

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 19 January 2012

The Council met at Three o'clock

MEMBERS PRESENT:

THE PRESIDENT

THE HONOURABLE JASPER TSANG YOK-SING, G.B.S., J.P.

IR DR THE HONOURABLE RAYMOND HO CHUNG-TAI, S.B.S., S.B.ST.J., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LEE CHEUK-YAN

DR THE HONOURABLE DAVID LI KWOK-PO, G.B.M., G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE FRED LI WAH-MING, S.B.S., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE MARGARET NG

THE HONOURABLE JAMES TO KUN-SUN

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG MAN-KWONG

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KAM-LAM, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS SOPHIE LEUNG LAU YAU-FUN, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG YIU-CHUNG

DR THE HONOURABLE PHILIP WONG YU-HONG, G.B.S.

THE HONOURABLE WONG YUNG-KAN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU KONG-WAH, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU WONG-FAT, G.B.M., G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MIRIAM LAU KIN-YEE, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE EMILY LAU WAI-HING, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW CHENG KAR-FOO

THE HONOURABLE ABRAHAM SHEK LAI-HIM, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LI FUNG-YING, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE TOMMY CHEUNG YU-YAN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE FREDERICK FUNG KIN-KEE, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE AUDREY EU YUET-MEE, S.C., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE VINCENT FANG KANG, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WONG KWOK-HING, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE LEE WING-TAT

DR THE HONOURABLE JOSEPH LEE KOK-LONG, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JEFFREY LAM KIN-FUNG, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW LEUNG KWAN-YUEN, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG HOK-MING, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WONG TING-KWONG, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE RONNY TONG KA-WAH, S.C.

THE HONOURABLE CHIM PUI-CHUNG

THE HONOURABLE KAM NAI-WAI, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE STARRY LEE WAI-KING, J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE LAM TAI-FAI, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN HAK-KAN

THE HONOURABLE PAUL CHAN MO-PO, M.H., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KIN-POR, J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE PRISCILLA LEUNG MEI-FUN, J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE LEUNG KA-LAU

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG KWOK-CHE

THE HONOURABLE WONG SING-CHI

THE HONOURABLE WONG KWOK-KIN, B.B.S.

THE HONOURABLE IP WAI-MING, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE IP KWOK-HIM, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS REGINA IP LAU SUK-YEE, G.B.S., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE PAN PEY-CHYOU

THE HONOURABLE PAUL TSE WAI-CHUN, J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE SAMSON TAM WAI-HO, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALAN LEONG KAH-KIT, S.C.

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG KWOK-HUNG

THE HONOURABLE TANYA CHAN

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT CHAN WAI-YIP

THE HONOURABLE WONG YUK-MAN

MEMBERS ABSENT:

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT HO CHUN-YAN

THE HONOURABLE TIMOTHY FOK TSUN-TING, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE TAM YIU-CHUNG, G.B.S., J.P.

PROF THE HONOURABLE PATRICK LAU SAU-SHING, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CYD HO SAU-LAN

PUBLIC OFFICERS ATTENDING:

THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN LAM SUI-LUNG, G.B.S., J.P.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION

THE HONOURABLE JOHN TSANG CHUN-WAH, G.B.M., J.P.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

THE HONOURABLE WONG YAN-LUNG, S.C., J.P.

THE SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE

THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL SUEN MING-YEUNG, G.B.S., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

THE HONOURABLE AMBROSE LEE SIU-KWONG, G.B.S., I.D.S.M., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY

THE HONOURABLE DENISE YUE CHUNG-YEE, G.B.S., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE

THE HONOURABLE TSANG TAK-SING, G.B.S., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS

THE HONOURABLE MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG, G.B.S., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND WELFARE

PROF THE HONOURABLE K C CHAN, S.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND THE TREASURY

THE HONOURABLE MRS CARRIE LAM CHENG YUET-NGOR, G.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT

THE HONOURABLE EDWARD YAU TANG-WAH, G.B.S., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

THE HONOURABLE GREGORY SO KAM-LEUNG, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE HONOURABLE RAYMOND TAM CHI-YUEN, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS

MR ROBIN IP MAN-FAI
HEAD, CENTRAL POLICY UNIT

MR YAU SHING-MU, J.P.
UNDER SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND HOUSING

CLERK IN ATTENDANCE:

MS PAULINE NG MAN-WAH, SECRETARY GENERAL

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL UNDER RULE 8
OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE, AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS PUT
BY MEMBERS.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Members will please remain standing while the Chief Executive enters the Chamber.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): The Chief Executive will first address the Council.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): President and Honourable Members, today, I wish to give you an account of this Government's focuses of work during the remainder of its term and follow up the issue of Mainland pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong, a problem that has recently aroused heated discussions in the community.

First, during my duty visit in Beijing last month, I enumerated this SAR Government's four focuses of work during the remainder of its term:

- (a) Faced with the imminent outbreak of a debt crisis in Europe, we must enhance our ability to withstand economic recession and roll out timely relief measures on the basis of needs, so as to "support enterprises, protect employment and relieve people's plight".
- (b) We must materialize the various policies and measures of improving people's living which this Government has mentioned. In this connection, as already announced by the Government a couple of days ago, new Air Quality Objectives will be adopted shortly. Besides, in the interim to the changeover, we are striving to finalize a new Home Ownership Scheme and the arrangements for cross-boundary Old Age Allowance, and to materialize transport fare subsidies for the elderly.
- (c) Regarding the Chief Executive Election and Legislative Council Election this year, we must make good preparations to ensure the orderly, fair and impartial conduct of the elections.
- (d) We must make good preparations for convergence with the next Government, so as to ensure the effective governance of this

Government during the remainder of its term and lay a sound foundation for the next Government.

Regarding the four focuses mentioned above, the general public are generally more concerned about the ones related to people's livelihood, and impassioned discussions on economic conditions are comparatively rare. However, I must emphasize that the risks of a European debt crisis triggering a global economic recession are increasing every day. Enhancing Hong Kong's ability to withstand economic recession is no longer merely an economic policy, but also a major strategy for protecting society and people's livelihood.

Hong Kong's system of monetary and financial supervision is already quite well-developed. We must make good use of this solid foundation, dovetail with the Country's Twelfth Five-Year Plan, consolidate Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre and offshore centre for Renminbi, and step up its external economic and trade activities, with the objective of ensuring that even with a global economic recession, investors will continue to regard Hong Kong as the only best option for their development in Asia and expansion into the Mainland, so as to ensure support for enterprises and protect employment.

Over the past few years, we have sought to combat the financial tsunami on the one hand, and grasp various development opportunities on the other. By now, we have made quite a number of achievements. The report recently published by the Heritage Foundation of the United States shows that Hong Kong has been rated the world's freest economy for 18 years in a row. In a macro environment marked by financial turbulence, Hong Kong has still managed to receive a credit rating of "AAA" from Standard and Poor's, becoming one of the two Asian places that receive such a rating. In the rankings of the Financial Development Index presented by the World Economic Forum, Hong Kong occupies the first position, surpassing Britain and the United States; this is also the first time that an Asian financial centre ever tops the list. Faced with various economic challenges, we must make extra efforts to defend all these hard-earned achievements before we can become well-equipped to thrive in spite of difficulties.

Concerning the issue of Mainland pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong, we must of course properly tackle the related social and livelihood problems. In recent years, the number of Mainland pregnant women giving

birth in Hong Kong has been soaring, thus exerting pressure on healthcare services in Hong Kong. And, at the same time, we must also cope with the demand for healthcare and educational services posed by the Hong Kong-born children of Mainland pregnant women. The Government attaches very great importance to all these problems and is actively adopting various tackling measures to ensure that pregnant Hong Kong residents and their babies are always accorded priority in the receipt of services and care.

In the middle of last year, we stepped up our measures and introduced a quota system for Mainland pregnant women coming to Hong Kong for delivery. The quota of delivery booking this year is limited to 3 400 for public hospitals and 31 000 for private hospitals. When compared with the total number of Mainland women giving birth in Hong Kong last year — by last year, I actually mean the year before last — when compared with the total figure of 43 000 in the whole of last year, there is a reduction of close to 20%. We will thoroughly consider the quota for the coming year, with a view to ensuring that local expectant mothers will not be affected.

In recent months, there has been a rise in the number of Mainland pregnant women with no delivery booking attempting to get through immigration for entry. And, after entry, some such pregnant women even sought delivery services from the accident and emergency departments of public hospitals when they were in labour. The Government will resolutely deter such acts by adopting the following measures:

- (a) Focusing on Mainland pregnant women with no delivery booking, we will join hands with the Mainland Government to clamp down on intermediaries and cross-boundary vehicles that assist such women in gaining entry, and to prevent those pregnant women who have been repatriated from running the risks of re-attempting to get through immigration for entry.
- (b) We will step up the interception of non-local pregnant women and healthcare manpower support at immigration control points, so as to repatriate those pregnant women attempting to bypass the booking system to the Mainland as expeditiously as possible.
- (c) The Home Affairs Department will step up measures on banning unlicensed hostels, including the active adoption of undercover

operations, close liaison with property management companies and the Estate Agents Authority, and the clamping down of illegal activities at the various segments, so as to make it more difficult for Mainland pregnant women who have gained entry to get illegal dwellings. The Housing Department will likewise step up inspections and publicity, with a view to preventing the illegal use of public housing rental units. We also encourage members of the public to report cases of suspected irregularities.

- (d) The Hospital Authority (HA) will review the fees for non-local pregnant women giving birth at accident and emergency departments, so as to minimize misuses of accident and emergency department services.

Apart from strictly enforcing the booking system and combating illegal activities to control the number of Mainland pregnant women coming to Hong Kong for delivery, we will also take concrete steps to tackle the issue of school places. The number of cross-boundary school children in this school year is around 13 000, representing a rise of 30% over the figure last year, and it is expected that there will still be a marked increase in the next school year. These school children mostly go to kindergarten and primary school. Although the territory-wide usage of kindergarten and primary school places has yet to reach the capacity levels, the supply of places in the North District is already very tight.

