

**Motion Debate on
“Imposing economic sanctions on the Philippines and
restoring Hong Kong people’s dignity”
held on 6 November 2013**

Progress Report

Introduction

At the meeting of the Legislation Council held on 6 November 2013, the motion on “Imposing economic sanctions on the Philippines and restoring Hong Kong people’s dignity” was passed with a view to urging the HKSAR Government to implement sanctions in order to urge the Philippine Government to positively respond to the four demands of the victims and their families. This paper sets out the latest progress of our follow-up work on the Manila hostage-taking incident.

Follow-up actions

2. The HKSAR Government is highly concerned that some Hong Kong residents lost their lives or were injured in the Manila hostage-taking incident. We also fully understand the anger and the grief of the bereaved families, the injured and the whole society over the incident. Since the incident three years ago, apart from providing necessary assistance to the injured and the families of the deceased, we have been liaising continuously with the Central People’s Government and the local Consulate General of the Philippines to urge the Philippine Government to seriously follow up and respond to the four demands of the injured and the families of the deceased, including apology, compensation, sanctions against officials responsible for the mishandling of the incident and devising and implementing effective measures to ensure the safety of tourists.

3. Since the Chief Executive requested the Philippine President for an official dialogue on the hostage-taking incident in October 2013, the Director of the Chief Executive’s Office and Cabinet Secretary of the

Philippines have been designated to carry out positive and pragmatic discussion on the four demands of the victims and their families, with a view to working towards a mutually satisfactory conclusion. With the efforts of both sides in the past few months, the Philippine side has made positive response to three of the demands. Substantive progress has also been made including turning over a token of solidarity to one of the victims. However, the Philippine side is still unable to meet the demand of the victims and the families for an apology. Despite many rounds of discussion, there remains a substantive difference between us on this important demand. The Chief Executive has made it clear that the victims and their families are not demanding an apology from the Philippine President for the act committed by an individual. They are seeking an apology from the Philippine Government for the failure and lapses of their officials in handling the rescue operation. During the incident, eight Hong Kong residents lost their lives and seven others sustained injuries. The victims and their families demand an apology that is consistent with the findings of an official investigation commissioned by the Philippine Government.

Sanctions

4. The four demands of the victims and their families are fully justified. The HKSAR Government will continue to seek a satisfactory response from the Philippine side. It was with this objective in mind that the HKSAR Government implemented the first phase of sanctions with effect from 5 February 2014, suspending the 14-day visa-free arrangement applicable to holders of diplomatic or official passports of the Republic of the Philippines. To visit Hong Kong, holders of these passports will have to apply for a visa beforehand in accordance with the normal procedures to the Immigration Department of Hong Kong or the Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Missions overseas.

Conclusion

5. The position of the HKSAR Government has been clear and consistent. The door to further discussions between the two sides remains open and the ball is in the Philippine's court. The HKSAR Government urges the Philippine Government to demonstrate sincerity

and resolve in bringing the discussion to a satisfactory conclusion, so that we would not have to contemplate further sanctions. Only then can the bilateral relations between Hong Kong and the Philippines resume normal.

Security Bureau
March 2014