

# 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, at a media session at the Legislative Council Complex today (January 17):

Reporter: With the run-up to the Chinese New Year, there may be more tourists coming in and out of Hong Kong, would you consider like requesting them to declare their health status to the authorities? You said you had meeting yesterday, could you give us a brief recap?

Secretary for Food and Health: Regarding the latest development of the Wuhan pneumonia with this new novel coronavirus, I have convened a Steering Committee meeting in accordance with the Serious Response Level under the Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance yesterday. During this meeting, I alerted all participating departments and bureaux in view of the latest situation and the latest risk assessment. Everybody has to be in high vigilance and on guard in case we have a confirmed case in Hong Kong. Given the latest situation that confirmed cases are found in Japan and in Thailand, as well as the latest information from Wuhan, although there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission, they cannot rule out that there is some form of limited human-to-human transmission. Therefore, we have to be on guard and maintain high vigilance, not only our health department and the Hospital Authority (HA) but also everybody in Hong Kong. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has expanded the scope of surveillance to include not only those who come back from Wuhan but those who have visited hospitals in the Mainland. This is a new reporting criteria. The DH had already sent letters to all private doctors, private hospitals and Chinese medicine practitioners. The HA is also aware of this latest reporting criteria. As far as the control measures adopted at the boundary is concerned, we have already strengthened all measures at the boundary checkpoints including temperature screenings on all incoming travellers, in particular at the arrival gate in the airport where the passenger from Wuhan arrived as well as the Express Rail Link station. Everyone who comes from Wuhan would have their temperature checked by handheld infrared thermometers. Other than temperature checks, we have also made in-flight announcements as well as at the lobby of Express Rail Link station and also gave out pamphlets to remind travellers of the situation and health advice. Finally, it is also important for everyone in Hong Kong to be on high alert. In case there is a confirmed case in Hong Kong, the Government will be able to respond quickly and swiftly.

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

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## Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (January 17) released the latest grading of water quality for four gazetted beaches that are open all year round for swimming.

Four beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Clear Water Bay Second Beach  
Deep Water Bay Beach  
Golden Beach  
Silverstrand Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, there was no change in the grading for these beaches.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, an EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's website on Beach Water Quality ([www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach)) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

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## Appeal for information on missing woman in Tsuen Wan (with photo)

Police today (January 17) appealed to the public for information on a

woman who went missing in Tsuen Wan.

Tsang Sze-man, aged 47, went missing after she left her residence in Sam Tung Uk Village on January 10. Her family made a report to Police on January 12.

She is about 1.65 metres tall, 44 kilograms in weight and of thin build. She has a long face with yellow complexion and straight black hair. She was last seen wearing a black shirt, dark trousers and a dark bag.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing woman or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1173, 6099 3830 or email to [rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk](mailto:rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk), or contact any police station.



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## [Post-office employment for former official under special appointment Mr Chan Kin-ping](#)

The Advisory Committee on Post-office Employment for Former Chief Executives and Politically Appointed Officials has advised on former official under special appointment Mr Chan Kin-ping's proposed employment after his departure from the Government on May 12, 2018.

The Advisory Committee considers that, subject to the observance of certain restrictions it has advised, Mr Chan's proposed employment would not

give rise to any potential conflict of interest. The Advisory Committee also does not anticipate adverse public perception to arise from the proposed employment.

The Advisory Committee considers and advises on the post-office employment, appointments and other engagements for former officials under special appointment. In considering each case, the Advisory Committee has regard to the information provided by the former official under special appointment concerned, the assessments by relevant government bureaux or offices, and the criteria for advice as stipulated in the "Guidance Note on Post-office Employment for Officials under Special Appointment".

Details of the above-mentioned case are available at the Advisory Committee's website ([www.ceo.gov.hk/poo/eng/index.htm](http://www.ceo.gov.hk/poo/eng/index.htm)).

The membership of the Advisory Committee is as follows:

Professor Liu Pak-wai (Chairman)  
Ms Susanna Chiu Lai-kuen  
Mr Simon Ip Sik-on  
Mrs Margaret Leung Ko May-yee  
Mr Thomas Brian Stevenson

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## **Business expectations for the first quarter of 2020**

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (January 17) the results of the Quarterly Business Tendency Survey for the first quarter (Q1) of 2020.

