

Opening remarks by SCS at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the English translation of the opening remarks by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 12):

Chairman and Members,

Among the matters related to the civil service in the 2021-22 Draft Estimates of Expenditure, I would like to focus my introduction on three items.

The first item is the civil service establishment. It is of utmost importance to maintain the sustainability of public finance amidst the economic downturn. We will have zero growth in the civil service establishment in 2021-22 in order to contain the growth in establishment expenditure. We have encouraged bureaux and departments to enhance effectiveness and efficiency through re-prioritisation, internal redeployment and streamlining of work processes, so that the workload can be coped with even without an increase in the civil service establishment.

The second item is on the creation of time-limited jobs under the Anti-epidemic Fund. To relieve the worsening unemployment situation due to the epidemic and the anti-epidemic measures, the Government has earmarked \$6.6 billion under the Anti-epidemic Fund last year to create 30 000 time-limited jobs in the public and private sectors within two years for people of different skill sets and academic qualifications. The Civil Service Bureau is co-ordinating the relevant work. As at the end of March 2021, around 31 000 jobs had been created, with half of the jobs being created in the Government and the other half in the non-governmental sector. Among the jobs already created, over 20 000 jobs have been filled while the recruitment for the remaining 11 000 jobs is in progress or will commence shortly. In view of the persistently high unemployment rate, the Government announced in the 2021-22 Budget to further earmark \$6.6 billion to create an additional 30 000 time-limited jobs. Relevant government departments will liaise with the non-governmental organisations or relevant associations under their purview to formulate details of the additional jobs.

The third item is about financial provisions. In the 2021-22 Draft Estimates of Expenditure, we have reserved over \$2,700 million for the Government, as a good employer, to continuously improve the medical and dental services for civil service eligible persons (including pensioners). Over \$1,050 million out of the said provision is for providing medical and dental services at Families Clinics and government dental clinics. Apart from meeting the operating expenses of the clinics, the provision will also be used for strengthening manpower support and setting up an additional specialised dental surgery. Also, we have reserved \$1,660 million for the

payment and reimbursement of medical fees and hospital charges, to meet expenses on reimbursement of medical fees, which are not entirely predictable.

Chairman, this is the end of my introduction. I would welcome questions from Members.

[FS visits Hong Kong International Airport and three-runway system site \(with photos\)](#)

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, visited Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and the construction site of HKIA's three-runway system (3RS) today (April 12) to learn about the progress of major projects of the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AA). Mr Chan was accompanied by the Chairman of the AA, Mr Jack So, and the Chief Executive Officer of the AA, Mr Fred Lam. The Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport), Ms Mable Chan, also joined the visit.

Mr Chan was first briefed on the progress of various projects under the Airport City strategy, including the 3RS, SKYCITY and AsiaWorld-Expo Phase 2, smart airport developments, as well as projects to strengthen connectivity within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and cargo developments. The Airport City strategy has been put forward by the AA to fully capitalise on the unique geographical advantage of HKIA, capture opportunities arising from various new infrastructural developments in Hong Kong, and integrate and achieve greater synergy between the core functions of the airport and related industries, thereby strengthening HKIA's status as an international aviation hub and creating a new landmark for Hong Kong.

Mr Chan said, "HKIA has been the world's leading international passenger and cargo airport. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by the aviation industry amid the COVID 19 pandemic, the AA is committed to its vision and plans for the further development of HKIA to enhance its capacity, functionality and synergy with partners in the GBA. The Airport City strategy will broaden HKIA's catchment and harness our competitiveness, consolidating Hong Kong's status as a preeminent international aviation hub."

Mr Chan was also updated on the latest progress of the 3RS construction works. Reclamation of the area required for commissioning the third runway has been completed and handed over to the follow-on contractors. The AA has been maintaining the progress of the 3RS construction project with a view to commissioning the third runway in 2022 and the 3RS in 2024 as planned to cater for long-term air traffic demand. Upon full commissioning of the 3RS,

HKIA's annual passenger handling capacity will be around 100 million and its annual cargo handling capacity will be around 9 million tonnes.

"The pandemic has brought about a significant impact on the aviation industry around the world, but I am confident that the industry and air traffic will gradually recover after the pandemic. The various long-term development projects at HKIA are critical in order to capitalise on the opportunities presented by the market when it recovers. The 3RS will help maintain Hong Kong's overall competitiveness as an international aviation hub, create employment opportunities and benefit the well-being of our community, bringing long-term economic and social benefits to Hong Kong," Mr Chan said.



[Import of poultry meat and products from areas in Germany suspended](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (April 12) that in view of notifications from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza in Districts of Ammerland, Vechta, Diepholz, Wesermarsch and Emden of the State of Niedersachsen; and Districts of Saalekreis and Altmarkkreis Salzwedel of the State of Sachsen-Anhalt in

Germany, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above-mentioned areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 3 900 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 1.41 million poultry eggs from Germany last year.

"The CFS has contacted the German authorities over the issues and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, April 12, 2021 is 102 (same as last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, April 10, 2021 was 102 (same as last Friday's index).

US Dollar Liquidity Facility tender notice

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

US Dollar Liquidity Facility tender notice:

Tender date	:	April 14, 2021 (Wednesday)
Tender submission time	:	9am to noon
Settlement date	:	April 15, 2021 (Thursday)
Repayment date	:	April 22, 2021 (Thursday)
Tenor	:	Seven days
Amount on offer	:	US\$10,000 Million

Note: Licensed Banks interested in participating in the tender for the first time are encouraged to provide US dollar settlement instructions by email

(settlementsection@hkma.gov.hk) to the Hong Kong Monetary Authority's Settlement Team in advance, preferably two days prior to the tender. Required information includes name of corresponding bank, name of final beneficiary (must be the Licensed Bank participating in the tender), and account or CHIPS number of a US dollar bank account to be settled in the US. Such information needs to be provided once only, unless there is further change.