

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

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council (ExCo) meeting today (December 20):

Reporter: Good morning, Chief Executive. First, what's your expectation of your duty visit to Beijing, how would you bargain for border reopening with Mainland China, and what would be the main directions? Second, what follow-up actions would the Government take against Google on the national anthem realm? Thank you very much.

Chief Executive: I have been in a good dialogue with the responsible department in Beijing which takes care of Hong Kong affairs, which is the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council. Therefore, the Hong Kong situation has well been reported to the Central Government throughout the period. What I would like to report to the leaders when I will be in Beijing is to reflect the overall situation of Hong Kong in all regards. Then, of course, I will be touching on the situation in Hong Kong in relation to how the pandemic situation is, and I'll also be explaining what I have done in the period, on one hand controlling the COVID and at the same time maintaining the economy to run so that it will be allowed to be strengthened. I have been reflecting all these concerns, so I am very sure that the Central People's Government has already had a good understanding of the present situation of Hong Kong, but having an opportunity to report face-to-face and make direct response to questions that may be raised by the leaders will help explain Hong Kong's situation more thoroughly. My experience during my communication with the leaders is that they always listen earnestly to and consider my ideas seriously. So I think this is what will happen during my reporting to the leaders of the situation of Hong Kong.

Of course, I will be reflecting the concern of Hong Kong people, whose voices are already heard by the Central People's Government. And it is something that I think we are all working hard to see how it can be done, because we all know very well that while we want to do this, we have to consider how we do it in an orderly fashion, maintaining a good control of the risks and the potential problems that may arise when new arrangements are introduced. But there is a very strong, common commitment to ensure that things progress at good speed and, at the same time, with risks and issues under control.

As regards Google, we have repeatedly made our statement very clearly. The incorrect information of the Hong Kong national anthem, which is the national anthem of the People's Republic of China (PRC), is a serious matter. It is not just a piece of information that is wrongly reflected, such as business information, or day-to-day traffic matters or price matters. It is an important matter, because the national anthem represents the country, represents the people, and also represents the dignity of the people and the

country. So it has to be taken seriously by whoever provides that information to ensure its accuracy. We will, of course, be contacting Google to see how we can rectify the situation.

We all know very well that Google has the means to do it; it's a question of whether Google chooses to do it. If it chooses not to do it, then I think it has a lot to explain. Its company policy has stated that they will remove content for legal reasons. It is a very clear fact that playing our Hong Kong national anthem, which is the PRC's national anthem, with a song which is not (the national anthem), is an offence in Hong Kong, because it constitutes insult which contradicts and contravenes our law on national anthem. So it is an offence for somebody to play a song, which is not the Hong Kong national anthem, which is also the national anthem of the PRC, because it constitutes insult. So, that content constitutes an offense. It conforms to Google's policy of removing content for legal reasons.

The second thing that I have noticed is that Google's policy also says that it will not allow content that misrepresents or misleads. Obviously, it misrepresents our Hong Kong national anthem, and it misleads people to think that the song that has been searched as purportedly the Hong Kong national anthem is the actual Hong Kong national anthem. So it is presenting content that misrepresents and misleads.

I think that Google is a responsible company, and we will be in touch with Google. We hope that we can work together for a solution to ensure that the right content is provided to the public, and that they will conform to the company policy to remove content for legal reasons and to remove content that misrepresents and misleads. And I think that an organisation as big as Google will take these things seriously.

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