I have asked the Education Bureau to ensure an adequate supply of kindergarten and primary school places for coping with demand, and to explore a reasonable diversion of cross-boundary school children, so as to balance the demand for and supply of school places in the various districts and enable local children to attend schools near to their homes.

In regard to maternal and child health services, with the increasing number of newborn babies, we have allocated additional resources for service expansion, including the expansion of Fanling Maternal and Child Health Centre. We will also make resource deployment having regard to the patronage situations of individual centres, with a view to ensuring that Hong Kong-born children can continue to enjoy quality and professional services.

The abovementioned measures can all manifest the Government's determination to tackle the issues concerned orderly and systematically. I am aware that there are many discussions on such issues in society these days, and some people even perceive the issues as conflicts between Mainlanders and Hong Kong people. Hong Kong is an open city, and openness has always been the cornerstone of our success. We should approach such issues with an accommodating, positive and active attitude. The Government will safeguard the services enjoyed by Hong Kong people and formulate planning conducive to Hong Kong's long-term development. I have already made it clear that the Government will conduct a comprehensive review of the population policy in response to population ageing and the phenomenon of Mainland pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong. The Steering Committee on Population Policy chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration is at present actively following up the work in this respect.

Meantime, the external economic environment is overcast, very much like "a windy tower presaging rising mountain tempests", so Hong Kong must make good preparations. In particular, at the very juncture of government changeover, we must be especially vigilant and do a good job in gate-keeping. The maintenance of Hong Kong's economic, political and social stability must depend on the sincere co-operation of the executive and the legislature.

Honourable Members, as the Chinese New Year is just a few days away, let me send you an early New Year greeting on behalf my colleagues in the SAR Government. May all of you enjoy sound health, family harmony and very good luck in the Year of the Dragon. Thank you.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): The Chief Executive will now take questions from Members.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): *President, the Chief Executive's reference to tolerance just now was very appropriate. Last time when he came to the Legislative Council, a Member talked about the teachings of Confucius and Mencius, but he accused him of behaving like a "triad element" and "thug", showing fully his lack of tolerance.*

President, the Chief Executive mentioned the Lunar New Year a moment ago. We have the custom of giving spring inscriptions to others as gift during the Lunar New Year. During the time of TUNG Chee-hwa, I presented to him 18 spring inscriptions all beginning with the Chinese character "一", meaning "a" in English. Even Donald TSANG, then the Financial Secretary, also expressed appreciation of the calligraphy of the 18 spring inscriptions. These 18 spring inscriptions, all beginning with the Chinese character "一", are "a complete mess", "a nosedive" and "a complete lack of merits"

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please state your question directly.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): *President, my question is precisely related to spring inscriptions. May I first wish that all Hong Kong people can enjoy peace in their families, sound health and very good luck in the new year.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please state your question.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): *As a Christian, the Chief Executive should glorify God and edify people and say, "My cup runs over." But he seems to have failed to do these two things. He has been in power for seven years. The "Eight-year Reign of Chee-hwa" was disastrous. "The Seven-year Reign of Donald" has brought about air pollution, cronyism, hopelessness for democracy, excessive police power, inflation, high property prices*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please state your question as quickly as possible.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): *..... "shell-less snails", people's bitterness, financial hegemony, developer hegemony, collusion between the Government and business, plutocratic domination and most seriously, President, the disparity in wealth — the central idea of my question.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please state your question.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): *Following his election, MA Ying-jeou stated right at the beginning of his victory declaration that he would seek to ease the disparity in wealth and narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. But when our Chief Executive was asked on the disparity in wealth, he only replied that it was an inevitable phenomenon in a capitalist society.*

I want to ask the Chief Executive one question. The Budget will be announced next month, and this can enable him to lessen or ease the problem of poverty and disparity in wealth during his term through the distribution and redistribution of financial resources. May I ask him whether he should, as a Christian and a member of the accountable government, ease the problem of disparity in wealth during the last stage of his term?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): We have discussed this issue many times before. The challenges faced by grass-roots people in their living and various small and medium enterprises in Hong Kong are invariably the SAR Government's focuses of resource deployment. During any discussions on this issue, we must objectively examine how grass-roots people in Hong Kong have been faring over the past few years.

Mr CHAN, I strongly agree with you. The livelihood of grass-roots people is something we must pay heed to. And, we must not ignore the problem of disparity in wealth. The Financial Secretary will certainly put forward relevant proposals in the Budget.

I wish to advise you that since 2007 when I first assumed office, for example, the number of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) recipients has dropped by 11%. In 2007, there were almost 500 000 CSSA recipients. Today, the number is only 443 000. And, the proportion of the poverty population has not shown any increase either.

Concerning grass-roots people's livelihood over the past few years, one notable change has been a marked increase in their wages at a rate higher than the inflation rate. Such a change is understandably the fruit of our society's

economic improvement and the result of policy assistance. I can say that all this, especially the improvement of grass-roots people's livelihood, is the concern of this present Government, and I also believe that every Government in the future will likewise do so.

As for how we can solve the problem of disparity in wealth in the long run, we have held many discussions before. I think we should make efforts by investing resources in education, social mobility and other respects. The approach of distributing wealth, or re-distributing earnings, is not the most effective means, as can be seen from the experience of many European countries over all these years. However, I will still listen to Members' opinions with an open mind. We will continue to make efforts in this respect.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): *President, the Chief Executive has been talking about resolving the problem of disparity in wealth through the provision of education and other policies for seven years already. However, the problem has still been deteriorating all the time during his term. The most direct and simplest means — only several months is left in his term — if the Government decides to hand out \$8,000 to each person next month, it will be able to instantly narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. The Government now possesses a surplus amounting to some \$50 billion, so it is definitely able to do so. Will the Chief Executive, with a bit of conscience and Christ's compassion, make this important decision in the next few weeks, so as to enable poor people in Hong Kong to live a better life this year? Will the Government consider implementing the decision of handing out \$8,000 to each person?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Regarding our measure of handing out cash last year, many Hong Kong people hold divergent views. However, this after all falls within the Financial Secretary's responsibilities, so he will give a reply on this question to Honourable Members. But Mr CHAN, what I have heard from society and the mass media up to this moment actually indicates that the majority of people do have some reservation about handing out cash again.

DR DAVID LI (in Cantonese): *President, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) has earlier rolled out measures to regulate the property market, limiting*

the loan-to-value ratios for bank mortgages. May I ask the Chief Executive whether he would consider optimizing the relevant policies, so as to make it less difficult for end-users to buy properties?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): In regard to property speculation, we have a series of measures in place, especially

MR WONG YUK-MAN (in Cantonese): *Give us back \$8,000 for a happy new year.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr WONG Yuk-man, please be quiet.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): In response to property speculation activities, we have launched a series of measures which have somewhat prevented and reduced speculation activities. The mortgage-related measures are meant to tackle problems in several areas — I believe you must know these measures very well — especially the risks faced by banks. We think that we should be particularly careful with home mortgages. Therefore, we have imposed some requirements. In particular, we think that loan-to-value ratios should be handled prudently.

External market conditions are at present very unstable, but the existing measures seem to have stabilized property prices, and there is also a mechanism for downward adjustments in the market. The masses in Hong Kong find it necessary to have such measures and I strongly believe the existing measures are effective. We will, of course, continue to review the measures currently adopted by the HKMA and the Government. We strongly believe these measures are effective at the moment. Given the turbulence of the external market, I do not think that we are in a position to make any abrupt changes to the time-tested measures which are currently in force.

DR MARGARET NG (in Cantonese): *President, the Chief Executive and the SAR Government have the responsibility to ensure an adequate supply of*

maternity beds for Hong Kong women and Hong Kong people's Mainland spouses so that they can give birth safely and without any worries. The problem of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" actually stems from the Individual Visit Scheme. According to the relevant statistics, the figures in 2001 and 2002 were still very low, but since 2003 and 2004, they have surged from several thousand to some 10 000 and even 20 000 or so.

Approval for the implementation of the Individual Visit Scheme was given by the Mainland authorities, and only the Mainland authorities have the power to grant approval for Mainland residents to come to Hong Kong. In that case, has the Chief Executive directly requested, or will he directly request, the Central Government to stop granting approval for "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" on the Mainland to come to Hong Kong, at this very time when the problem of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" produces such huge impacts? This is a concrete problem calling for concrete solutions. The earlier it is tackled, the sooner we can set Hong Kong people's mind at ease. Has he put forward this proposal to the Central Authorities? Will he put forward this proposal to the Central Authorities? If he will not do so, or if he has not done so, could he please explain to all mothers in Hong Kong why he has not done so, and why he has just kept talking about all those hardly relevant measures mentioned earlier?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): I have already given Honourable Members a systematic account, telling you that the authorities will try to limit the number of Mainland pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong by means of a quota system that caps the number at 35 000 per year. This figure represents a drop, quite a significant drop, against the 40 000 or so cases recorded last year, and our healthcare system has the capacity to cope with it.

We intend to set the quota at 3 400-odd for public hospitals, which is also within their handling capacity. Local mothers would definitely be given priority for the services. That is our established policy. I believe this measure, together with all the other measures mentioned earlier, can surely bring the problem under control at the very least.

As for our liaison with the Mainland on "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" giving birth in Hong Kong, it was a major issue which I

discussed with officials of the Central Authorities during my last duty visit. The measures I proposed at that time are the same as those I mentioned just now. We will continue to follow up matters in this respect.