### Business situation

For all surveyed sectors taken together, the proportion of respondents expecting their business situation to be worse (31%) in Q1 2020 over Q4 2019 is higher than that expecting it to be better (9%).

When compared with the results of the Q4 2019 survey round, the proportion of respondents expecting a worse business situation in Q1 2020 as compared with the preceding quarter is 31%, which is broadly similar to the corresponding proportion in Q4 2019 (32%).

Analysed by sector, respondents in all of the surveyed sectors expect their business situation to be worse on balance in Q1 2020 as compared with Q4 2019. In particular, significantly more respondents in the accommodation and food services; retail; transportation, storage and courier services;

construction; and manufacturing sectors expect their business situation to be worse in Q1 2020 as compared with Q4 2019, relative to those expecting a better business situation.

A Government spokesman cautioned that the results of the survey should be interpreted with care. He said, "In this type of survey on expectations, the views collected in the survey are affected by the events in the community occurring around the time of enumeration, and it is difficult to establish precisely the extent to which respondents' perception of the future accords with the underlying trends." The enumeration period for this survey round was from December 3, 2019 to January 10, 2020.

#### Volume of business/output

Respondents in all of the surveyed sectors expect their volume of business/output to decrease on balance in Q1 2020 as compared with Q4 2019. In particular, significantly more respondents in the accommodation and food services; retail; construction; and transportation, storage and courier services sectors expect their volume of business/sales/construction output to decrease, as compared to those expecting it to increase.

#### Employment

Respondents in most of the surveyed sectors expect their employment to remain broadly unchanged or to decrease on balance in Q1 2020 as compared with Q4 2019. In particular, significantly more respondents in the construction sector expect their employment to decrease in Q1 2020 over Q4 2019. On the other hand, slightly more respondents in the financing and insurance; and manufacturing sectors expect their employment to increase, as compared to those expecting it to decrease.

#### Selling price/service charge

Respondents in most of the surveyed sectors expect their selling prices/service charges to remain broadly unchanged or to go down on balance in Q1 2020 as compared with Q4 2019. In particular, significantly more respondents in the construction sector expect their tender prices to go down, as compared to those expecting an increase in tender prices. On the other hand, slightly more respondents in the information and communications; and manufacturing sectors expect their service charges/selling prices to go up, as compared to those expecting a decrease in service charges/selling prices.

#### Further information

The survey gathers views on short-term business performance from the senior management of about 570 prominent establishments in various sectors in Hong Kong with a view to providing a quick reference, with minimum time lag, for predicting the short-term future economic performance of the local economy.

The survey covers 10 major sectors in Hong Kong, namely manufacturing;

construction; import/export trade and wholesale; retail; accommodation and food services (mainly covering services rendered by hotels and restaurants); transportation, storage and courier services; information and communications; financing and insurance; real estate; and professional and business services sectors.

Views collected in the survey refer only to those of respondents on their own establishments rather than those on the respective sectors they are engaged in, and are limited to the expected direction of quarter-to-quarter change (e.g. "up", "same" or "down") but not the magnitude of change. In collecting views on the quarter-to-quarter changes, if the variable in question is subject to seasonal variations, respondents are asked to provide the expected changes after excluding the normal seasonal variations.

Survey results are generally presented as "net balance", i.e. the difference between the percentage of respondents choosing "up" and that choosing "down". The percentage distribution of respondents among various response categories (e.g. "up", "same" and "down") reflects how varied their business expectations are. The "net balance", with its appropriate sign, indicates the direction of expected change in the variable concerned. A positive sign indicates a likely upward trend while a negative sign indicates a likely downward trend. However, the magnitude of the "net balance" reflects only the prevalence of optimism or pessimism, but not the magnitude of expected change, since information relating to such magnitude is not collected in the survey.

Furthermore, owing to sample size constraint, care should be taken in interpreting survey results involving a small percentage (e.g. less than 10%) of respondents in individual sectors.

Chart 1 shows the views on expected changes in business situation for the period Q1 2019 to Q1 2020.

Table 1 shows the net balances of views on expectations in respect of different variables for Q1 2020.

The survey results are published in greater detail in the "Report on Quarterly Business Tendency Survey, Q1 2020". Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp300.jsp?productCode=B1110008](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp300.jsp?productCode=B1110008)).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Business Expectation Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7263 or email: [business-prospects@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:business-prospects@censtatd.gov.hk)).