

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo (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 (December 7):

Reporter: Good morning, Mrs Lam. Two questions. The first one is Xia Baolong (Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council and Vice-Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) said on Monday that blind pursuit of Western-style democracy has brought more harm than benefits to Hong Kong. What's your take on that?

The second one is in response to Mr Xia's speech, you expressed the expectation for better relationship between the Government and the new-term Legislative Council. Which areas will the Government prioritise in terms of its future co-operation with the Legislative Council?

Chief Executive: Of the two questions, first of all, I fully endorse and agree with the remarks of Mr Xia Baolong yesterday, and I think he has really brought out the significance of the improvements to the electoral system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. As you will recall, he made similar remarks about the importance of "patriots administering Hong Kong" in February this year and then in July this year. And now with the Legislative Council elections in process after the nomination period, we could all see the 153 candidates who have come forward to contest the 90 seats. It is very timely for Mr Xia to relate what he said previously, for example, we are only looking for people who are patriotic, we will not screen out people with a different political background, we will respect diversity and the improved electoral system will return more Legislative Council Members from a broad range of background. Now, we have the people right in front of us, we could, sort of, prove that what he said previously is accurate, because this is for all to see.

About democracy, I have said previously that there is no one size fits all in democracy. One has to remember the ultimate aim and purpose of a democratic system is to improve the livelihood of the people. What's the point of having the so-called democracy if people are suffering, as you can see in some Western democracies in the course of fighting COVID-19? Hong Kong is particularly unique because we operate under "One Country, Two Systems". The democratic system in Hong Kong has to follow exactly what is provided for in the Basic Law. What is provided for in the Basic Law was promulgated by the highest state power organ, that is, the National People's Congress. We will continue to abide by the system endorsed by the National People's Congress and conduct elections in Hong Kong in a fair and open manner.

That brings me to your second question. I mentioned that the purpose of

democracy or any political system is to improve the livelihood of the people. I am anticipating that after the 2021 Legislative Council General Election, when the seventh Legislative Council returns on January 1 next year, it will be a Legislative Council which is more rational, more prepared to work with the Executive in order to further the interests of Hong Kong. The particular areas which previously have been obstructed and disrupted are our relationship with the Central Government, and also our aspirations to integrate more into the national development. I'm sure that now that we have a Legislative Council comprising patriots, all these endeavours to work more closely with the Mainland authorities, to render ourselves in a position to contribute to the national development, will get more support. In fact, we have seen this already since last November when the Legislative Council became more or less the form that we will see, that is, the 40-plus members were predominantly pro-establishment members who are patriotic. They have on their own volition passed quite a number of non-binding motions, and the content and the theme of those non-binding motions were to urge the Hong Kong SAR Government to co-operate more with the Mainland authorities and to support us to do co-location in some of the border control points with Shenzhen. This is one area which I'm sure will make a lot of differences when the new Legislative Council comes into play.

Thank you.

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