

## Transcript of remarks by CE at media session on the passage of the Decision on improving the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's electoral system by the National People's Congress (with photo/video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam at a media session on the passage of the Decision on improving the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's electoral system by the National People's Congress today (March 11):

Reporter: In the resolution, the Central Government mentioned that some grassroots representatives could be added to the Election Committee. What are your suggestions, like if the opposition camp can still be included and who do you think from the grassroots should be added? And how important do you see geographical constituencies in future LegCo (Legislative Council) elections? Some said only 20 or 30 seats would be returned from them. Do you agree that 30 seats could be a better balance or the general public's votes are no longer valued? Thank you.

Chief Executive: First of all, again as I said, at the moment, we only have in front of us a Decision made by the National People's Congress, and many of the details about changes to the selection of the Chief Executive and the formation of the Legislative Council have yet to be deliberated and decided by the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC), so I'm actually not in a position to give you the details, and I want to say that as far as I understand, there will be discussions and sessions being arranged for the Central Government officials to listen to the views of the Hong Kong people. Although, again, I could not give you the exact timing and the number of sessions that will be organised for this sort of listening of views, I'm sure there will be this process before the NPCSC deliberates on the details. You'll have to wait until the NPCSC has discussed the matter. I can only say that based on the Decision made by the National People's Congress, in future there will be 90 seats in the Legislative Council, and in addition to the two methods now returning members of the Legislative Council – one is through functional constituencies, the other is through direct elections on geographical basis – there will now be a third method and that is by elections conducted by the Election Committee members. How to divide the 90 members amongst these three methods, again, is another matter that can only be decided by the NPCSC. Thank you.

Reporter: Earlier today the almost 2 900 Deputies of the National People's Congress approved the most significant change to Hong Kong's elections

without a single negative vote. Is that the sort of dissent Hong Kong can expect in the Legislative Council after this overhaul is enacted? What would you say to those concerned that the system may not provide the oversight necessary to maintain Hong Kong's stability and prosperity? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Yes, you are right, the Legislative Council has very important constitutional duties under the Basic Law, and that is also something that I attach a lot of importance to, and that is check and balance. The Executive needs to be monitored and scrutinised by the Legislative Council, whether in terms of enactment of legislation, answering questions from them, or putting funding proposals to the Legislative Council. All these will not be changed, because we are not dealing with making the Legislative Council more supportive of the Hong Kong SAR Government. We are just making sure that the Legislative Council, being such an important political structure in the Hong Kong SAR, is supporting "One Country, Two Systems", will not do anything to undermine national security and will continue to allow Hong Kong to move forward. I just don't see how, by improving the electoral system in Hong Kong, or even by expanding the number of Legislative Council members from 70 to 90, that the Hong Kong SAR Government will not be monitored and will not be put under this check and balance. It will continue, and we welcome – this sort of constructive interaction is very important for good governance. Even as the Chief Executive and as somebody who has four decades of public sector experience, I would not say that we got everything right when we put them to the Legislative Council. It is through that interaction, in a very healthy and constructive or even critical manner, that we manage to improve the government policies and the government legislation. We will expect this to continue. But what we have seen in the past few years and which necessitates this very timely Decision by the National People's Congress is the opposite. They are trying to politicise everything that we put to the Legislative Council by advocating and promoting this anti-Mainland, anti-government sentiment, or even inviting external forces to impose sanctions on Hong Kong, which are not hurting the Government alone – it's hurting the people of Hong Kong. It is those chaotic situations that we need to deal with in this exercise. It's not about making the Legislative Council less critical of the Hong Kong SAR Government. Thank you.

