

# **Fight the Virus Together with Confidence**

21.8.2020

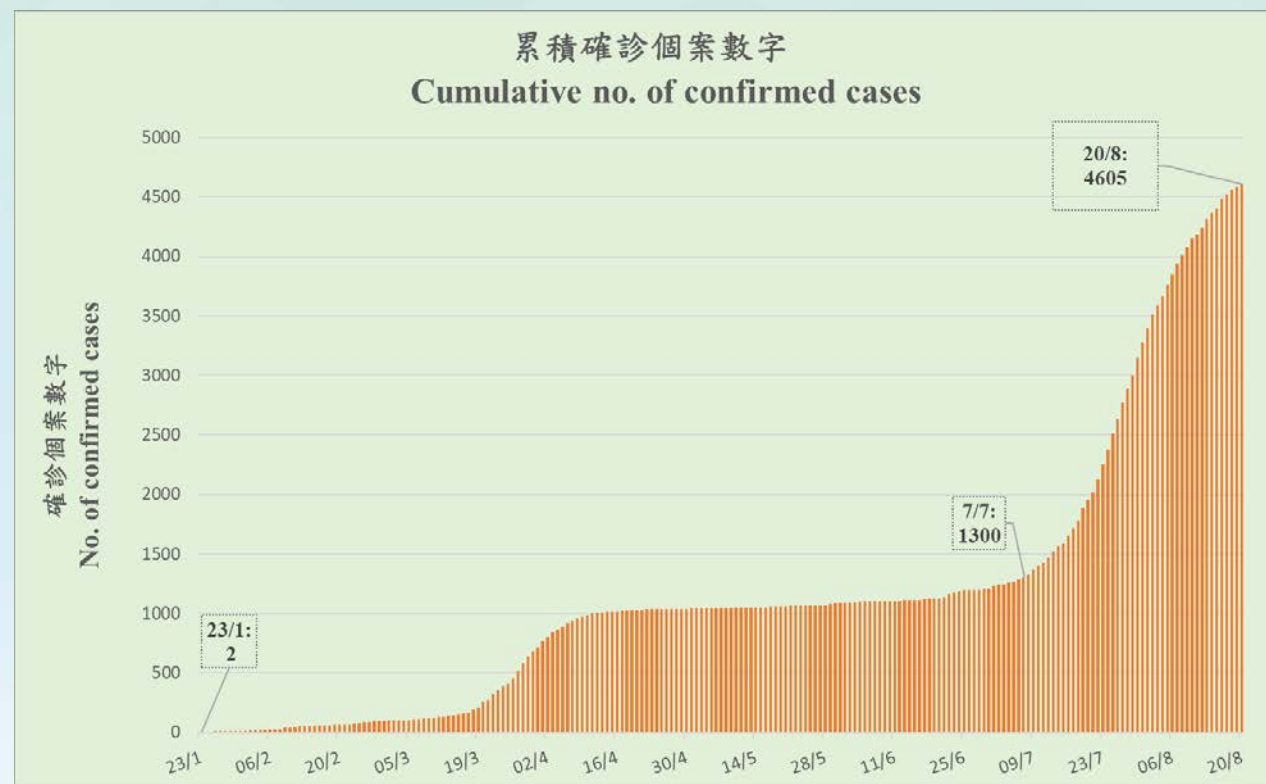
(Translated version)



