

Transcript of remarks at press conference on analysis of the poverty situation in Hong Kong

The Chief Secretary for Administration and Chairperson of the Commission on Poverty, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong; the Deputy Commissioner for Census and Statistics, Ms Marion Chan; and the Principal Economist of the Office of the Government Economist, Ms Reddy Ng, today (November 19) held a press conference to announce the analysis of the poverty situation in Hong Kong in 2017. Following is the transcript of remarks at the press conference:

Reporter: It seems that the number of children living in poverty has been decreasing in the past few years, but it's increased slightly last year. Are there any specific reasons that you can think of that led to this increase? And also the Chief Secretary has talked about a lot of statistical limitations in the calculation of our poverty rate, but the fact is the rate has been increasing – it's reached a nine-year high now. So isn't that the strongest evidence to show that the Government's policies in alleviating poverty have failed? Thank you.

Chief Secretary for Administration: First of all, I don't think our policy has failed at all. If anything, in fact, if you look at the figures, look at elderly sector particularly, there is an obvious increase, an improvement, increase in the effectiveness of our measures. We're now back to the 2003 level, which is very encouraging in fact.

The other thing I want to be able to stress here is that poverty alleviation is a multi-pronged effort and the problem with our methodology, it's constrained by the very fact that a lot of these non-recurrent government cash programmes like the Community Care Fund, a lot of these so-called one-off relief measures and all that, and also a lot of services including after-school care services, elderly care services, home care services are not counted at all. All these are money but the trouble is because of this methodology, the rigidity, the constraint, the parameter. But we've got to follow the international norm, that's why all these are not reflected in the figures at all. But that does not mean that we should be complacent at all. The figures themselves tell us that we should continue to work hard, continue to step up our efforts on poverty alleviation, join hands with the community and also encourage those who are needy, eligible for the allowances, for example the Working Family Allowance to apply. I mentioned earlier on that we are now targeting ethnic minorities because of their lack of understanding, language barrier and all that – we want to reach out to them directly, proactively, so that they can have access. Once they have access, the figures will be improved, because it is reflected in the poverty figure generally. So we should step up our efforts, no doubt about it.

As for children, the reason why it's got a slight increase of 0.3 percentage points, it's primarily they come from families, big families, big households, with just one breadwinner and living with one old family member, which will drag down the household income in the analysis. But if you look at what's happening for children, basically, the number is not significant at all. It's purely, I said that, the demographic structure we are facing, structural ageing community. Every year 60,000 Hong Kong residents enter to the senior citizens bracket, and also household size becomes smaller and smaller. All these really are posing a challenge in terms of statistical analysis. Thank you.

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

[LegCo Members visit Ying Tung Estate in Tung Chung \(with photos\)](#)

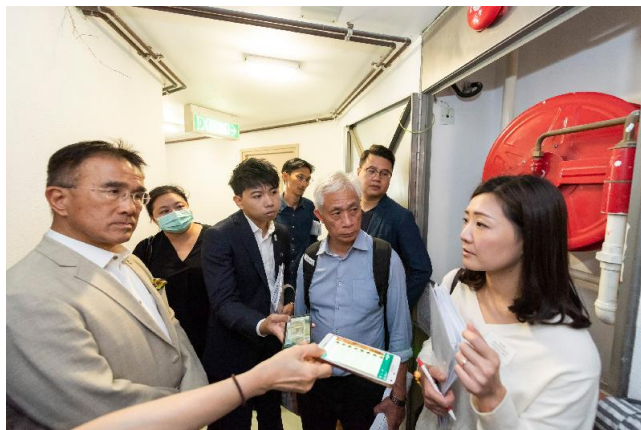
The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

Legislative Council (LegCo) Members conducted a site visit to Tung Chung today (November 19) to follow up on a case about the ancillary community facilities and estate management of Ying Tung Estate.

Ying Tung Estate, with tenant intake starting from March this year, is comprised of four domestic blocks with 3 580 public rental housing flats. Accompanied by representatives of the Housing Department, the Transport Department, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Water Supplies Department, the Social Welfare Department, the Home Affairs Department as well as the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Members visited the public facilities in the Estate such as the carpark and bus stop, so as to learn more about the existing ancillary community facilities in Ying Tung Estate, and the residents' concern on the estate management and hygiene conditions.

After the site visit, Members held a case conference with the Administration at the LegCo Complex for follow-up action.

Members who participated in the visit included Mr Andrew Wan (Convenor), Mr Leung Yiu-chung, Mr Michael Tien and Mr Chu Hoi-dick.



FS commences visit to Beijing (with photos)

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, today (November 19) started his visit to Beijing. Joining him was the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau.

They first met with the China International Trade Representative and Vice Minister of Commerce, Mr Fu Ziyang, to thank the Ministry of Commerce for its support for Hong Kong's participation in the inaugural China International Import Expo, including setting up a Hong Kong Exhibition Area and joining the Enterprise and Business Exhibition.

