

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo meeting (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (April 28):

Reporter: So, you have mentioned the border lockdown is likely to be lifted, however your delay to shut the borders' facilities with China in January incurred having, including but not limited to 7 000 people from Wuhan travelled to Hong Kong and factually they used Hong Kong as a transit port and travelled especially to the West. It is public opinion in international community that it was the catalyst to result in the outbreak of coronavirus worldwide. So do you agree that your delayed border lockdown measure was responsible for the global outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic? Thank you.

Chief Executive: First of all, I have to fiercely disagree and refute your very serious allegation. Your allegation is not substantiated by any evidence whatsoever. The Hong Kong SAR Government's strategy in containing the spread of COVID-19 is to adopt measures based on science, evidence and also the advice of my experts on the expert advisory panel. We have taken very progressive steps to consolidate the border control points in order to reduce population mobility, which is one of the two-pronged strategies recommended by my experts. The second prong is to introduce very stringent social distancing measures in order to contain the spread of the disease.

As early as January 27 – we have the first case in Hong Kong confirmed on January 23 – Hong Kong has already imposed a complete ban on arrivals from Hubei. And on top of that, Hubei residents not from Hubei, they could be in other places, in Shenzhen, were also disallowed to come into Hong Kong. That is one of the earliest places that we have imposed that sort of control on arrivals, from one of the major places where this infection has taken place. So for you to suggest that sort of allegation, that Hong Kong has become a transit centre for the spread of the disease worldwide, is most unfair and unsubstantiated.

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