DR MARGARET NG (in Cantonese): *President, what the Chief Executive reportedly raised during his last duty visit is just the same as the points he has just mentioned. All these points are just a tinker, rather than any drastic measures that can achieve real practical results. Such a tinker is not going to work and has in fact been so proven, because "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" giving birth in Hong Kong have by now come to involve market supply, a commercial activity undertaken by a certain industry.*

Would the Chief Executive seriously negotiate with the Central Authorities, at least asking them to suspend the granting of approval for "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" to come to Hong Kong, and to explain clearly that this is not the policy of the Central Authorities, that the policy of the Central Authorities is to forbid "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" to give birth in Hong Kong, and that if they do so, they will receive punishment after returning to the Mainland? Perhaps we should not tell the Central Government how to handle the issue, because we believe the Central Government should have many measures in mind, and the SAR Government can act in concert in many ways. However, why is he reluctant to put forward anything? Why has he uttered not even a single word, refusing to request the Central Government to adopt policy and administrative measures to at least suspend the granting of approval for "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" to come to Hong Kong until further plans are made when the situation is brought under control? The present situation has already gone out of control.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Let me reiterate that when we hold discussions with the Central Government on how to tackle the issue, we seek to handle it in two directions: first, we focus on intermediaries who abuse Hong Kong's procedures, and second, we focus on the problem of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" giving birth in Hong Kong, the very problem mentioned by the Honourable Member just now. What we focus on are precisely these two problems.

DR MARGARET NG (in Cantonese): *Could the Chief Executive please tell me why he does not advise the Central Government to at least suspend the granting of approval for "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" to come to Hong Kong for giving birth?*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Dr NG, the Chief Executive has heard your question clearly. Chief Executive, do you have anything to add?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): I have already replied that the problem of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" giving birth in Hong Kong is our focus. Administrative measures are specific policy initiatives which must require discussions with the Central Authorities. I believe we may come up with better solutions after discussions, solutions that may even be more effective than those mentioned earlier by Honourable Members.

MS STARRY LEE (in Cantonese): *President, the Chief Executive has mentioned a series of administrative measures to ensure that Hong Kong people can enjoy priority access to various kinds of services in Hong Kong. However, all these can only treat the symptoms but cannot tackle the problem at root. I noticed that when speaking on the issue of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" flocking to Hong Kong for delivery, both the Chief Executive and the Chief Secretary for Administration used to talk about the probability of children born to "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" becoming a source of "new blood" for replenishing the population in Hong Kong. However, the present reality is that more than 100 000 Mainland pregnant women have come to Hong Kong for delivery over the past decade, and mothers here in Hong Kong must scramble for three types of places — first, maternity places during pregnancy; then, "inoculation places" for vaccinating their children after delivery; and, school places for their children as they grow up healthily after vaccination.*

By now, the impact of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" giving birth in Hong Kong has become very apparent. Members of the public are also very concerned about the issue, and they expect the SAR Government to deal with it. The parade staged by a group of local pregnant women last week is

an apt illustration of people's negative reaction to the Government's "new blood theory". Why are the public so negative in reaction? All is because people think that Hong Kong will lose control over its own population policy if it is to rely on children born to "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" as a means of replenishing its human resources.

I noticed that the Chief Executive did not make any reference to his "replenishment theory" in his remarks just now. Does this mean that he is actually aware of people's opinion about his "replenishment theory"? Would the Chief Executive agree that the measures he mentioned earlier can only treat the symptoms but cannot tackle the problem at root, so further exploration in conjunction with the Central Government is required to ascertain whether there is any package of policies and ancillary measures that can thoroughly tackle this grave public concern?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): I already discussed the same topic when answering Dr NG's question. What we are saying is that the existing strategy is effective, in the sense that it is not only about treating the symptoms but also about tackling the problem at root. The reason is that forbidding the entry of Mainland pregnant women to Hong Kong is already a measure of tackling the root of the problem. And, even if they are allowed to come to Hong Kong, there will still be a quota. Therefore, this is already a measure that can tackle the root of the problem. I have of course also raised this idea with the Central Authorities, and I will continue to follow it up.

The issues I will discuss with the Central Authorities revolve around two problems. There exist certain illegal and unethical intermediaries which mislead Mainland pregnant women who want to give birth in Hong Kong. In this regard, our hope is their eradication. Besides, regarding the problem of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women", that is, cases where both the father and the mother are non-permanent residents of Hong Kong, we will request the Central Authorities to tackle it with special emphasis. These are the tasks that we will continue to do.

Regarding pregnant women in Hong Kong, we must at least ensure adequate maternity support services for all of them, as I already mentioned just now. This includes not only the need for maternity beds which I mentioned earlier but also the allocation of additional resources for maternal and child health

centres to ensure service availability. We also pay heed to children's education from kindergarten to primary school, so our existing efforts can be described as comprehensive.

As for the long-term development of our economy, I have already mentioned that the Chief Secretary for Administration will continue to follow up this topic. There is no need to worry about and dwell on this. Most importantly, the SAR Government is committed to handling this issue with a determined, strategic and systemic approach.

MS STARRY LEE (in Cantonese): *I note the series of measures mentioned by the Chief Executive just now. However, another major problem faced by us now is that many pregnant women attempt to get through immigration and go to accident and emergency departments to give birth, with the result that many measures may have to be implemented at boundary control points. At present, the four staff unions of the Immigration Department (ImmD) all say that they are overloaded by work and ask for more manpower. After implementing the additional administrative measures concerned, would the Chief Executive instruct the Director of Immigration to hold discussions with the various staff unions on increasing manpower in the very near future, so that within a short time frame, the entry of all such women can be completely blocked, or interception at boundary control points can at least be strengthened, with a view to thwarting the illegal attempts of such pregnant women to get through immigration?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): As I pointed out in my opening speech just now, we will deploy more manpower to boundary control points. We will not only deploy more law-enforcement officers of the ImmD, but will also deploy healthcare personnel from the Department of Health to assist in the work. Particularly when any such pregnant women make a scene before immigration personnel while attempting to gain entry, such healthcare personnel can carry out immediate inspections, thus facilitating the expeditious repatriation of such women on the spot. Therefore, healthcare personnel will definitely be able to offer assistance. The additional manpower I have mentioned covers not only law-enforcement officers. Healthcare personnel will also be deployed to boundary control points.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *Hearing the Chief Executive say "a windy tower presaging rising mountain tempests" a moment ago, I hastened to improvise a line to make a couplet, a very perfect couplet: "an outgoing chief showing ghastly perfunctory interest". "An outgoing chief" of course "shows ghastly perfunctory interest". It is useless for him to say anything now.*

What kind of government is his government? I hear that foreign governments offer care from cradle to grave. But his government simply "messes up" everything from cradle to grave. Other Members have already questioned him on "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women", so I am not going to ask any further questions on this.

Chief Executive, may I ask you a question? You can see here — the war between the Wolf and the Hog. You are the Chief Executive, and at the very beginning, you lied to us that you would "do something big". We now have a surplus of \$2,400 billion. According to the Financial Secretary, there will be a surplus of \$60 billion this year, meaning that a further windfall is forthcoming. May I ask whether you will order the Financial Secretary to return this sum of \$60 billion to Hong Kong people? This is a windfall anyway. Also, will you allocate a separate sum of \$50 billion or even more for the purpose of implementing a universal retirement protection scheme? Will you do so? This is supported by statistical computations. Will you implement it? I once told the Financial Secretary that if he did not go ahead with implementation, I would hurl objects at him.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, please sit down if you have already stated your question, so that the Chief Executive can give his reply.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): In this regard, if there is any surplus, the Financial Secretary will definitely draw up a plan on how best to make use of it. Early next month, he will certainly give a full account to all of you in the Budget speech. We will certainly make the best use of our reserves.

Concerning the implementation of a universal retirement protection scheme, I have already held many debates with Honourable Members in the Chamber. We think society has honestly not yet reached any consensus on how

such a scheme should be implemented. This is not a problem that can be resolved simply by allocating any single sum from the surplus. The Government has to make commitment, and not only this, the public, the labour sector and everybody must likewise make contributions. Society has not yet reached any consensus on this, so the Government must not take any forcible actions.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *The Government must be deranged and perfunctory. Chief Executive, when describing our future demographic composition, you explained that unlike other countries, we will not have enough young people to support the elderly population. You got so excited that you even talked about the introduction of new blood, such as the children of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women", to replenish our population. I now want to tell you that it may not be feasible to depend on such people. But you have not drawn up any planning. The Government now puts forward a system. Look at it yourself. It is now 2012, and in no time, 2036 will arrive. Last time, I tried to hurl this thing at you, but it was intercepted*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, please state your supplementary question concisely.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *He must answer my question. How come he is so seriously deranged? He talks about the necessity of injecting new blood into our demographic composition and even allowing the entry of outsiders as a means of rejuvenating our population and supporting the elderly. I now tell him*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please state your supplementary question.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *I am asking him how to resolve this problem. He says he will look for solutions. I now tell him very specifically* My question for him is very specific, but his answer is not.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, I must remind you that this is not a debate, and the Chief Executive has already given a reply.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *I say he should distribute the extra \$60 billion to Hong Kong people and then allocate an additional sum of \$50 billion for implementing a universal retirement protection scheme. Will he accept this proposal?*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please state your supplementary question concisely.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *He is just giving me a runaround. He says he will make efforts. This is the same as his replying that he has eaten shit when I ask him whether he has had any meal today. Such a reply is no reply at all. Oh, he has really eaten?*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, please sit down, and let me ask the Chief Executive to give his reply.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *Is he going to give a reply anyway? You often criticize me for refusing to be reasonable. He answers me by saying he has eaten*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, please sit down.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *..... eaten shit.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Chief Executive, please give your reply.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *It is still about eating; I have eaten shit.*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): In several respects, there are already some measures in Hong Kong. There is the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance system to assist grass-roots people. There is also the Mandatory Provident Fund system for the protection of the labour sector. I would not say that all this is already perfect. There must be room for improvement. However, when it comes to the introduction of a universal retirement protection system, I must point that many years ago, we already held many debates, and the idea was deemed impracticable at that time. Even if we raise the idea again today, there are bound to be many divergent opinions still. I wish to repeat that this is not a problem which can be resolved simply by the allocation of several dozen billion dollars by the Government. This cannot be any solution. There must be a consensus among all Hong Kong people, and the Government must make more commitments. If the public are willing to kick-start the whole thing, they too must make greater commitment. However, there is not yet any consensus at the moment. Without a consensus, it will be impossible to put in place a sustainable universal retirement protection scheme.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *He has really not answered my question. He has not undertaken to make a commitment of \$50 billion, nor has he undertaken to make a greater commitment of \$80 billion in case there is not enough money*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, please sit down.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *..... He still has the face to say that the Government needs to make greater commitment. I now ask him for \$50 billion*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, the time for your questions is over. Please sit down immediately.