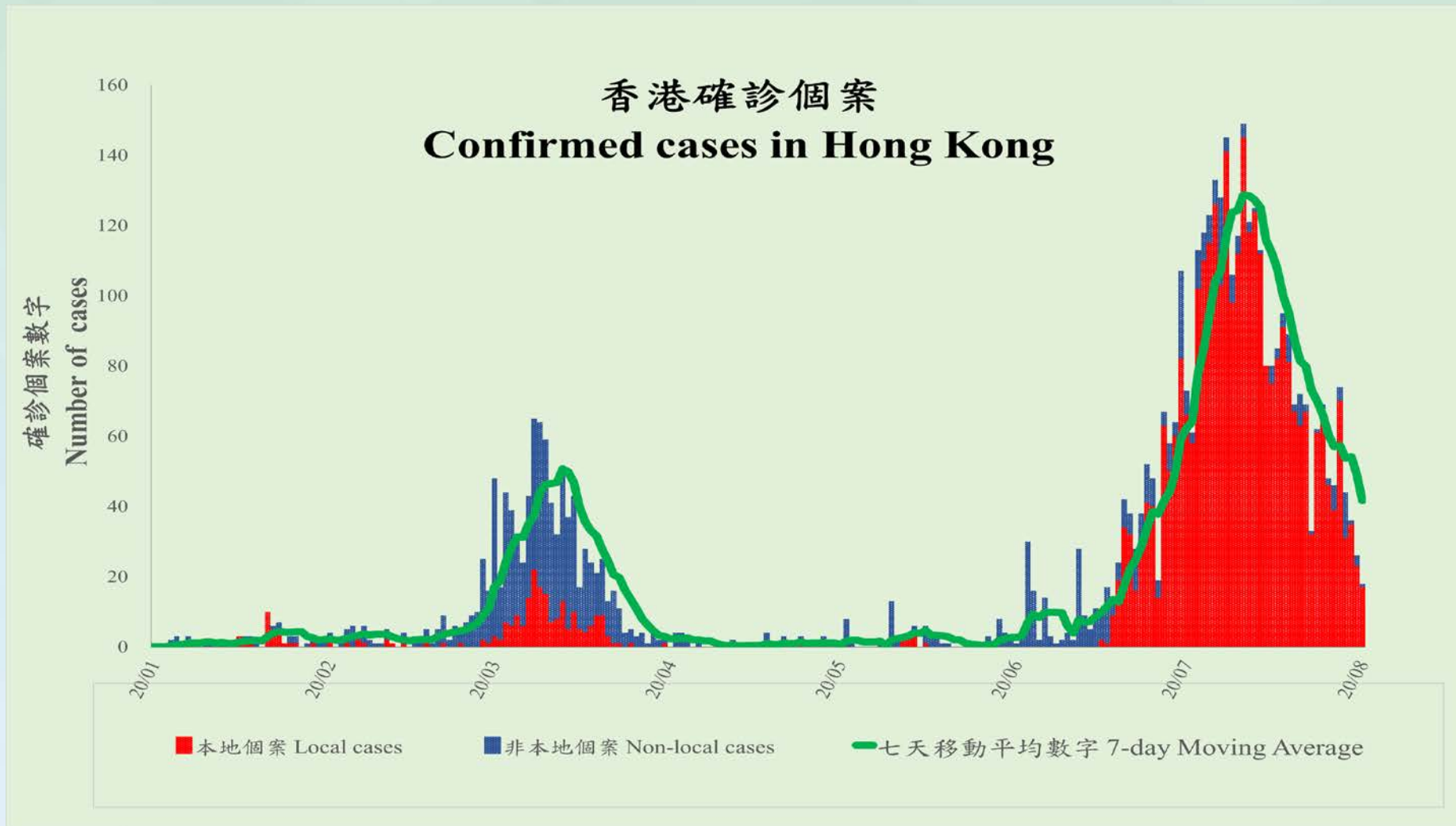
Hong Kong SAR Government

## Epidemic development

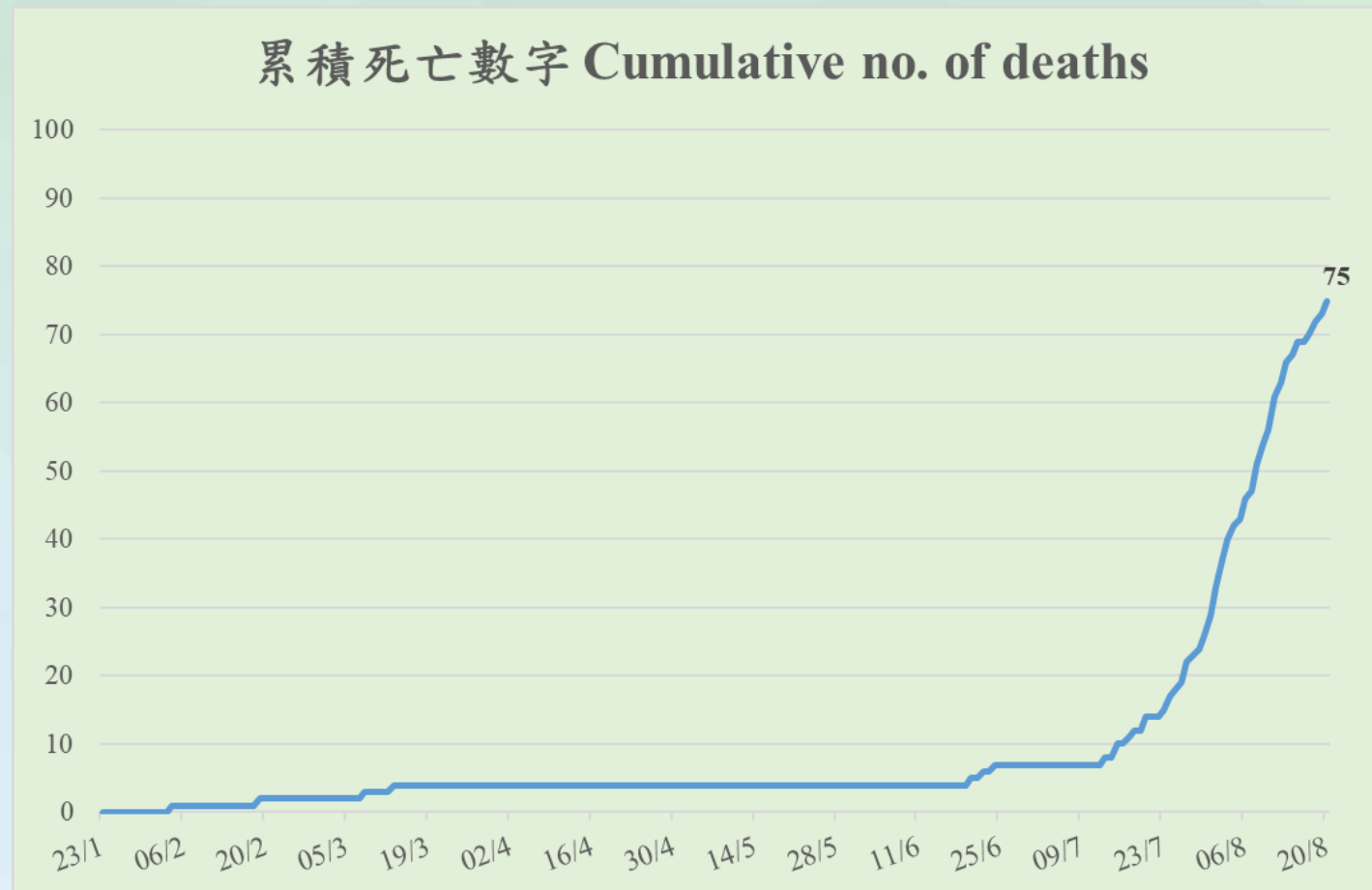
The number of confirmed cases reported globally has exceeded 22 million and the death toll is close to 0.8 million. The epidemic in some countries and regions continues to deteriorate, while the situation rebounds in some countries and regions which successfully contained the virus earlier, necessitating the implementation of strict social distancing measures again. Similar circumstances have also emerged in Hong Kong.



# Epidemic development (cont'd)



## Epidemic development (cont'd)



- The age of fatal cases ranges from 39 to 95 years, with 82 as the average



# Anti-epidemic strategy

- The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has never dropped our guard: Since the response level under the “Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance” was raised to the Emergency Response Level on January 25, the Chief Executive has presided over 21 meetings of the inter-departmental Steering Committee cum Command Centre and 16 meetings with the expert advisory group. The Executive Council has made seven regulations (Cap 599C to Cap 599I) under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance and over 330 press conferences and media sessions have been held. We have followed the three key principles of responding promptly, staying alert to the situation and working in an open and transparent manner
- Strategy adopted by the HKSAR Government: Reduce the cross-boundary people flows to prevent importing the disease and maintain social distancing to prevent the virus from spreading in the community (including mask-wearing and various measures to safeguard personal and environmental hygiene), as well as adopting the “Suppress and Lift” strategy in accordance with the epidemic development
