

Transcript of remarks by S for S after FCC meeting

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, at a media session at Central Government Offices, Tamar, after the Fight Crime Committee meeting this afternoon (May 29):

Reporter: Mr Lee, there has been a sharp rise in several drugs seized in the first quarter, especially ecstasy. Is there a particular reason? Secondly, there is also, as you mentioned, a rise in online dating scams. Despite a previous publicity campaign, it still continues to rise. Is it because the previous campaign was not targeted enough? Thank you.

Secretary for Security: In respect of ecstasy, first of all it is not the most popular drug in Hong Kong, so the demand has not gone up. And it is not because of the demand that the seizure has gone up. The seizure actually reflects a few things. First, I think it is the effectiveness of the intelligence system. If you look at the big seizure of ecstasy, the Customs and Excise Department intercepted, in quite a number of cases, ecstasy in large quantity. And the Police also, in their enforcement in the territory, have neutralised several syndicates, in which the amount of seizure was high. For example, in one single case, the number of ecstasy pills that was seized amounted to over 6 000. And the third thing is, there has been very good co-operation with the Mainland and the international law enforcement agencies in the fight against drugs, which reflects in the amount of seizure. Another thing that we can draw from the statistics is some of the ecstasy pills that have come to Hong Kong are not mainly targeted for local consumption. As I explained, the demand has not really gone up. We assess that a lot (of ecstasy) will be taken out of Hong Kong to other markets. But that trend does not seem to be a very steady trend yet. So it may just reflect a periodic modus operandi. But I think what is important in the fight against drugs is an effective intelligence network and a very smooth co-operation system with agencies outside Hong Kong.

Reporter: And also the online romance scam?

Secretary for Security: The romance scam has gone up two times. That is the statistics. Our experience with deception of this kind is, first of all, it has been high because of the low risk that the culprit has to face. And it almost lacks cost that he has to put into the scam. So, that means whatever we do, there will be culprits because there will not be a lot of risks, and not a lot of costs for them.

Publicity and propaganda will help. Because as I explained earlier, in connection with the scam involving WhatsApp, after the Police's publicity, the figure has dropped in April by something like almost 80 per cent from the March figure. So publicity works, but publicity does take time. It has to repeat every now and then. That is what the Police will be doing and also something I would request your assistance in making sure that the modus

operandi is made as widely known as possible.

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