Transcript of remarks by SLW on anti-epidemic measures

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on measures of the Anti-epidemic Fund after attending a radio programme this morning (February 22):

Reporter: There are some criticisms that the Anti-epidemic Fund, the relief package, overly focuses on the corporate and the businesses than helping the workers. How do you respond to that criticism?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: Yes, it is definitely the concern for the Government to protect the employees, over three million employees, here in Hong Kong. The approach in this Anti-epidemic Fund is basically trying to help the employers to maintain their business as far as possible. If they can maintain their business, then the employment can continue, instead of closing down or firing their own staff. So, by the time when the epidemic is over, the enterprises can bounce back very quickly. That is the basic idea. We hope that we can help them.

On the other hand, to help the general population is a matter of a much macro perspective and I would guess the Financial Secretary would take care of that.

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

Tsang Man-tung to host talks in multimedia lecture-performance series (II)

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department will present the "On Sounds, Colours, Images and Forms" multimedia lecture-performance series (II) in March and April. The series is hosted by scenographer and singing bowl artist Tsang Man-tung and will feature lectures from four speakers.

In each of the lectures there will be an interactive performance and each of the four speakers will use their respective multi-media medium as well as a singing bowl performance to explore artistic expressions relating to sounds, colours, images and forms. The host and speakers will also discuss how elements of physical movements, sounds, images, light and shadows can merge to form a new spatial realm on the performance stage.

Details of the lectures are as follows:

March 25 ï¼ˆWednesdayï¼‰
Topic: "Images"
Speaker: Cheung King-wai
Venue: Miller Theater, Asia Society Hong Kong Center

March 31 ï¼ˆTuesdayï¼‰
Topic: "Colours"
Speaker: anothermountainman (Stanley Wong)
Venue: Miller Theater, Asia Society Hong Kong Center

April 27 ï¼ˆMondayï¼‰
Topic: "Sounds"
Speakerï¼šChoi Sai-ho
Venue: Black Box Theatre, Kwai Tsing Theatre

April 28 ï¼ˆTuesdayï¼‰
Topic: "Forms"
Speaker: Koala Yip
Venue: Black Box Theatre, Kwai Tsing Theatre

All lectures will start at 7.30pm. Tickets priced at $80 (free seating) are now available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7323 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/multi_arts/programs_952.html.

DSD continues to provide basic and limited public services next week

In view of the extension of the special work arrangements for government departments, the Drainage Services Department (DSD) announced today (February 22) that it will continue to maintain its emergency and essential public services, and will provide basic and limited public services to members of the public next week, including the 24-hour DSD Drainage Hotline, the inspection of drainage records and the handling of Sewage Charges/Trade Effluent Surcharge matters. The public are advised to minimise their usage of the above services unless under emergency or necessary situations. The public are also advised that the handling time of the above services would be longer than usual.

Except for the 24-hour Drainage Hotline (2300 1110), all enquiry phone lines and reception services will be suspended temporarily.

The opening hours for inspection of drainage records, and the offices at the four locations listed below which provide limited receipt and dispatch services, will be maintained on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 10am to noon and from 2pm to 4pm.

- 43/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
- 12/F, Kowloon Government Offices, 405 Nathan Road, Kowloon
- 23/F, 1063 King's Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong
- G/F, Western Magistracy Building, 2A Pok Fu Lam Road, Hong Kong

Deposit boxes will be available at the above four locations and at the gate of Shatin Sewage Treatment Works outside the opening hours for document reception.

DSD facilities will also be temporarily closed for public visits or other educational purposes until further notice.

Latest arrangements for Inland Revenue Department public services

In view of the extension of the special work arrangements for government departments to March 1, the Inland Revenue Department announced today (February 22) that from February 24 it will continue to suspend the provision of all of its services, except for the following:

Offices	Opening hours
Central Enquiry Counter (only for enquiries relating to tax clearance for taxpayers leaving Hong Kong)	From 9am to noon, Monday to Friday
Business Registration Office	From 9am to noon and 1.30pm to 4pm, Monday to Friday
Stamp Office	From 9am to noon and 1.30pm to 4pm, Monday to Friday

The department appeals to members of the public for their understanding that the above services will only be provided at a much reduced scale and that services in all other areas will not be provided at the service counters. They should also be prepared to experience a longer waiting time before they can be served. The department encourages the public to use its

electronic services to handle their tax affairs as much as possible. A list of such services can be found in the department's website at www.ird.gov.hk/eng/ese/index.htm.

The department further announced that deadlines for tax payments, lodgement of objections and holdover applications as well as submission of tax returns and information that fall between January 29 and March 1 will be automatically extended to March 2.

The department will review the situation and make further announcements as necessary.

Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.