Both sides exchanged views on various topics, such as China-US trade relations and promoting the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement. Mr Chan also briefed Mr Fu on Hong Kong's recent economic performance, including the latest developments of the financial market and the banking system as well as the Government's support measures for enterprises. Both sides agreed to forge close collaboration on the trade and economic front, leveraging on Hong Kong's unique advantages in helping Mainland enterprises to go global.

Mr Chan and Mr Lau then called on the Commissioner of the State Administration of Taxation, Mr Wang Jun, and discussed matters relating to the Individual Income Tax Law of the Mainland.

Tomorrow (November 20), Mr Chan will continue his visit in Beijing.



LegCo to debate motion on studying formulation of policies for homosexual couples to enter into union

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

The Legislative Council (LegCo) will hold a meeting on Wednesday (November 21) at 11am in the Chamber of the LegCo Complex. During the meeting, Members will debate a motion on studying the formulation of policies for homosexual couples to enter into a union.

The motion, moved by Mr Chan Chi-chuen, states: "That this Council urges the Government to study the formulation of policies for homosexual couples to enter into a union so that they can enjoy equal rights as heterosexual couples."

Dr Priscilla Leung, Mr Au Nok-hin and Mr Gary Fan will move separate amendments to Mr Chan Chi-chuen's motion.

Mr Michael Tien will move a motion on restructuring the governance of MTR Corporation Limited. The motion states: "That the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has built and operates 11 railways in Hong Kong, and in the future, seven new railway projects will most likely be assigned to MTRCL; the people of Hong Kong heavily rely on the railway system as a mode of transport, but in recent years, there have been strong views in society on the service quality, corporate governance and supervision of works of MTRCL; the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government as the majority shareholder of MTRCL has a major responsibility of monitoring MTRCL in

providing to the public the safest railway services and infrastructure of the best quality; in this connection, this Council urges the SAR Government to adopt the following measures to restructure the governance of MTRCL to restore public confidence in MTRCL:

(1) setting up an independent railway development department – given that at present, a railway from planning to construction involves various government departments, including the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Buildings Department and the Highways Department, resulting in fragmentation of responsibilities and inefficiency; besides, responsible for all the works of roads, tunnels, bridges, etc. in Hong Kong, the Highways Department can hardly attend to everything at the same time, thus giving rise to problems in the regulation of railways; hence, the SAR Government should set up an independent railway development department dedicated to railway works and directly responsible to the Secretary for Transport and Housing;

(2) planning new development areas in tandem with their ancillary railway facilities – in planning some of the new development areas in the past, since the SAR Government did not concurrently consider ancillary transport facilities, serious traffic problems arose in such areas, and the SAR Government then constructed railways in a rush, thus causing the works quality to fall; hence, new development areas and ancillary railway facilities should be planned in tandem in order to prevent the quality of railway projects from being affected by very tight work schedules;

(3) urging MTRCL to regularly review its investment strategy of updating the signalling system – in the past, repeated serious disruptions of MTR train services were caused by the ageing signalling system; hence, MTRCL should regularly upgrade the signalling system to the latest version, rather than refusing to upgrade the signalling system on the ground of the cost being the prime factor of consideration, so as to ensure provision of stable and reliable public transport services to passengers;

(4) rationalising the appointment of the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer of MTRCL – to cope with the foreseeable railway projects, either of the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer of MTRCL, being the two highest persons-in-charge, should have an engineering background to facilitate monitoring of the works progress at the highest level;

(5) supervising MTRCL in reviewing the criteria of its internal tendering system – when drawing up the criteria of its internal tendering system, MTRCL should study following the criteria of the tendering system of the SAR Government which draw greater reference from the past performance, cooperative attitude, accountability performance of tenderers, etc., rather than overstressing the principle of 'the lowest bid wins' and the number of times the tenderers were awarded railway projects in the past as priority considerations, so as to avoid monopolisation;

(6) requiring MTRCL to strengthen the project management notification system – MTRCL should draw up specific and transparent notification criteria and make improvements on two levels: on the first level, requiring frontline site

staff to report to the management in higher ranks the site conditions, including but not limited to issuing to contractors non-conformance notices/reports for any work that does not comply with plans and works requirements, and on the second level, reporting to the Government all construction problems in respect of repeated mistakes without rectification, delays in resolving such problems and suspected violations of statutory requirements; and

(7) raising MTRCL's requirements for supervision of the works of contractors – MTRCL should draw reference from the requirements of the SAR Government in supervising public works, including considering the introduction of the Contractor Management Handbook for public works to conduct regular assessments on the quality, progress and safety of works, environmental protection, management and attitude of the persons-in-charge of projects, subcontracting of works, performance of procurement, etc., and requiring resident site staff to conduct thorough on-site supervision, thereby effecting more stringent supervision of railway projects."

