

Transcript of remarks by S for S and SFH at media session (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, and the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, at the media session at the Central Government Offices this afternoon (February 22):

Reporter: When will the third chartered flight be? Who will be allowed on board? When will it depart? And how many people do you expect will be able to take the flight? And secondly how would you help those in close contact with confirmed patients? Under what circumstances will they be evacuated and flown back to Hong Kong? And thirdly about the health conditions of those in Chun Yeung Estate, are there any suspected cases? Thank you.

Secretary for Security: We have arranged a third chartered flight to take the Hong Kong people who are now still on board the Diamond Princess cruise ship and who are not close contacts. The chartered flight will depart Japan at 0145 hours tomorrow morning. Our intention is to take back any Hong Kong people who are allowed to leave the ship and also leave Japan if they are not close contacts, so that they can be all taken back to Hong Kong. The information so far indicates that there will likely be around a hundred people still in Japan. On board the ship, there are 32 close contacts and there are several tens of people who are not close contacts and will be allowed to disembark the ship. Our agreement with the authorities of Japan is to arrange all those who are willing to take our chartered flight to be carried by our buses to the airport, so that they can take our chartered flight. We are appealing to all Hong Kong residents still in Japan to take our chartered flight. We do not expect that this chartered flight will take back as many passengers as the first and second chartered flights, but it is our aim to take back any (Hong Kong resident) who is allowed to leave and is not a close contact. That is why, despite the possibility of this third chartered flight not taking back a large number of people, we will not give up any chance to take back the Hong Kong people who are not close contacts and can leave Japan.

We also learned from the Japanese authorities that they will be moving all the people who are required to be quarantined to facilities on land. We will be monitoring this and liaising with the Japanese authorities, so that we know where the Hong Kong people will be sent to, so as to attend to their needs and take care of their special requests. The Under Secretary for Security together with a doctor from the Department of Health have been visiting some of the patients while they are staying in Japan. We will be offering any assistance that we can to those who are in need.

Secretary for Food and Health: Let me provide some information about the Chun Yeung Estate and those people who came back last night, as well as the day before. There is a total of 208 people from two chartered flights back in Hong Kong and living in Chun Yeung Estate as the quarantine centre. They will

stay there to be quarantined for 14 days. So far, the operation is smooth and they are now in the estate. The Department of Health's people are there 24 hours a day providing medical surveillance to people living in Chun Yeung Estate. For example, every day they have to take temperature twice as well as inspecting the residents' health condition to see whether there is any problem.

Yesterday, there was a nine-year-old child who had developed fever and sent to the Prince of Wales Hospital. Initial test shows negative result. Today, there is a 68-year-old person, who took the second chartered flight back and just arrived early today, also showed sign of fever and being sent to the hospital. We will continue to monitor the health condition of these people. Secretary Lee has already given you some ideas about close contacts. The Department of Health is actively exploring the different options to see how they can be taken back or being quarantined in an appropriate facility in Japan.

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