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *In that case, I have no alternative but to throw things at him. I must throw all these sweets back to him.*

(Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung threw some sweets forward)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, leave the Chamber immediately!

(The Clerk and security personnel assisted Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung in leaving the Chamber)

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *I do not want all these small favours, all these sweets! You have only given us some small favours, some sweets*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, leave the Chamber immediately!

(Security personnel continued to assist Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung in leaving the Chamber)

MR LEUNG KWOK-HUNG (in Cantonese): *You have not made any commitment. If \$50 billion is not enough, \$80 billion should be given. The Government has as much as \$2,400 billion, right?*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEUNG, stop speaking immediately and leave the Chamber.

(With the assistance of security personnel, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung left the Chamber, but continued to yell on the way)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now ask the Chief Executive to continue to answer Members' questions.

DR SAMSON TAM (in Cantonese): *President, I must first thank you and the Chief Executive for visiting Members' Offices and taking a tour around our workplaces just now. The Chief Executive might notice that the windows of my office were open as we needed fresh air, and two of my five assistants were wearing a face mask. I hope when the Chief Executive visits us next time, our working environment will have become better.*

Chief Executive, I wish to ask a question concerning the development of Hong Kong's television industry. I believe all of us know that the television industry means much more than one single industry. A properly developed television industry is an information dissemination platform allowing the "blossoming of a hundred flowers" and the broadcasting of many more voices through the airwaves, and it is also an indicator showing the soft power of a place.

In its heyday, Hong Kong's television industry as a brand name enjoyed very high status in China, Asia and even Chinese communities all over the world. However, the various problems plaguing the television industry recently have come to hinder its very development.

The Chief Executive stated in the Policy Address of the year before last that additional domestic free television programme service licences would be granted to introduce greater competition into the industry and create more opportunities. However, we have been waiting for long enough, and the Chief Executive has still not announced when any additional licences would be granted. What is the reason for this? When will these licences be granted? I am really very eager to know the answer.

May I also ask the Chief Executive what policy will be put in place to assist Hong Kong's television industry in sustaining its development in conjunction with the new media industries?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Our long-standing policy has already been elaborated earlier. Since 1998, we have had the intention of enhancing competition in the free television market and pay television market through market liberalization. We did receive some applications, but there was also a petition. Many court proceedings have not been completed until recently. The

several applications will be referred to the Executive Council for processing. I believe an outcome will be forthcoming soon. But as the matter must be examined by the Executive Council, it is not appropriate for me to provide any further detail here.

DR SAMSON TAM (in Cantonese): *President, part of my question asks the Chief Executive what policy would be put in place, especially at this very time when the Mainland or overseas places are already working on tri-networks integration, rather than merely depending on airwaves for broadcasting. The licences are no doubt for television broadcasting in Hong Kong, but the programme contents can actually be transmitted to overseas countries or the Mainland. May I ask the Chief Executive whether he has formulated any supporting policies to facilitate the transmission of locally-produced programmes to the Mainland or other countries?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Regarding the transmission of programme contents to other countries via the Internet, restrictions and legislative control are found in every country. As for Hong Kong, we impose absolutely no restriction on anyone who broadcasts his programmes legally via the Internet in Hong Kong. At present, programmes broadcast via the Internet already abound in Hong Kong. A domestic free television programme service licence is not necessarily required for the purpose, and people are still able to view such programmes.

Moreover, I firmly believe that those applicants who are granted licences in the future will seek development in different directions, rather than solely focusing on free television. They will operate broadcasting services through the Internet and other media, and it is only by doing so that we can make the development of the television industry more dynamic.

Personally, I believe that the media are in the process of constant evolution. When it comes to its internal management framework, the Government is already following the direction of merging the management of several different media. I am convinced that the efforts made by Hong Kong in this respect will make it a vanguard in the global market. Nevertheless, in case the sector wants to raise any special points we have not considered, thinking that more should be done by Hong Kong to facilitate the development of the telecommunications, television or

broadcasting industries, I will be more than happy to co-operate. In regard to control and infrastructure, we have already made efforts on our part, and we have applied plenty of latitude when handling the licence issue.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): *President, I wish to ask the Chief Executive a question on enforcement and law interpretation. Honestly, there is basically nothing wrong for a prospective Chief Executive candidate to put forward proposals he considers correct and point out the areas requiring reform when he engages in electioneering. However, when a prospective Chief Executive candidate recently met with New Territories personalities, he described certain unauthorized building works (UBWs) in the New Territories as "so-called illegal structures", remarking that some UBWs in the New Territories had very unique historical backgrounds, and hoping that all sides could approach the issue of illegal structures in the New Territories with an attitude of mutual understanding and tolerance as well as amicability, having regard to the fact that indigenous inhabitants' legitimate rights and interests should be protected by the Basic Law.*

However, the public do have the right to know the present Government's interpretation of existing legislation and its enforcement policy. I want to ask the Chief Executive the following questions. First, do the legitimate rights and interests of indigenous inhabitants protected by the Basic Law also include illegal structures? Second, in terms of law interpretation and enforcement, is there any distinction between illegal structures in the urban areas and the "so-called illegal structures" in the New Territories? Is there really a grey area known as "so-called illegal structures"? Do the UBWs in the New Territories really have any unique historical backgrounds that warrant an attitude of mutual understanding and tolerance as well as amicability for handling? Does such an advocacy create any enforcement difficulties for the present Government?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): I will not comment on the remarks made by any prospective candidates. Illegal structures are erected against the law. They are of course illegal and do not enjoy any protection under the Basic Law. Local legislation likewise will not protect any illegal structures. Regarding the protection of building and public safety, we will continue to adhere to the law when handling the problems arising from illegal structures. Irrespective of where the illegal structures are located, whether in the urban areas or the New

Territories, we will still adopt a uniform handling approach. I must of course add that the backgrounds of building management in the urban areas and the New Territories are truly different, so we will adopt different approaches of enforcement control for them. We will adhere to the law and take actions according to priority. This is the long-established principle.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): *President, the Chief Executive has replied that the rights and interests of indigenous inhabitants that are protected by the Basic Law do not include illegal structures. However, the Chief Executive has not answered us whether the advocacy concerned will create any enforcement difficulties for the present Government. This question is especially important because there is now a new policy under which villagers are required to voluntarily register their illegal structures before a certain day several months later, and clearance may be deferred if the illegal structures concerned are deemed to be posing only low risks. Have any enforcement difficulties been created in this regard?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): I have said that I will not comment on the opinions of any prospective candidate. However, I can say that the strategies, enforcement approach and relevant timetable announced by the SAR Government will not be affected by the opinions of any people (including election candidates or prospective candidates) because we will always adhere to the law. We will definitely act in strict accordance with the established policy, procedures and timetable, and will never be swayed by all such opinions.

MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): *President, over the last few months, the two prospective Chief Executive candidates, who once worked with the Chief Executive for years, have been severely criticizing the policies of the present Government, and many people agree to their criticisms. In the case of housing, for example, when it comes to the production volume of public rental housing (PRH), they maintain that the present construction volume of 15 000 flats a year is too small to meet demand, and should be increased to 30 000 flats or more a year. As for education, they recommend the implementation of small-class teaching. Regarding healthcare services, besides calling for "shutting the gate" to "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women", they also hope that the*

expenditure on healthcare can be increased, so as to improve existing healthcare facilities and services.

I do not know whether the Chief Executive ever heard these two prospective candidates criticize the Government's policies or governance when they worked with him in the past. If they did do so, why did the Government fail to make any improvement in response to such criticisms? Is it because the team spirit oft-emphasized by the Government has never really existed, and the Chief Executive has in fact been making all decisions on his own? Or is it because these two prospective candidates never gave the Chief Executive any advice, all along serving only as his obsequious yes-men without raising any such issues when they worked with him, and choosing to do so now only because of their candidature? If this is the case, does the Chief Executive think that his selection of these two men as his colleagues at that time was in fact wrong?

President, in any case, may I ask the Chief Executive whether he will do his utmost to consider their advice as much as possible and make improvement in his remaining term of several months after hearing so many criticisms of the Government's policy objectives and initiatives? Many people agree to their criticisms, and everybody hopes that the Government can proceed in these directions. Will he make more efforts as far as he can in the coming months, instead of leaving the problems to the next Government, to whosoever assumes office?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): The discharge of public duties will always come under criticisms from different quarters. Before the Government launches a policy, it will first hold internal discussions and in the process, divergent views will understandably be voiced. However, once the policy is rolled out, it will be taken as representing the consensus and determination of the Government. I have repeated many times that I will not respond to the criticisms or comments made by these prospective candidates on existing policies. However, as regards the problems faced by Hong Kong now, including the problems of housing, healthcare and pregnant women, the Government will continue to cope with them actively.

In the case of housing, our response measures have already been enumerated in the Policy Address. Concerning PRH supply, we have already

put in place a long-term strategy, and our policy is very clear — enabling all eligible applicants to receive housing allocation after a waiting period of three years. If there is a need for supplying 15 000 flats, we will supply 15 000 flats; if there is a need for more flats, we can hold further discussions. Such is our established policy and we will adhere to it. As for the issue of pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong, I have already given a full reply just now.

Every day, I listen to the criticisms and views of the general public, and I always do so with sincerity and modesty. If there is anything I am capable of doing, I will respond positively. I will treat all opinions in the same way, whether they are views expressed by the masses from different perspectives or criticisms made by any candidates in the Chief Executive Election.