Mr Luk Chung-hung, Mr Chan Han-pan, Dr Kwok Ka-ki and Mr Lam Cheuk-ting will move separate amendments to Mr Tien's motion.

Meanwhile, Mr Chan Chun-ying will move a proposed resolution under section 34(4) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance to extend the period for amending the Financial Institutions (Resolution) (Loss-absorbing Capacity Requirements-Banking Sector) Rules laid on the table of the Council on October 24, 2018 to the meeting of December 12, 2018.

Mr Christopher Cheung will move a proposed resolution under section 34(4) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance to extend the period for amending the Securities and Futures (Financial Resources) (Amendment) Rules 2018 laid on the table of the Council on October 24, 2018 to the meeting of December 12, 2018.

Mr Frankie Yick will move a proposed resolution under section 34(4) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance to extend the period for amending the Closed Area (Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port and Hong Kong Link Road) Order (Commencement) Notice, the Cross-boundary Movement of Physical Currency and Bearer Negotiable Instruments Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 1) (No. 3) Notice 2018, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port and Hong Kong Link Road Closed Area (Permission to Enter) Notice (Commencement) Notice, the Immigration (Places of Detention) (Amendment) Order 2017 (Commencement) Notice and the Immigration Service (Designated Places) (Amendment) Order 2017 (Commencement) Notice laid on the table of the Council on October 24, 2018 to the meeting of December 12, 2018.

Mr Abraham Shek will move a proposed resolution under section 34(4) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance to extend the period for amending the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) Regulation 2018 laid on the table of the Council on October 31, 2018 to the meeting of January 9, 2019.

Mr Dennis Kwok will move a proposed resolution under section 34(4) of

the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance to extend the period for amending the Foreign Lawyers Practice (Amendment) Rules 2018 (Commencement) Notice, the Solicitors' Practice (Amendment) Rules 2018 (Commencement) Notice and the Summary Disposal of Complaints (Solicitors) (Amendment) Rules 2018 (Commencement) Notice laid on the table of the Council on October 31, 2018 to the meeting of January 9, 2019.

On Government motions, the Chief Secretary for Administration will move two proposed resolutions under the Legal Aid Ordinance to amend the Legal Aid Ordinance as set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

During the meeting, Members will also ask the Government 22 questions on various policy areas, six of which require oral replies.

The agenda of the above meeting can be obtained via the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk). Please note that the agenda is subject to change, and the latest information about the agenda could be found on the LegCo Website.

Members of the public are welcome to observe the proceedings of the meeting from the public galleries of the Chamber of the LegCo Complex. They may reserve seats by calling 3919 3399 during office hours. Members of the public can also watch or listen to the meeting via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website.

CHP investigates case of invasive meningococcal infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 19) investigating a case of invasive meningococcal infection, a communicable disease transmitted by direct contact with droplets from carriers or infected persons.

The case involves a 51-year-old man with underlying illnesses, who has presented with fever and chills since November 13. He sought medical treatment from the Accident and Emergency Department (A&ED) of Prince of Wales Hospital and passed away at the A&ED on the same day.

His blood sample tested positive for *Neisseria meningitidis* upon laboratory testing.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient travelled to Shenzhen alone during the incubation period. His home contact remains asymptomatic so far.

The CHP's investigation is continuing. The case was also referred to the Coroner for investigation.

"Meningococcal infection is caused by a bacterium known as meningococcus. It is mainly transmitted by direct contact through respiratory secretions, including droplets from the nose and throat, from infected persons. The incubation period varies from two to 10 days, and is commonly three or four days," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The clinical picture may vary. Severe illness may result when the bacteria invade the bloodstream (meningococcaemia) or the membranes that envelop the brain and spinal cord (meningococcal meningitis).

Meningococcaemia is characterised by sudden onset of fever, intense headache, purpura, shock and even death in severe cases. Meningococcal meningitis is characterised by high fever, severe headache and stiff neck followed by drowsiness, vomiting, fear of bright light, or a rash. It can cause brain damage or even death. The brain damage may lead to intellectual impairment, mental retardation, hearing loss and electrolyte imbalance. Invasive meningococcal infections can be complicated by arthritis, inflammation of the heart muscle, inflammation of the posterior chamber of the eye or chest infection.

Meningococcal infection is a serious illness. Patients should be treated promptly with antibiotics.

To prevent meningococcal infection, members of the public are advised to take heed of the following measures:

- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly, especially when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, e.g. after sneezing, and clean hands with alcohol-based handrub when they are not visibly soiled;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing, hold the spit with tissue, dispose of nasal and mouth discharge in a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands immediately;
- Avoid crowded places;
- Avoid close contact with patients who have fever or severe headache;
- Travellers to high-risk areas may consult doctors for meningococcal vaccination; and
- Travellers returning from high-risk areas should seek medical advice if they become ill and should discuss their recent travel history with their doctor.

The public may visit the CHP's [website](#) for more information on meningococcal infection.