

Transcript of remarks by CS at media session (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr John Lee Ka-chiu, at a media session after attending the opening ceremony of thematic exhibition on Chinese scientists in 100 years cum unveiling ceremony of lunar soil this morning (June 26):

Reporter: First one, how do you respond to criticisms that question your lack of experience in many policy areas? The second question, it is expected that you will take up an important role in the vetting committee for the upcoming three elections. You have been perceived as a hard line official, what criteria will you use to screen out potential candidates? Thanks.

Chief Secretary for Administration: I thank you for the question. There is no know-all I think in this world. I have strengths, which I think the Chief Executive considers, will assist her to achieve what she wants to do in her governance in this year. When I consider whether I will take up this job, I seriously reflected on my strengths and experience.

The making of policies, of course, the responsibility rests on the secretary concerned, but as the Chief Secretary of course, I have the overall duty of co-ordinating, mobilising, and also ensuring that the policy meets the objectives of the Government.

I will be putting strong emphasis on collective commitment in implementing any policy that is proposed by a secretary. The purpose of the Chief Secretary is not to take away the responsibility of making policies from the responsible secretary. That is how the Hong Kong Government's system works. But it is important that there is a senior officer to give an objective view, consider it from other angles, taking into consideration other interests and concerns, so as to ensure all the concerns and matters are addressed, and I consider that as my main function. I think I can do that well because I have 44 years' experience in Government, and when I make policies, I don't just consider the pros, I take exceptions to the cons. The cons usually are what members of the public are concerned with, and cons are usually not taken seriously when we have a very complex issue, sometimes over-possessed by what one tries to achieve, therefore paying less attention to what repercussions sometimes can inevitably happen. And I think I have that strength to ensure that effective policies will be formulated.

As regards my firmness to matters, my firmness to matters is mainly about what is right and what is wrong, what is lawful and what is unlawful. I think I have made that very clear during my term in this Government. The criteria for assessing whether a candidate is qualified is very simple. Basically two criteria, whether that candidate truly upholds the Basic Law, and whether the candidate truly bears allegiance to Hong Kong. But truly is also an important element. We don't want somebody to fake allegiance, to fake upholding the Basic Law. That is what the law doesn't allow, and that is

politically, ethically and from the whole angle of Hong Kong's interest not allowed.

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