MR LEUNG YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): *President, I think the Chief Executive also knows that not much time is left for him to carry out his policies. If he continues to do nothing more than listening, he can neither resolve the problems nor dispel public grievances. On the other hand, what everybody looks forward to is the implementation of concrete policies to resolve the various problems. Therefore, although he has already put forward his policy objectives, may I still ask the Chief Executive whether he will re-adjust his the policy objectives and take really concrete steps to answer people's current aspirations in view of the strong public demands, so as to tackle the problems in housing, healthcare, education and other areas?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): All of the policies proposed in the Policy Address and the ideas put forward by the present Government are about concrete actions and policies meant for actual implementation. We do not just talk, hope or listen. After listening to views, we will put them into practice. Regarding the housing policy, what I have proposed (including the new HOS policy) are all meant for actual implementation. The measures on tackling the problem of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" giving birth in Hong Kong, which I mentioned just now, are likewise meant for actual implementation. We will keep on listening to views and keep on tackling whatever issue arises until the last minute in the term of the present Government.

MR WONG TING-KWONG (in Cantonese): *President, the Chief Executive's voice seems to show that he has not yet recovered from his flu. I wish him a speedy recovery, so that he can enjoy a happy Spring Festival in good health.*

Chief Executive, since Mr MA Ying-jeou's victory in the election several days ago (that is, last Sunday), there have been many analyses which foresee some kind of positive development in cross-straits relationship and even bilateral exchanges between Hong Kong and Taiwan in the time to come. In March this year, the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (ETCO) in Taiwan will be inaugurated. Does the Chief Executive think that this presents a good opportunity, in the sense that he can officiate in person at the inauguration ceremony in Taiwan, so as to further promote multi-faceted contacts between Hong Kong and Taiwan?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Over the past few years, we have made many efforts in respect of Hong Kong-Taiwan exchanges, adopting a positive and active attitude as far as possible. I strongly believe that the Taiwan authorities are aware of our past efforts as well as active attitude in this regard, and will be very willing to engage in adequate and multi-faceted commercial and cultural exchanges. And, setting up the ETCO in Taiwan is also proof of our effort in this respect.

As for whether I will visit Taiwan, I must say I have pretty much work to handle this year. First, as you all know, I must deliver a speech in Davos, Switzerland, after the Lunar New Year despite my flu, and I also need to attend to certain other business before I can return to Hong Kong. I must then go to Beijing, and later to Latin America for promotion. In response to our loss of trade with Europe and the United States, I wish to promote Hong Kong as an offshore Renminbi centre and open up markets for our trade settlement role. Regarding Japan, some work has also been scheduled for May. I have a very tight overseas visit schedule in the several months to come. We do attach very great importance to developing our relationship with Taiwan. This is well known to all, including Mr MA Ying-jeou. He is likewise aware of our active attitude in this respect.

MR WONG TING-KWONG (in Cantonese): *President, I also understand that the Chief Executive must be pre-occupied with loads of business every day. If he is really unable to spare any time during his remaining term, then, after he has left office, will he find time to visit this very "business" set up during his time?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): *As I have said many times, I always want to visit Taiwan. If there is any opportunity, I will certainly grasp it and go there. Thanks for your advice; thanks also for your kind regards. I also hope I can recover soon, so that I can spare the need for drinking so much water and reply to more questions from Members without any interruption. I am recovering now, though.*

MR RONNY TONG (in Cantonese): *President, when Mr MA Ying-jeou was first elected President, he told some Hong Kong people: "I am also a 'Hongkonger'." When the Chief Executive ran in the Chief Executive Election, he likewise said, "I am a 'Hongkonger'." He even went on to say — sorry, my memory of this is not quite so clear — I think he said something like "I also drink Hong Kong water, with Hong Kong blood running in my veins."*

These days, while many Mainland people shove their way to Hong Kong for giving birth to "Hongkongers", someone from the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (LOCPG) has however remarked that any references to Hong Kong people as opposed to Chinese people are against logic, insinuating that such references are politically incorrect.

President, I want to ask the Chief Executive one question. Over the past seven years of his term, he has made strenuous and unceasing efforts to promote Mainland culture in Hong Kong. However, what has he actually done and what will he do to explain Hong Kong culture to Mainland officials? Is Hong Kong people's identification with Hong Kong the same as any "Hong Kong independence movement"? Does Hong Kong people's identification with Hong Kong preclude their identification with the Country? I wish to ask the Chief Executive what he has done.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Every time I visit the Mainland, I do not go alone, and I am invariably accompanied by many colleagues of mine as well as various delegations representing the business sector and Hong Kong. We bring there Hong Kong's ways of doing things. When Mainland people visit Hong Kong, they can see for themselves how things are done in Hong Kong. The point is not for us to tell others in one or two meetings that we represent freedom, equality and the rule of law. Others already know this very clearly, and there are also clear provisions in the Basic Law.

On every occasion, we will explain to them directly and indirectly how we seek to solve our problems in our own Hong Kong ways. We have become used to this practice over the past several years, and we will continue to make such efforts. However, mutual cultural understanding in the true sense of the term must be based on mutual respect, frankness and sincerity. I believe things are already happening right now to make Mainland people better understand Hong Kong's current situation and Hong Kong people better understand the Mainland's situation. Nevertheless, success cannot be possible overnight. I have already done my part, and I will continue to make efforts. I believe Hong Kong people will likewise continue to do the same.

In the case of pregnant women, as I said just now, we will bring up these issues, so as to find out how we can be more accommodating. We must handle these issues rationally and avoid any division or discrimination. Hong Kong is a metropolis. Everybody knows and understands our values. The question is: do our values constitute Hong Kong's edges? In our view, the answer is yes, and they are the reasons for Hong Kong's strong competitiveness over all these years. I hope that Mainland people can understand this over time.

MR RONNY TONG (in Cantonese): *President, my question for the Chief Executive is actually about what concrete efforts he has made. When somebody makes a comment in Hong Kong, attempting to drive a wedge between Hong Kong and Mainland people, we expect the Chief Executive to stand beside Hong Kong people, step forward and say unequivocally that identification with Hong Kong is neither a bad thing nor an unforgivable sin. Chief Executive, why do you not stand up for Hong Kong people at such important moments and say a few words of fairness for them?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Whenever there is any opportunity, I will talk about this issue. I do not know which incident you are referring to.

MR RONNY TONG (in Cantonese): *President, I am talking about the recent comment made by Mr HAO Tiechuan of the LOCPG on the University of Hong Kong's opinion poll. I do not believe that the Chief Executive has not heard of it. Hasn't he read any newspaper?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Making comments is common in Hong Kong. Practically everybody does so. I strongly believe that Dr Robert CHUNG is an expert in this field. Why should he fear any criticisms? He has

MR RONNY TONG (in Cantonese): *President*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): his own values and professional approach of doing things.

MR RONNY TONG (in Cantonese): *My question is not about Dr Robert CHUNG's reaction, but about the reasons for the Chief Executive's failure to stand beside Hong Kong people and say a few words of fairness for them.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr TONG, you have stated your question. Please sit down, so that the Chief Executive can reply.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): All Hong Kong people have the right to expression and criticism. I strongly believe that all of you understand that Hong Kong is a liberal society. We believe everybody will respect others' opinions. What is most important is whether an opinion is appropriate and correct. As for which opinions are correct, and which ones are not, Hong Kong people know very well how to make the distinction.

MR PAUL TSE (in Cantonese): *President, when it comes to speaking words of fairness for Hong Kong people, uttering the right words at the right time is also very important. Let us put aside the question raised by Mr Ronny TONG for the time being. In the recent D&G incident, the Chief Executive (and his officials) no public officer ever stepped forward to say any words of fairness for Hong Kong people at critical moments. Even though this incident does not fall within the purview of the Equal Opportunities Commission, it still issued a statement, pointing out that the practice that led to the incident was wrong.*

Mr Chief Executive, I am afraid that the incident is only the tip of the iceberg. What is really important to note is that when we handed out \$6,000, talks about "locusts" started to emerge. The D&G incident has induced many Hong Kong people to level many malicious criticisms at Mainland visitors, and "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" have likewise given rise to many negative perceptions.

I am surprised by Dr Margaret NG's earlier comment that the problem of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" stems from the Individual Visit Scheme. This is an extremely wrong saying. Besides, what is even more worrying is that having heard Dr Priscilla LEUNG's earlier talks about punishing voters, we now even hear Dr Margaret NG talk about punishing "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" and forcing Mainland authorities to do so. I hope she can explain her comment clearly when an opportunity arises. However, more importantly, I wish to ask the Chief Executive one question. At an appropriate moment, will the Chief Executive voluntarily seek an interpretation of the Basic Law by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, so as to resolve once and for all the problems in Hong Kong that cannot be resolved by administrative measures — whether it is the issue of Filipino maids or that of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women"?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): I have already explained the Government's strategy of dealing with the issue of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women", and I believe the existing measures are effective. Besides, we have established contacts with the Central Government for joining hands to focus on the two directions I mentioned earlier: first, the direction of dealing with intermediaries resorting to illegal or improper practices for inducing

pregnant women to give birth in Hong Kong; second, the direction of determining how to prevent the entry of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" with no advance booking. I believe that by focusing on these two directions, we will be able to resolve this problem.

However, I very much hope that this incident will not cause any division in the time to come. I totally agree with you that division, hostility and animosity should be avoided. I think we must uphold Hong Kong's values — and I hope this can also answer Mr Ronny TONG's earlier question — I think we must have confidence in Hong Kong's values, instead of all the time asking any Chief Executive to tell people to do this or that like a backseat driver. I strongly believe that Hong Kong people are very keen to react to such issues, and they do not need me to tell them what to do.

I can still recall that when Hong Kong saw waves of emigration in the 1990s, I was responsible for visiting Canada to promote Hong Kong, and I heard how the Canadians talked about Hong Kong people's parvenu arrogance. However, I no longer hear any such comment these days. This actually means that Hong Kong people who emigrated have very naturally integrated into the local cultures of their host countries. Over the past few years, I have been to many places on the Mainland, such as Beijing and Shanghai. I can say that many things over there have changed, and I have also noticed many concrete changes in its local culture as well.

A very high-ranking Mainland official once told me how he was baffled by those Mainland container truck drivers holding both Hong Kong and Mainland driving licences, who will still drive recklessly in Shenzhen, but will instantly turn well-behaved and observe every traffic light once after crossing Lo Wu Bridge and entering Hong Kong. The reason for this is that Hong Kong is a place upholding the rule of law, so even without our telling them, they will still behave themselves naturally. Given the values and the rule of law we uphold, they will surely behave themselves naturally.

