

Transcript of remarks by FS at media session after ninth meeting of Financial Leaders Forum (with video)

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, met the media after attending the ninth meeting of the Financial Leaders Forum this afternoon (August 7). Joining him were the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau; the Deputy Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Mr Arthur Yuen; and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Securities and Futures Commission, Ms Julia Leung. Following is the transcript of remarks at the media session:

Reporter: You said the latest economic data shows that the Hong Kong economy is under pressure, so do you see partly because of the, well uh, the economy's and how likely you see a greater chance that we are heading into a recession in the second half of the year?

Financial Secretary: Thank you for the question. Our second quarter economic data indicates that, on a quarter-to-quarter basis, the GDP has decelerated in the second quarter, and in fact has come down to negative 0.3 per cent. The economic situation, both externally and domestically was challenging in July. Domestically we are still struggling with our own social issues and externally there are increasing external uncertainties caused by escalating US-China trade conflict as well as other geo-political situations.

For the third quarter of this year, if we were to have a negative growth again, then we would be technically in recession. This situation is causing some concern, and we'd like to highlight this risk to our people so that we will all stay vigilant and pay more attention to our economic and livelihood issues. Thank you.

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

Cluster of Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus cases in Princess Margaret Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) made the following

announcement today (August 7):

A 3-month-old baby girl of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit was confirmed to be infected with Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) on 3 August. She is in serious condition, under close medical surveillance and proper isolation and treatment. Furthermore, during a monthly routine screening, three baby girls (aged 16 days to 3 months) who have been staying in the same unit were confirmed to be carriers of MRSA, but without clinical symptoms. The three babies are still being hospitalised under medical surveillance and are in isolation due to their underlying disease. They are in stable condition.

Infection control measures of the ward have already been stepped up and contact tracing would be conducted according to prevailing guidelines. All other infants in the ward are under close medical surveillance.

The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Hong Kong Customs conducts operation against supply of wedding dinner set by hotel with false trade description

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (August 6) conducted an operation against a hotel supplying a wedding banquet with a false trade description in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that a hotel in Mong Kok claimed to offer a customer, who ordered a wedding banquet from them, a free upgrade from sliced abalone to whole abalone.

After an initial investigation, the hotel only offered sliced abalone at the wedding banquet.

An investigation is ongoing.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to purchase products at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any person who supplies goods with a false trade description, or any trader who applies a false trade description to a service supplied to a consumer, commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violation of the TDO to

Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

SLW forges closer ties between Hong Kong and Japan to tackle ageing challenges (with photos)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, today (August 7) concluded his visit to Tokyo, Japan, saying that Hong Kong looked forward to strengthening collaboration and exchanges with the Japanese government and trade sector on elderly care and gerontechnology in tackling the challenges of a rapidly ageing population.

In his meeting with the State Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan, Mr Yoshinori Oguchi, yesterday (August 6), Dr Law said that Japan started to tackle ageing challenges earlier than Hong Kong and thus its experience in many aspects has been a valuable reference for Hong Kong. He encouraged Japanese businesses to tap the Hong Kong market and foster exchanges with local non-governmental organisations. Dr Law also called on the Cabinet Office today and was briefed on Japan's policy initiatives in response to the challenges of an ageing society including the financial burden on long-term care needs and acute shortages of care staff.

Together with delegates from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Dr Law visited a showroom and a service centre of a care equipment supplier yesterday to take a closer look at innovative products supporting household care and ageing in place, such as care beds for purchase or rental.

Dr Law and delegates attended an expert panel discussion on the same day to exchange views with the elderly and the rehabilitation care service sector on matters including the operations of local equipment rental services, the role of case managers and home nursing care services. He also had a candid exchange with representatives of the gerontechnology trade at a dinner hosted by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Tokyo.

Speaking during the above occasions, Dr Law pointed out that Hong Kong launched a \$1 billion Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care to promote the application of gerontechnology as well as to subsidise service units to try out and procure or rent technology products. He appealed to Japanese manufacturers to consider the Hong Kong market, and to tap business opportunities brought about by the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Before concluding his visit today, he met with the Chinese Ambassador to

Japan, Mr Kong Xuanyou, and updated him on the latest labour market and economic situation in Hong Kong. He departed for Hong Kong this afternoon.



DoJ's response to procession by members of legal profession

In response to the procession by certain members of the legal profession today (August 7), a spokesman for the Department of Justice (DoJ) issued the following statement:

Prosecutors of the DoJ always uphold the constitutional duty under Article 63 of the Basic Law in handling all prosecution works in a fair and

impartial manner. Article 63 of the Basic Law provides that "the DoJ of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall control criminal prosecutions, free from any interference".

In making decisions of whether or not to prosecute in each case, the DoJ must make an objective and professional assessment of the available evidence and applicable law, and act in accordance with the Prosecution Code. The DoJ will not handle the cases differently due to the political beliefs or background of the persons involved. Any person suspected of breaking the law, including when acts of violence or vandalism are involved, the decision on prosecution and related charges will be made in accordance with the above principles and there is no political consideration.

All investigations are conducted by law enforcement agencies which will, after completion of investigation and when necessary, refer the cases to the DoJ for making independent prosecutorial decisions. The time required for making prosecutorial decisions depends on a number of factors, including the time required for law enforcement agencies to conduct the investigation, the amount of evidence and the nature and complexity of the cases.

The Secretary for Justice, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the prosecution team have all along been discharging their prosecutorial duties fairly and without prejudice or favour so as to safeguard criminal justice.

In addition, the Secretary for Justice and DoJ colleagues have all along maintained communication with different parties in the legal and dispute resolution sectors. A number of meetings with representatives of these sectors to exchange views and suggestions on the present situation and the Policy Address have been held recently. The DoJ will continue to liaise with other members of these sectors to meet and is willing to listen to the views of the legal and dispute resolution sectors on appropriate occasions.