

香港特別行政區政府
保安局



The Government of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Security Bureau

香港添馬添美道 2 號

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13 November 2014

Honourable Prof Joseph LEE Kok-long
Chairman
Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

By Fax No.: 2185 7845

Dear Chairman,

Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) System

Further to the letter from the former Chairman of 27 August 2014 to the Secretary for Security and our interim replies of 29 August 2014 and 14 October 2014, I write to provide further information on the OTA System.

The OTA System set up by the Government aims to facilitate Hong Kong residents to better understand possible risks to their personal safety in travelling to 85 countries that are the more popular travel destinations for Hong Kong residents, so that they may make their travel plans and arrangements accordingly. When there are signs of threat in a place that may affect the personal safety of residents, the Security Bureau will assess and consider the need to issue an OTA taking into account factors such as the nature (e.g. whether it is targeted at travellers), level and duration of the threat. When assessing the need to issue an OTA, we will understand the local situation through various channels, including Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR, Chinese Diplomatic

and Consular Missions, tourism industry, foreign embassies and consulates in HKSAR as well as HKSAR Government offices overseas, etc. We will also make reference to the travel information and alerts issued by other jurisdictions.

Members suggested that "health conditions of a country should be included as a factor for consideration in assessing the travel risk and the need to issue an OTA". Security threat and health risk involve different considerations, guided by necessary expertise and professional judgment. Insofar as health risk is concerned, the Department of Health has all along maintained vigilance and issued timely advice to the public, if the circumstances so warrant. Taking the case of Ebola virus disease as an example, the Department of Health has advised Hong Kong residents to avoid unnecessary travel to the four affected countries and area, namely Equateur province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. This travel advice has been widely promulgated for public's attention and uploaded to the front page of the Centre for Health Protection and Department of Health's Travel Health Service websites, as well as the Outbound Travel Alert website of the Security Bureau.

Yours sincerely,



(Amy Wong)
for Secretary for Security

cc: Secretary for Food and Health (Attn: Ms Fiona Chau)