Sometimes, we may notice some cultural differences and consider certain ways of behaving not quite so becoming. If any visitors behave in such ways, whether they are Mainlanders or foreigners, we may always advise them or explain things to them politely, letting them know Hong Kong's ways of doing similar things. I strongly believe that they will certainly be happy to respond.

If they do not respond and even use spiteful language with all the arrogance of parvenus, Hong Kong will not let them go either. This also applies to the D&G incident you have mentioned.

Therefore, I have great confidence in Hong Kong. Our values are solid, and this is an example of our success. While we need to uphold our values, there is no need for the Chief Executive to come out every day and remind Hong Kong people of all this. We Hong Kong people know very well what we are.

MR PAUL TSE (in Cantonese): *President, a Chinese saying goes, "Never put your wealth before others' eyes." When the right of abode is something so easily obtainable, I am afraid we will not be able to block the inflow even if we exhaust all administrative measures, and doing so will only make life difficult for our front-line staff.*

For some time in the past, many Hong Kong pregnant women also went to the United States for delivery because their children would be issued American passports, and might even become a President of the United States. However, in the case of Hong Kong, if we fail to sever the root and if we rely solely on administrative means, then even though we turn off that very "tap" called the Individual Visit Scheme, or put all our boundary control points under layers and layers of security measures as police states do, all our efforts will still be in vain, and we will not be able to solve the problem

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please state your supplementary question concisely.

MR PAUL TSE (in Cantonese): *..... The root of the problem is the loophole in our Basic Law. Mr Chief Executive, I wish to ask you one further question. How far do you still want the situation to deteriorate before considering seeking an interpretation of the Basic Law? And, what are your reasons for not doing so?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Concerning the right of abode, the Court is now handling a case involving foreign domestic helpers' right of abode in Hong Kong. So, it is not appropriate for us to discuss this particular issue here. I strongly believe that the relevant proceedings will continue. As we have already said, this Government will definitely follow it up. If this matter goes all the way to the Court of Final Appeal, the Court of Final Appeal will pass a judgment. As for existing legislative provisions, the Hong Kong SAR Government must abide by Hong Kong laws.

MR KAM NAI-WAI (in Cantonese): *President and Chief Executive, many Members mentioned the election in Taiwan just now. After his re-election, MA Ying-jeou said that he was no longer under any pressure of seeking re-election, but would instead face the pressure of historical appraisal. When looking at this "sunset government", many Hong Kong people would understandably no longer expect it to undertake any major reform in areas such as housing and healthcare.*

However, I wonder if it has ever occurred to the Chief Executive that you should, no matter what, do a few good things for Hong Kong people in the remaining months of your term, so that they can still remember you after you have left office. Some such things are things you have promised to do, and they can be done very easily.

May I ask, for example, whether you can implement in the remainder of your term the fare concession of \$2 per trip, which the elderly have been longing for? The new Air Quality Objectives (AQOs) announced recently are another example. All is in fact very simple in this case. There is actually no need for enacting any legislation; as long as an administrative measure is adopted for regularly announcing the latest air pollution situation in accordance with the new AQOs, so that Hong Kong people can accordingly protect their own health, all will be fine. Does the Chief Executive feel the pressure of historical appraisal?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): My answer is no. History is history, and it is not anything for me to worry about. As for how I am to be appraised in history, I will leave it to history. I do not need to have any worry, and worrying does not help anyway. The most important thing is for me to do my utmost

every day according to conscience, with each and every effort dedicated to Hong Kong people's well-being.

I will carry out the policies which have been set down and honour the undertakings I have made, including the two tasks mentioned just now. First, in respect of the fare concession of \$2 per trip for the elderly, my colleagues are actively working on it. On the one hand, we are holding discussions with operators, particularly the MTR Corporation Limited and bus companies, to explore how the proposal can be implemented, how computer programmes can be revised and how the Octopus Card can cope with the demand, so that this measure can be expeditiously implemented to enable the elderly to get around Hong Kong in their leisure with the generous concessions offered by such a scheme; on the other hand, we are also seeking to ensure the protection of the public coffers. My colleagues are making active efforts, with the aim of executing and materializing the proposal before I leave office.

Second, in respect of air quality, an administrative order alone cannot possibly achieve any success. Apart from government efforts, co-operation from the business community is also required. Without any legislative support, success cannot be possible. We will formulate the relevant standards with all sincerity of purpose, and put them into practice in an orderly and progressive manner. I believe it is only by doing so, rather than hastening to get it all done as soon as a proposal is made, that we can command public support. The reason is that our instant implementation of policies in the absence of adequate consultation already taught us a bitter lesson in the past. We have to deal with every issue in an orderly and progressive manner with all sincerity of purpose, whether it is the fare concession for the elderly or the new AQOs mentioned by the Honourable Member just now.

MR KAM NAI-WAI (in Cantonese): *President, I reckon that the Chief Executive does not quite understand my question concerning the AQOs. I am merely asking him to adopt an administrative measure for making regular announcements in accordance with the new AQOs to enable to the public to protect their own health. In this way, it will not be necessary to wait for the enactment of legislation, because the process may take two years.*

I am aware of the relationship between the relevant legislation and environmental impact assessments. But in respect of the Air Pollution Index, the

desired effect can already be achieved as long as the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) makes regular announcements. The Chief Executive says that he is under no pressure of historical appraisal, but I hope he can do this good thing for Hong Kong people.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): We will constantly update the collection and release of data on AQOs. The Honourable Member is right in saying that we may not necessarily need to enact any legislation in this case. The direction he proposes is right, and I believe my colleagues in the EPD will follow the new AQOs in their work. Whenever we can do so on our part — as Secretary Edward YAU and my colleagues have explained to you, I believe — as in the case of new projects yet to or about to be launched, we will follow the new AQOs even before the enactment of legislation. In other words, we will not withhold actions until after the enactment of legislation.

DR LEUNG KA-LAU (in Cantonese): *It is my turn me to speak so soon? Since the Chief Executive talked about the issue of Mainland pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong, I also pressed the button to raise a question. I believe one point is indisputable: any population policy must squarely address long-term planning demands, and Hong Kong residents should be accorded priority in receiving services such as healthcare and education.*

However, I would like to ask the Chief Executive one question. The public seem to have the impression that Mainland pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong have overburdened Hong Kong's healthcare system, but I hope the Government can be more scientific in the course of governance and take account of statistical data. Since the public have such an impression, I have checked some historical data. There is one point I cannot understand. Last year, 88 000 babies were born in Hong Kong, and people all say that this is beyond the capacity of Hong Kong's healthcare system. However, I have checked the numbers of births in Hong Kong in the late 1980s when the total healthcare personnel establishment was only about half the present level, and, surprisingly, more than 70 000 babies were born each year during that period. In 1988, which was also a Year of the Dragon, the number of babies born was 75 000, similar to that at present. However, the number of healthcare personnel was only half the present level.

If we look at the record of the Hospital Authority (HA) on the number of babies born, we will know that in 1995 — a golden period for the HA, when Hong Kong people were extremely satisfied with its services — in 1995, the number of babies born in HA hospitals was 46 000. And, the number of babies born in public hospitals in Hong Kong last year was actually only some 40 000 to 42 000

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please state your question.

DR LEUNG KA-LAU (in Cantonese): *My question concerns what has gone wrong with our healthcare system. Our healthcare personnel establishment has obviously doubled, and the burden on our healthcare system, or the number of babies born, is actually not that considerable, with even a declining number of babies born in public hospitals. May I ask the Chief Executive what has gone wrong with our healthcare system?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): You are an expert on this, and you instead asked me such a question. However, I will try to answer it as much as I can.

As Members all know, in response to the declining birth rates in Hong Kong over certain periods of time in the past, we made a number of special adjustments to resource allocation and facilities. For example, Tsan Yuk Hospital was originally a maternity hospital, but its maternity facilities were later shut down due to lack of patronage. With the sudden increase in demand recently, problems have naturally emerged. What is more, the healthcare requirements of pregnant women in the past and those at present are completely different. The requirements of healthcare resource allocation, service quality and human resources are no longer the same, and so are those concerning professionalism. We firmly believe that under the current approach, the resources borne by the Government will mostly be used for Hong Kong pregnant women.

On the other hand, the business community does not have to worry about any lack of patronage, because there is still the patronage of several dozen thousand Mainland pregnant women. However, I think the manpower of the

Hong Kong Government and the HA must be increased in response to the pressure they face. It is impossible to cope with the sudden increase in pregnant women without increasing their manpower. We must set a limit, and I believe we can cope with the situation under the existing quota system.

DR LEUNG KA-LAU (in Cantonese): *Since the Chief Executive has talked about the quota system, I also want to follow it up. The HA's delivery quota for Mainland pregnant women is 3 400, but the number of Mainland pregnant women with Hong Kong husbands coming to Hong Kong for delivery is as large as 6 000 to 7 000 each year. Since the quota cannot even cater for these women's needs, it is small wonder that they go to accident and emergency departments without any booking.*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Do not forget that our healthcare system has a capacity of several dozen thousand places. I very much believe that with the existing healthcare facilities, hospitals in Hong Kong can cope. The quota I have mentioned is the outcome of negotiations between the Secretary and private hospital management.

DR LEUNG KA-LAU (in Cantonese): *President, he has not replied to one point in my question. My question concerns both "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" and "non-permanent resident pregnant women", but the quota system in place does not distinguish between the two. The quota system he has mentioned cannot look after those whose fathers are Hong Kong permanent residents*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Dr LEUNG, please sit down. Chief Executive, do you have anything to add?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): If the fathers-to-be are Hong Kong permanent residents, their babies may be delivered either on the Mainland or in Hong Kong; delivery may not necessarily take place in Hong Kong. Even if expectant mothers want to give birth to their babies in Hong Kong, they may also

patronize private hospitals instead of always going to public hospitals. However, I only mean to say that public hospitals have sufficient resources to cater for Hong Kong pregnant women's demand; as for Mainland pregnant women, we have reserved 3 400 places.