- In the face of a new wave of infections, we have taken the most stringent anti-epidemic measures



- Remarkable results in reducing cross-boundary people flows

	Number of inbound passengers through sea, land and air control points	Number of outbound passengers through sea, land and air control points
January 2020 (Daily average)	325 000	324 000
August 2020 (Daily average up to 20 Aug)	1 213	2 649

- Proportion of confirmed cases among persons under compulsory quarantine

	Number of persons put under quarantine until now	Number of confirmed cases
Inbound travellers from the Mainland, Macao and Taiwan (Put under quarantine in accordance with Cap 599C)	215 601	0
Inbound travellers from overseas (Put under quarantine in accordance with Cap 599E)	143 906	799

- The countries that patients of imported cases have visited, in descending order in terms of number of cases, are (1) the United Kingdom (2) Pakistan (3) India (4) the Philippines (5) the United States





- Certain persons entering Hong Kong are exempted from compulsory quarantine to maintain the supply of essential goods and services to meet the daily needs of Hong Kong people; or he/she is essential for Government operation; or to provide education; or is in the interest of Hong Kong's economic development
- Inbound travellers from the Mainland, Macao and Taiwan are mostly cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers, while other categories take up 6% only
- Inbound travellers from overseas are mostly air crew and sea crew members, while other categories take up 2% only



