

LegCo Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways meeting

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways will hold a meeting at 10.45am tomorrow (March 3) in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex.

Public consultation on proposed application of CISG to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region commences

The Department of Justice (DoJ) today (March 2) issued a consultation paper on the proposed application of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG) to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (referred to as "Proposed Application"). Members of the community are invited to submit their views on the Proposed Application on or before September 30, 2020.

The CISG is a treaty which provides a set of uniform rules governing the formation, performance and remedies for breach of contracts for the international sale of goods within its scope. Its purpose is to provide a modern, uniform and fair regime for contracts for the international sale of goods, and through which to contribute to introducing certainty in commercial exchanges and decreasing transaction costs. In particular, the Convention applies to contracts for sale of goods between parties whose places of business are in different Contracting States, subject to the right of the parties to opt out in whole or part of the Convention. The CISG currently has 93 Contracting States, many of which are along the Belt and Road Initiative, from diverse legal traditions and levels of economic development, which together represent over two-thirds of the global economy.

For the purpose of gathering and understanding the views of a full range of interested stakeholders on this matter, the DoJ commenced today a public consultation on the Proposed Application. The full set of consultation documents and related information are available on the DoJ's website at www.doj.gov.hk/eng/public/CISG.html.

The DoJ welcomes views from the public on the matters raised in the consultation paper. All views (marked "CISG") should be submitted on or before September 30, 2020, to the International Law Division (Treaties & Law Unit) in the following ways: by post, to International Law Division (Treaties & Law Unit), 7/F, Main Wing, Justice Place, 18 Lower Albert Road, Central, Hong Kong; by fax at 3918 4791; or by email at ild@doj.gov.hk.

Extension of rent concession period approved for HA's retail and factory tenants

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA)'s Commercial Properties Committee (CPC) today (March 2) approved to extend the 50 per cent rent concession for its retail and factory tenants for six months from April 1 to September 30, 2020, in line with the Government's relief measures.

The Financial Secretary announced on February 26 the reduction of rentals by 50 per cent for another six months from April 1, 2020 for eligible tenants of government properties and government land, among others.

"A total of about 2 450 retail and 3 300 factory tenants will benefit from the rent concession. The rent concession does not include rates and air-conditioning charges," a spokesman for the HA said.

To tie in with the Government's relief measures, the CPC endorsed in September and October last year the arrangements for the granting of a 50 per cent rent concession for the HA's retail and factory tenants for six months from October 1, 2019, to March 31, 2020.

The total rent forgone for the 12-month rent concession is estimated at about \$778 million.

"The arrangements endorsed previously will continue to apply during the extended rent concession period. The rent concession will apply to all eligible tenancies that are in force during the concession period. There will be no rent concession for tenancies that are under a rent-free period during the concession period," the spokesman said.

"We will continue to adopt a flexible approach in dealing with retail and factory tenancies due to expire during the extended rent concession period as a transitional arrangement," he added.

"To enable the tenants to continue their use and occupation of the premises upon expiry of the existing tenancies, licences will be granted at the existing rent while pending agreement on the new rent for the new tenancies. Upon finalisation of the new rent for the new tenancy, it will take retrospective effect from the original effective date of the new tenancy and the licence fee paid shall be applied to the payment of rent under the new tenancy. This arrangement will allow more time for both the HA and the tenants to grasp additional market information for consideration and decision making."

Special traffic arrangements in Kowloon West

Police will implement special traffic arrangements in Kowloon West to facilitate the Customs and Excise Service funeral with full honours for the late Senior Customs Officer, Ms Ng Wing-man, to be held on March 5 (Thursday).

Traffic control measures will be implemented on Cheong Hang Lane and Cheong Hang Road from 8am to noon on March 5. Traffic along Lo Lung Hang Street must turn right to Winslow Street.

The metered parking spaces on Lo Lung Hang Street, Winslow Street, Cheong Hang Road, and On Ching Road will be suspended from 8pm on March 4 to noon on the following day.

People going to the funeral by vehicles should alight at Winslow Street or Lo Lung Hang Street and proceed to the Universal Funeral Parlour.

Subject to traffic condition, the cortege can park on Cheong Hang Road. Other vehicles with authorisation can park on the west side of Cheong Hang Road.

Actual implementation of the traffic arrangements will be made depending on traffic and crowd conditions in the area. Motorists are advised to exercise tolerance and patience and take heed of instructions of the Police on site.

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, after attending a radio programme today (March 2):

Reporter: With the return to work of civil servants and many people in the private sector, do you think it will increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the community?

Secretary for Food and Health: The Government's decision of progressively having some people returning to work and also starting some of the public services has balanced the expectation of the people and taken into account the current situation. Obviously, there will be some risk but the Government – the Civil Service Bureau – has already been working together with all the department heads in looking into the flexibility in such as working hours and lunch hours, and also other measures that can be taken to protect colleagues when they are providing services to the public and going to work. For example, now in government buildings, the temperature of people would have to be taken before they enter the building. There are also other hygiene measures at government offices. So, everybody should be very vigilant. For example, when they go to lunch, the advice is not to have lunch together, use more delivery services, and not gather together. The issue of social distancing is still very important for people to observe. Using appropriate protective equipment, such as masks and also other personal protective clothing, when providing services are also important. All the department heads, as I understand, have already worked on the specific services that each department will be providing and sending out press releases to highlight those services.

Reporter: Did the Government consult any of its own medical experts when they made this decision?

Secretary for Food and Health: The Chief Executive has an expert advisory group and this issue has been discussed with our experts during the previous meetings. The experts' advice is to provide more flexibility. The protection as well as on how to maintain social distancing in a flexible manner when people start to work or to provide public services have also been discussed.

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