MS AUDREY EU (in Cantonese): *President, Mr KAM Nai-wai remarked earlier that the Chief Executive did not understand the issue of Air Quality Objectives (AQOs). He also pointed out that no enactment of legislation was required, and an announcement by Secretary Edward YAU under administrative procedures would suffice. Yet, the Chief Executive replied that this was impossible unless with the co-operation of the business sector. Before I proceed to ask my question, let me first explain to the Chief Executive why he is mistaken.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please be as concise as possible.

MS AUDREY EU (in Cantonese): *Alright. Chief Executive, the AQOs that we mention refer to the normal or up-to-standard benchmarks set for our air. This is like a doctor's advice that one's blood pressure, expressed in terms of systolic pressure over diastolic pressure, should be 120/60 mmHg. The doctor's advice is as simple as that and does not require any endorsement from the business sector. What we are now asking for is that the SAR Government should update its anachronistic AQOs to align them closer to the standards devised by the World Health Organization.*

Chief Executive, you should remember that in a Chief Executive's Question and Answer Session last year, I asked you about the time frame for updating the AQOs. You replied that the work could be done by the end of last year. However, you failed to do so by the end of last year. Then, when I asked you again, you said that they would be updated within your term of office. Two days ago, Secretary Edward YAU announced that the AQOs would not be updated until 2014.

So, Chief Executive, why have you failed to keep your words? Or, have you been tricking us? You only said that the matter would be left to the next Government. Why must Hong Kong people wait until 2014 before they are told

what the quality of air that comes close to or aligns with the standards should be like?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): The air quality standards that we mentioned have been released. What I said last year was about the release of our air quality standards, and such standards were announced two days ago. What you have referred to is the time frame for implementation, and this will have implications on all construction projects. If projects are to meet the new standards, a new environmental impact assessment (EIA) regime has to be adopted. This is in fact our goal.

As for the matters you have mentioned, including the updating of figures, data collection and the presentation of new data within this period of time and so on, I believe that we will continue to tackle them under the current approach. The time of completion may not necessarily be as late as 2016. I do not see any problem in this regard. You and I do not have any different views.

MS AUDREY EU (in Cantonese): *I think the Chief Executive's reply indicates that, first, he does not understand the question; second, "the fox is betrayed by its tail".*

Chief Executive, the problem is precisely about works projects. Works projects require the conduct of EIAs, and EIAs are based on the AQOs. This explains why the Government has all time been so reluctant to update the AQOs — allowing the EIAs of large-scale projects (including the third runway of the airport) to be conducted on the basis of the outdated AQOs, so that they can be given a green light under them and then implemented, thus leaving all the problems to the next generation for tackling. Is this really the case, Chief Executive? Is this the reason for the Government's reluctance to update the AQOs all along?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): I believe that Ms Audrey EU is mistaken. This is simply not our intention, nor do we wish to do so at all. However, the new AQOs are very complicated and will affect many people. The public must pay a price, and so must the Government. And, a strategy for implementation

must also be worked out. Some members of the public have already begun to worry about possible hikes in electricity tariff and transport fares in the future. We must also pay heed to be these matters.

It is wrong for Ms EU's to say that we have sought to delay the updating of the AQOs for the sake of constructing the third runway. I have already replied that we will not evade the environmental problems and delay the updating of the AQOs to enable any projects to meet the objectives. As I mentioned, the EIA for the third runway will be conducted in accordance with the new objectives. Let me repeat: we will assess the third runway in accordance with the new objectives, irrespective of whether it takes place in 2016, 2017, 2015, 2014 or even 2012.

MR CHAN HAK-KAN (in Cantonese): *President, the Chief Executive said with very great determination just now that he would "shut the gate" to "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" coming to Hong Kong for delivery. However, in the past 10 years alone, the number of babies born to such "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" in Hong Kong was already close to 100 000. In case all these Mainland babies really come to live in Hong Kong, they will reduce the per-capita share of the education, healthcare, welfare and housing resources as well as employment opportunities in our society. May I ask the Chief Executive whether he will draw up any new planning for the use of existing government resources, so that Hong Kong people can face the arrival of this 100 000-strong army without any worries, so that parents in Hong Kong do not need to be so desperate in supporting their children and worry about all sorts of daily necessities and problems, such as their children's livelihood needs, healthcare, welfare and education?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): The present population policy review seeks precisely to address this problem, and this problem will be given special emphasis. The policy on pregnant women which I explained a moment ago aims to tackle problems in the short run. As for medium- and long-term problems, we must depend on the population policy, in the hope that it can tell us how we should face the various problems arising from population increase and ageing in the future. In regard to population ageing, we must make special adjustments to healthcare arrangements. As for population, if all those

Mainland children born in Hong Kong return to live here, we will have to face the problems of education, healthcare, public health and housing mentioned just now. Planning re-adjustments will be necessary in all cases. All these constitute the scope and work objectives of our present population policy review. I believe the Chief Secretary for Administration is at present actively studying the problem. I very much hope that I can at least put forward a preliminary report during the remainder of my term, so as to enable all to know the direction ahead.

MR CHAN HAK-KAN (in Cantonese): *President, I cannot wait to see this report on population policy. However, I do not believe that with respect to the problem of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women", we can "stop the bleeding" immediately simply by adopting the policies and measures mentioned by the Chief Executive just now. I earnestly hope that the Government can set up a joint mechanism with the Mainland for tackling the problem of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women". Actually, the Chief Executive already mentioned this point in his opening address just now. May I ask the Chief Executive whether he will set up a working group under existing mechanisms — such as the Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference — to follow up the problem of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women"? The reason is that this problem cannot possibly be tackled by Hong Kong's unilateral efforts alone, nor can it be solved in the near future. Rather, long-term follow-up is required. I suggest that this problem should be discussed and followed up in the Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference.*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): We will not discuss this problem in the Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference only. This matter has now been elevated to the highest echelons of the Country, and it has been brought to the attention of the Premier. In the time to come, we will also follow up the matter with the Ministry of Public Security and the Guangdong provincial authorities. The Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference convenes only several times a year, and there is also a working group under it. However, I believe the following up of this problem at the working level is a matter of the utmost urgency. We can of course reopen a review of this problem in the Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference, and the relevant follow-up work has already commenced.

DR LAM TAI-FAI (in Cantonese): *Chief Executive, today I would like to ask a question which is a bit more serious, one which concerns the well-being of the 7 million Hong Kong people in Hong Kong, the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong society, as well as the governance credibility of the Country. Not long ago, you paid the last duty visit to Beijing in your term of office, during which you met with state leaders. A leader told you, "Chief Executive, in your remaining term of office, you must work hard to bring forth a satisfactory changeover from the outgoing Government to the new one." I heard you pledge reassuringly and intrepidly that the job would be properly done. Chief Executive, you must note that any changeover process will necessarily involve two parties, the handing-over party and the receiving party, as in a relay where one runner passes the baton and another one receives it. If the baton is not properly relayed and drops, the team will lose, and even the overall situation will be affected.*

Chief Executive, several probable Chief Executive hopefuls or Chief Executive candidates are getting ready to stand in the election, and frankly speaking, they are different from one another in terms of ability, personality and political belief or mindset. May I ask what preparation should be made to ensure a successful changeover, bearing in mind that one must make the best preparation for every job? With three candidates set to stand in the election, how would the Chief Executive prepare for a smooth changeover? How will he prepare for the changeover? I hope the Chief Executive can share his views with us.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): First of all, no changeover work can commence until after the Chief Executive Election on 25 March. In the interim, however, I have started some advance work in respect of, for example, the manpower and organizational needs of the Chief Executive-elect, and the arrangements for forming a new governing team. We will also submit an application to the Finance Committee, in the hope of obtaining resources for setting up the office of the Chief Executive-elect. These are instances of our advance work on the changeover.

As for policy continuity, I must say that this SAR Government has already set down its policies clearly, and we will adhere to our policies without any changes. In case the next Chief Executive wants to optimize these policies, or

decides to call a halt to them and bring in a change in direction, he will have to wait until after 1 July this year. Nevertheless, when it comes to resources and manpower, I will do my best to ensure that he does not face any difficulties. I will definitely honor the promises I made to the public when standing in the Chief Executive Election in 2007. Matters that the present Government has promised to tackle, including the problem of "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" giving birth in Hong Kong, housing and travel subsidy for the elderly, will be tackled by us one by one. We will act in accordance with our own policies with the policy support and legal resources obtained from the Legislative Council.

DR LAM TAI-FAI (in Cantonese): *Chief Executive, changeover is much more than merely handing over documents and files, offices or the Government House. Changeover involves another party. There are currently three prospective Chief Executive candidates in society. Can one single changeover package cope with three scenarios of changeover? With three candidates, there are bound to be three different teams with different mindsets and different ideas on policy convergence. It is impossible for one single handover package to cope with three persons. So, my question is: how are you going to prepare for it?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): I am a bit confused. There will only be one Chief Executive-elect. How can there be three?

DR LAM TAI-FAI (in Cantonese): *With three prospective candidates at present, three packages for handing over must of course be prepared. Otherwise, the situation will be very chaotic when the time comes.*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): There are three prospective candidates now, and chances are that there will be many candidates eventually. You do not need to bother about the remarks they made. The most important point is that no matter who comes out as the winner on 25 March, I will co-operate with him fully, liaise with him and inform him of our work in the current year. I will provide all the resources that he needs as far as possible. In addition, if he wants to launch new policies, we can also collect the necessary data for him, but no new

policies can be launched until after 1 July. On my part, I will endeavour to implement my own policies in the meantime.