Reporter: I've got two questions for you today. According to Xinhua, a new vetting committee will be set up to screen all the candidates standing in the Legislative Council elections. How can you convince Hong Kong people that there will still be meaningful elections in the city when opposition politicians can easily be screened out in the process? My second question is about the theme that you have referenced today, "patriots administering Hong Kong". Can you tell us the definition of a patriot? Is a patriot required to love the Chinese Communist Party? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Thank you for the two questions. First is yes, as stipulated in the Decision approved today by the National People's Congress, there will be a committee called the qualification review committee. So there will be a committee to decide the qualification of individuals – whether they could contest in a particular election. This arrangement is not something new. It

is not something new in Hong Kong; it is not something new internationally. In every election, in every place, there will be a mechanism to certify the qualification of that individual, for example the age, the citizenship, the nationality, the years of experience, and in our case and in many other situations whether that candidate fulfils the requirements of upholding the Basic Law and swearing allegiance to the Hong Kong SAR. Even in previous elections, every candidate had to sign on the nominating form to declare that they are swearing allegiance to the Hong Kong SAR and supporting the Basic Law of the Hong Kong SAR. This is nothing new.

In local legislation, this very important role of certifying the qualification is carried out by somebody called a Returning Officer, and practically I'm sure you know that the Returning Officer is not a full-time position. It is only whenever there is an election, certain individuals in the civil service will be asked to assume this role of a Returning Officer. He or she alone will decide on the qualification of that particular candidate. Now, the Central Authorities have escalated it to a far more solemn and important level, and that is the setting up of a qualification review committee. This committee, or indeed the proposed improvements to the electoral system, is not to screen out the opposition. I have to make it very clear: this is all about implementing the very important principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong". And again, this is not something alien internationally. I suppose every parliament would require the candidates to be loyal to their country before they could contest an election to sit on the parliament of their country.

You asked about how to decide the "patriots administering Hong Kong". It is again something that has been tested in courts in Hong Kong. You remember there have been a few cases of disqualification of candidates in the LegCo election and the District Council election, and have gone through the judicial proceedings and the judge has already laid down certain ground rules of what will constitute loyalty and allegiance to the Hong Kong SAR and uphold the Basic Law. Specifically you asked a question about whether under this criterion of "patriots administering Hong Kong", the patriot has to love the Chinese Communist Party. The answer is no, because that was not the requirement under what is meant by being patriotic. But of course, one has to respect and accept that the system in the People's Republic of China is a socialist system and governed by the Chinese Communist Party. Loving the Chinese Communist Party is an obligation of the party members. I'm not a party member, I suppose all of you are not party members, but we have to accept because Hong Kong is part of the People's Republic of China, and this system of a socialist system with Chinese characteristics under the Chinese Communist Party is written into the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, Article 1. When we said that we have to uphold and respect and safeguard the Basic Law, it also implies that we have to respect and accept the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. We should not do anything to undermine the system in the Mainland of China.

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



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## [CHP investigates two suspected food poisoning clusters](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (March 11) investigating two suspected food poisoning clusters affecting five persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The first cluster involved three females aged 22 to 26, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhea, fever and vomiting about 32 to 45 hours after having dinner at a restaurant in Wan Chai on March 5.

The other cluster involved one male and one female aged 25 and 18, who developed similar symptoms about 35 hours after having dinner at the same restaurant on March 8.

Two of the affected persons sought medical advice and none required hospitalisation. They are in stable condition.

"We have alerted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to the incident and investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;

- Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
  - Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
  - Drink boiled water;
  - Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
  - Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.
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## [DH received two reports of suspected serious adverse event following COVID-19 vaccination](#)

The Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 4pm today (March 11), two reports were received from the Hospital Authority (HA) in the past 24 hours regarding a death case and a critical case, which are suspected serious adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination.

According to the information provided by the HA, the first case involved a 70-year-old woman who had history of hypertension and osteoarthritis of knee. She had shortness of breath this morning and collapsed at home at around noon and was admitted to Kwong Wah Hospital today. She did not respond to resuscitation and passed away this afternoon. According to information provided by the deceased's family member, she had received CoronaVac COVID-19 vaccination at Kowloon Bay Sports Centre Community Vaccination Centre on March 2.

