to assist in the tracing; to immediately install and strengthen the filtration facilities in each and every building in Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court; and to speed up the work.

In regard to the 10 tasks, I don't want to repeat here, because they have been well announced. And I've also asked the Deputy Financial Secretary, Michael Wong, to oversee the implementation. I see the 10 specific tasks are being implemented fast and immediately. During the past weekend, colleagues deployed additional manpower on-site to speed up the work progress. The latest progress of key areas has received positive feedback from residents. For example, we have visited a lot of households that have previously made complaints about the water quality, and from them –and from the sample water we've collected – they've indicated that they no longer see any particles in the water. They find the water clean, and they feel at ease to drink the water.

We have also enhanced manpower at the district level to talk to people who may still have problems. This includes government officials, care teams, District Council members and the different representatives who are willing to join the government team to visit households and also talk to the different people to address their concerns. And I'm glad to hear that they have been receiving positive feedback that those who previously complained about the particles they have reported, they no longer see those particles. There may be one or two households that still reported that they had seen particles, but after flushing and some work to the taps and also cleaning the water meter, there is very clear improvement. We'll continue the work. Experience suggests that some particles or residue may remain in the pipes after

entering into the building. In other words, in the same building, we're seeing a lot of households saying the water is clean – they don't see any particles anymore – but there may be one or two that still see some small particles. So these particles stay in internal pipes, probably within the households or probably within the taps or the water meter. Government colleagues are working hard to do all they can to continue to flush the pipes, flush the tap, flush the water meter. And I advise residents, they can do the same, but we'll do our best. And what is also very important is good dissemination of information, and we have been publishing the results every day on the website, and also posting the notice at the entrance of all buildings.

I think the experience that colleagues have learned from this incident is, response should be fast. We should understand the feelings of residents in water concerns to ensure that it's not just safe, but that when they drink the water, their mind is at ease. Colleagues, of course, focus on the technical side of ensuring the water is safe. I think everybody handling this matter knows that we should, at the same time, address residents' ease of mind when we deal with water problem. And I've also instructed the Water Supplies Department to replace the pipes which are the source of the particles. They're working hard on it. My thanks to the support and advice of the expert team which has been formed, they are more or less formulating the plan to replace the pipes which are the source of the problem as soon as possible, and the Water Supplies Department will submit the plan to the Development Bureau as soon as possible.

As regards the very good news of Aristo Sham having won the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, which is one of the highest levels of piano competitions, and Mr Aristo Sham, being born in Hong Kong – we are so proud of him, and we are so glad that he has won the competition. I think every Hong Kong resident feels proud of this excellent result. And of course, if Aristo will find time to make a few performances in Hong Kong, it will really get us even more excited and we will see if that will happen, but we'll work hard to see whether we can make it happen.

I'm very glad that overall, the performances of a lot of artists from Hong Kong are doing well in different areas, and this is seen in a lot of good results they have achieved. The present mechanism for the Government to support performers in this field of art is through the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, and they will be looking closely at the needs to strengthen opportunities for different areas of art so as to develop talent, to develop the overall performances of those who are interested in different areas. There is an expert group, actually, in the Arts Development Council to look at the overall situation and the different areas, strengths and potentials, to examine assistance and support, including donations or subsidies in the area of developing different arts. So the mechanism is there and we will continue to make good use of the Arts Development Council to help artists in different areas to achieve their goals and realise their dreams. Thank you.

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