In any case, the office of the Chief Executive-elect must not interfere with the effective administration of the present Government. This is one point that must be made very clear. Members of the public also expect me to do my utmost until the last minute of my term of office. I do not think that there is any need to worry about any conflicts like one candidate preferring this and the other preferring that, or one candidate suggesting building 40 000 units a year while the other two suggesting 50 000 and 65 000 respectively. By 25 March, I will know who the winner is and whom I should discuss with.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *President, let me first wish the Chief Executive very good health. Since you coughed all the time while you were speaking, I really wonder if you have had too many hotpot meals seasoned by an "outrageous assortment of sauces".*

One remark of yours just now is very unreasonable. This remark is also very "outrageous". I hope you can withdraw this remark. What is the remark about? You have really hurt the feelings of Mainland pregnant women married to Hong Kong residents. How "outrageous" is this remark? Your reasoning is marked by very great problems. You want "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" to come to Hong Kong for delivery, but then, you question Mainland pregnant women married to Hong Kong residents why they do not give birth back on the Mainland. This is very unreasonable, isn't it? Do you agree that you have hurt their feelings very deeply?

Mainland pregnant women married to Hong Kong residents all have one earnest request. The children born to these pregnant women are the offspring of Hong Kong residents. By asking them to give birth back on the Mainland, you are depriving them of family reunion, depriving the babies of their fathers' company after birth. Well, even though their fathers may still be able to stay with them, they can do so for very short periods only. Do you know that their fathers must work in Hong Kong and cannot return frequently to the Mainland? Are you aware of the significance of family reunion?

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please state your question.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *Therefore, the question I want to ask concerns whether the Chief Executive is prepared to withdraw the remark mentioned just now, that is, the remark that Mainland pregnant women married to Hong Kong residents may give birth back on the Mainland. Is it possible to allocate the entire quota of 3 400 places in public hospitals to Mainland pregnant women married to Hong Kong residents for delivery? In case this quota fails to cope, will the Chief Executive still try to provide them with delivery beds even if this means buying places from private hospitals? The reason is that such pregnant women are simply no match for "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women" if they are to compete with them for beds in private hospitals. For God's sake, please do not hurt their feelings any more. You are about to leave office after all.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEE, you have stated your question already. Please let the Chief Executive give his reply.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): First, this is not what I mean. What I mean is that if the mother is a Mainland resident, she will surely also consider the possibility of giving birth on the Mainland. This is only natural. I think if she really wants to give birth in Hong Kong, the HA will surely provide as much convenience and help as possible and find a place of delivery for her in Hong Kong, because the baby's father is a Hong Kong resident. I believe the Secretary also has such an intention. You can rest assured. Just now, I did not mean to ask them to give birth on the Mainland. My point is that if the mother lives on the Mainland, her family will be able to look after her over there, and I do not see any great problems with giving birth on the Mainland. But if they really choose giving birth in Hong Kong and the babies' fathers are Hong Kong residents, we will still provide them with as much convenience as possible.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *President, frankly speaking, the Chief Executive really does not know what is going on in this world. You remarked just now that if the mother lives on the Mainland, she may as well give birth over*

there. But the point is that her husband lives in Hong Kong. In that case, she should be allowed to give birth in Hong Kong, shouldn't she? Only this can bring forth family reunion.

Furthermore, you really do not know what is going on in this world. You say the HA will provide them with as much convenience as possible. But in fact, the HA does not do so. I once talked to Anthony WU about this. He said that it was impossible to do so, not so much because he was unwilling. He said that he sympathized with them, but the Government did not allow the classification of pregnant women from the Mainland into two categories. If public hospitals can divide present NEPs — non-eligible persons — into two categories, with one of them being Mainland pregnant women married to Hong Kong residents, and allow them to give birth in public hospitals Next to local pregnant women, they should have top priority. And, the other category should be "doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women", who should be rejected by public hospitals altogether. Do you know what I mean? The HA does not provide pregnant women married to Hong Kong residents with any convenience

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Please state your supplementary question.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *You may think that I am not quite so friendly. Let me then talk to you calmly. I hope you will not hurt their feelings any more. I hope you can really offer help to those Mainland pregnant women with Hong Kong husbands and also those babies of Hong Kong residents.*

I still want to raise one more point here. They are by no means wealthy, and many of them are only ordinary employees. Such families number some 6 000 in total. Can you refrain from breaking up their families?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): I think if the mother lives on the Mainland and the father also works on the Mainland, they will surely consider what the best way of looking after their baby should be. I agree with you that if they choose to give birth in Hong Kong, we may need to give special consideration to their cases. I will discuss further with the Secretary, okay? I

am very calm when looking at this issue, and you must be equally so when discussing it.

MISS TANYA CHAN (in Cantonese): *President*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): And, please also bear one more point in mind. Excuse me, Miss CHAN, please allow me to say several more words of explanation first.

Regarding those mothers who are non-permanent residents of Hong Kong, it is very difficult for us to distinguish them at present. How can we distinguish between such mothers and others? This must be handled with care lest the immigration policy may be affected. However, I think your idea is not without grounds. We will certainly give thoughts to it, okay?

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *President, I want to add a few words. Since he has added a comment, I also want to do so. I at first found his reply quite satisfactory. I mean I found his reply quite positive. But his added comment is not quite so satisfactory.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEE, this is not a debate. Please sit down.

MR LEE CHEUK-YAN (in Cantonese): *He says it is impossible to make any distinction. But the fact is that when the husband is a civil servant, the authorities are able to make the distinction. The Mainland wife of a civil servant only needs to pay \$100 for in-patient services in public hospitals.*

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr LEE, you have made your point very clear. Please sit down.

MISS TANYA CHAN (in Cantonese): *President. Chief Executive, I think you are aware of the Legislative Council's discussion on the declaration of Ho Tung Gardens as a proposed monument. We know the relevant declaration of proposed monument notice will expire on the 27th of this month, meaning that legal protection will end on 27 January.*

First, we wish to ascertain the progress of preserving Ho Tung Gardens. Today, we learn from a press interview that the Secretary for Development in her capacity as the Antiquities Authority has one goal — of course, as she pointed out in the interview, she may not stay in her present post in the next Government. May I ask whether you will, in the remainder of your term, establish a heritage conservation fund similar to the one mentioned by the Secretary for Development?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): I think any proposals that are justifiable will be considered under the Government's internal resource allocation procedures. We have always attached very great importance to heritage conservation, and resources are also being spent on such work. But when it comes to the exact contents and details of coverage, we must be very careful in our consideration.

MISS TANYA CHAN (in Cantonese): *President, speaking of a heritage conservation fund, I wonder whether it has ever occurred to the Chief Executive that while we have admittedly made efforts in respect of heritage conservation, such efforts are not yet broad and intensive enough. Actually, a heritage conservation fund should not only aim to cover what we regard as ordinary buildings. It may even involve cultural conservation. If the Chief Executive thinks that this is a correct direction, will he establish such a fund during the remainder of his term?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): I have said that if necessary, the idea can always be considered. The point here is that at present, in respect of cultural promotion, we are already expending resources on heritage protection. But all will become another matter if the situation develops to such a stage that the Government is asked to purchase everything in need of conservation. We do

attach importance to heritage conservation. But the effective utilization of resources is equally important. I believe a balance must be struck. I believe that if there is a concrete proposal, it will certainly be treated very seriously under our internal resource allocation procedures.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Will the Chief Executive please answer one more question?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Yes.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Last question.

MS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): *President. Chief Executive, the problem of population ageing currently faced by Hong Kong has led to an ever-increasing demand for public healthcare services. However, we can see that quite a number of public hospitals, such as Queen Mary Hospital and Kwong Wah Hospital, are already very old and out-dated, failing to cope with the demand of the times. Some criticize that these two hospitals are even worse than hospitals in Third World countries. In our Treasury, however, there is an abundance of money. We have recently heard that the surplus this year will be close to \$50 billion, and some even project that the amount will be as large as \$70 billion. The problem is thus not about money. If the problem is not about money, will the Chief Executive make the decision of immediately finalizing the redevelopment of Kwong Wah Hospital and Queen Mary Hospital during the remainder of his term?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): Decisions on resource allocation must be made by the Financial Secretary. However, I think we must also consider one problem. In the case of Queen Mary Hospital, some have raised the idea that certain main buildings must not be demolished under the project concerned, and this has come to affect the progress of formulating an overall project. This is the greatest problem. If the problem is not about money, it must be about the current availability of land.

The second problem concerns the capacity of Hong Kong's construction industry. This is also an important problem. My present Government has increased the annual expenditure on public works projects from some \$20 billion to some \$50 billion, or close to \$60 billion. Construction prices are likewise very great. And, there is also the problem of manpower capacity. These are the two greatest limitations.

Ms LAU, I agree entirely with you that while Hong Kong's healthcare services must be first-rate, its hospitals must likewise be so. However, when going about everything, we must not think only about the problem of money. There are other problems, such as conservation. The redevelopment of Queen Mary Hospital, for example, has been affected by the issue of conservation. Besides, in respect of construction works, we must also ask whether there will be sufficient manpower. This is also of decisive importance. But I do agree with you. The redevelopment of Queen Mary Hospital and Kwong Wah Hospital is a matter of very special concern to me. You and I share the same view on this. I hope that the Financial Secretary will give thoughts to this. Financial arrangements must of course be made, but the capacity of the construction industry mentioned just now must also be considered.

MS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): *President, the Chief Executive also admits that the problem is not about money. The problem is actually about determination. I hope the Chief Executive will not shift the responsibility to the Financial Secretary. Suppose the Chief Executive is really determined to redevelop these two public hospitals, will he at least launch some active discussions during the remaining months in his term, so that some headway can at least be made and a tentative plan drawn up for the next Government's follow-up?*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (in Cantonese): The Chief Executive is not omnipotent, and is himself unable to do so much. I cannot possibly make all the decisions, requiring each and every colleague to move forward and backward exactly as how I tell them to. Things are not like this. On each issue, discussions must be held and a consensus forged.

What is more, resource allocation is the responsibility of the Financial Secretary. And, he attaches very great importance to this responsibility. I believe he can hear your voices and mine. In case he does not earmark any funding for the redevelopment of these two public hospitals, let us hold further discussions, okay?

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Today's Question and Answer Session ends here.

Before the Chief Executive leaves the Chamber, may I wish him, the various government officials and all Members very good health and total invulnerability in the year of the Dragon. *(Laughter)*

The Chief Executive will now leave the Chamber.

NEXT MEETING

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now adjourn the Council until 11 am on Wednesday 1 February 2012.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-six minutes to Five o'clock.