Another case involved a 67-year-old man who has history of diabetes, hypertension and hyperlipidemia. He suddenly collapsed at Mongkok MTR station at around noon and was admitted to Kwong Wah Hospital today. The preliminary diagnosis was acute coronary syndrome and he is now in critical condition. According to available information, he received CoronaVac COVID-19 vaccination at a private clinic on March 2.

The DH has immediately contacted the HA upon the notifications to obtain further information for conducting investigation and assessment. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adverse event following immunization refers to any untoward medical occurrence which follows immunization and which does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the usage of the vaccine. The DH will obtain preliminary autopsy findings for the first case and provide all available information to the Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation (Expert Committee) as soon as possible. The Expert Committee will conduct causality assessment on the cases based on the algorithm of the WHO when all necessary information is available.

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## **A person visited the Extension Section at Wan Chai Immigration Tower tested preliminary positive for COVID-19**

Immigration Department (ImmD) today (March 11) said the department was notified by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) this evening that an applicant had briefly visited the Extension Section on the fifth floor of the Immigration Tower yesterday had been tested preliminary positive for COVID-19.

The person concerned approached the Extension Section for extension of stay formalities on the captioned date and briefly stayed there for less than 15 minutes. The ImmD had carried out thorough cleansing and sterilization in accordance with the CHP's advice.

During the situation of COVID-19 infection, the department has been strictly implementing various disease prevention measures, including measuring the body temperature of and providing alcohol-based handrub to all persons before their entry into the building, providing employees with masks and other protective equipment, requiring employees to wear masks when performing duties, and stepping up the cleaning and sterilising measures for the working environment.

The department will continue to maintain close liaison with the CHP, actively co-operate with CHP's quarantine arrangements and has also reminded its staff to pay attention to personal hygiene and stay vigilant. Staff have been reminded to seek medical advice and inform the department as soon as possible if feeling unwell.

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## **LegCo Public Accounts Committee to hold public hearing tomorrow**

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

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Public Accounts Committee (PAC) will hold two sessions of a public hearing on "Government's efforts in tackling shoreline refuse" (Chapter 2) of the Director of Audit's Report No.75 tomorrow (March 12) at 9am and noon in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex respectively.

Six witnesses and eight witnesses have been invited respectively to appear before the above sessions of the hearing to respond to points raised in the Report and answer questions asked by PAC members.

The programme for the public hearing is as follows:

Subject: Government's efforts in tackling shoreline refuse (Chapter 2 of the Director of Audit's Report No.75)

Date: March 12 (Friday)

Venue: Conference Room 1

Session One

Time: 9am

Witnesses:

Secretary for the Environment

Mr Wong Kam-sing

Director of Environmental Protection

Ms Maisie Cheng

Deputy Director of Environmental Protection(1)

Dr Samuel Chui

Assistant Director (Water Policy),  
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Chen Che-kong

Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Dr Leung Siu-fai

Acting Assistant Director (Country and Marine Parks),  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Dr Jackie Yip

Session Two

Time: noon

Secretary for the Environment

Mr Wong Kam-sing

Deputy Director of Environmental Protection(1)

Dr Samuel Chui

Assistant Director (Water Policy),  
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Chen Che-kong

Acting Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Miss Diane Wong

Acting Assistant Director (Operations)3,  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department  
Mr Tse Yu-cheung

Senior Superintendent (Cleansing and Pest Control)1,  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department  
Mr Tse Ki-cheong

Director of Leisure and Cultural Services  
Mr Vincent Liu

Assistant Director (Leisure Services)1,  
Leisure and Cultural Services Department  
Mr Horman Chan

PAC is chaired by Mr Abraham Shek, and its Deputy Chairman is Mr Paul Tse. Other members include Mr Steven Ho, Mr Shiu Ka-fai, Ms Yung Hoi-yan, Mr Lau Kwok-fan and Mr Tony Tse.