

**The Government's Response to
A Motion Proposed to be Moved by Hon CHAN Hak-kan under the
Agenda Item of "Update on the Government's Overall Efforts and
Relevant Measures to Combat COVID-19" at the Special Meeting of the
House Committee of the Legislative Council on 28 August 2020**

We are grateful to the Honourable Member for moving the motion in support of the SAR Government in launching the Universal Community Testing Programme (UCTP).

2. Virus testing can effectively cut the transmission of the virus. In order to identify as early as possible asymptomatic patients of COVID-19 in the community for achieving the objective of "early identification, early isolation and early treatment", the SAR Government launched the 14-day UCTP on 1 September 2020 to provide free testing service to members of the public.

3. The UCTP was implemented in three phases starting from 1 September. The first phase ran from 1 to 7 September with a total of 141 Community Testing Centres (CTCs) in operation. After reviewing the data and experience from the operation as well as the public's demand for the testing services, the Government arranged 122 CTCs to continue to provide testing services for the public from 8 to 11 September. After that, again in commensurate with the public's demand for the services, we continued to arrange 57 CTCs to provide testing services for the public until 14 September.

4. The entire UCTP had a total number of 1 783 000 people who had their specimens taken and the total number of people who successfully registered online for the programme reached 1 376 000. Among the 32 new confirmed cases identified under the UCTP, 13 were asymptomatic and 20 were local cases with unknown source of infection. This reflects that the UCTP has helped identify asymptomatic patients and sever transmission chains in the community. Among the 91 close contacts of the confirmed cases identified under the UCTP, eight turned out to be confirmed cases. This shows that the UCTP has facilitated early isolation of confirmed cases and quarantine of their close contacts. Together with the five cases identified concurrently through

the UCTP and the tracing of close contacts, a total of 45 confirmed cases were identified with their transmission chains severed through the UCTP directly or indirectly as at end September. Without the UCTP, these patients would have continued to carry out various activities in the community, which might lead to further outbreaks and more confirmed cases clusters in the community.

5. The UCTP, carried out smoothly throughout its implementation period, was fully in line with the principle of providing voluntary virus testing for anyone who would like to receive the test. It has facilitated the anti-epidemic work in the future and achieved the policy goal of isolating and treating asymptomatic patients and cutting transmission chains in the community.

Civil Service Bureau
Food and Health Bureau
November 2020