- The most stringent social distancing measures

- Prohibit group gatherings of more than two persons in public places
- Prohibit dine-in services in catering business premises in the evening. Restaurants must adopt prevention and control measures, including allowing no more than two persons at each table, maintaining a certain distance between tables, restricting the number of customers and wearing of masks
- Close 14 types of scheduled premises, bars or pubs and club-houses
- A person must wear a mask at all times in public places and in public transport
- Suspend all face-to-face classes and on-campus activities
- Civil servants work from home to minimise people flow, providing only emergency government services and essential public services
- Close cultural and leisure facilities and suspend related activities
- Suspend visit arrangements such as those in public hospitals and elderly homes





- Over the past eight months, the **Government** has been reviewing its work and making improvements, noting there is still room to do better
- Over the past eight months, **members of the public** have been fighting the virus together and enduring inconveniences in daily lives in order to get through the epidemic early
- Over the past eight months, **businesses** have been dealt an unprecedented blow with significant lower earnings. Businesses are pessimistic about the future
- Please be patient. In the coming week, we will:
  - Closely observe whether the emerging downward trend in terms of case numbers will continue
  - Complete the virus tests and follow-up work for the two major clusters involving the container terminal and foreign domestic helper dormitories
  - Review the test results of expanded targeted groups
  - Discuss with the catering industry and various premises which have been closed regarding arrangements for resumption of businesses in an orderly manner, including the resumption of dine-in services in the evening and reopening, on a limited basis, cinemas, beauty parlours, some sports venues, etc.
  - Oversee the smooth launch of the large-scale Universal Community Testing Programme (UCTP) to provide voluntary virus tests for all citizens



# Enhance testing to cut the transmission chain

Significant increase in virus testing volume and testing capability



Hong Kong SAR Government

- Test results help with early identification, early isolation and early treatment of infected people

Targeted group testing	Specimens tested	Tested positive	Tested positive percentage
Hospital Authority general outpatient clinics	23 666	56	0.24%
High-risk groups	354 338	71	0.02%
➤ Residential care homes for the elderly, residential care homes for persons with disabilities and nursing homes (round 1)	32 621	1	0.003%
➤ Drivers of public transport such as taxis, mini-buses, buses and ferries	19 599	12	0.06%
➤ Staff of catering businesses, market stall operators and staff	129 315	28	0.02%



- Virus testing under three-pronged approach:

1. Epidemiological tests (regular): Conducted by the Hospital Authority and the Department of Health, together with laboratories in universities and with assistance from outsourced private laboratories on a need basis, targeting patients with symptoms and those at a higher risk as well as close contacts. Average daily testing volume in August is about 10 000 to 12 000
2. Targeted groups (regularly conducted on a need basis): Conducted by relevant departments, targeting people with no symptoms who work in higher-risk sectors and environment or people who have high exposure, covering staff members of public and private organisations (newly added categories include frontline civil servants, hotel staff, carers of the elderly, frontline dock workers, lift repair workers, foreign domestic workers who change jobs in Hong Kong – in total over 400 000 people). Private laboratories can conduct tens of thousands of these tests per day
3. UCTP (one-off): The Central Government will help the HKSAR with the laboratory test services, while the HKSAR Government will handle the collection and delivery of specimens as well as reservations by and contact with members of the public, with the aim of doing tests for all the people on a voluntary basis





- Testing capacity of local private laboratories at present:
  - More than 30 laboratories have been approved by the Centre of Health Protection (CHP) to conduct tests for COVID-19. Total testing volume, as reported by the laboratories, is over 100 000 per day
  - It is believed that sufficient market supply will help lower test fees, enabling people to meet the requirement to show negative test results for travelling in the future



# Support of the Central Government

- With the staunch support of the Central People's Government for the anti-epidemic work of the HKSAR, the co-ordination by the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council as well as the assistance and sharing of professional advice by the National Health Commission of the PRC, three major projects are committed:
  1. One-off UCTP will start on September 1. Aim to complete in two weeks
  2. A community treatment facility (mobile cabin hospital) will be set up at Halls 8 to 11 at the AsiaWorld-Expo (AWE) with 1 000 beds, some to be fitted with the negative pressure systems. Aim to complete in several weeks
  3. A temporary hospital will be built on a 3.2 hectare piece of land near the AWE. In the initial design, it is a two-storey structure and will provide negative pressure wards with over 800 beds and relevant medical equipment. The specifications are similar to standard hospitals. Aim to complete in four months





# Support of the Central Government (Con't)

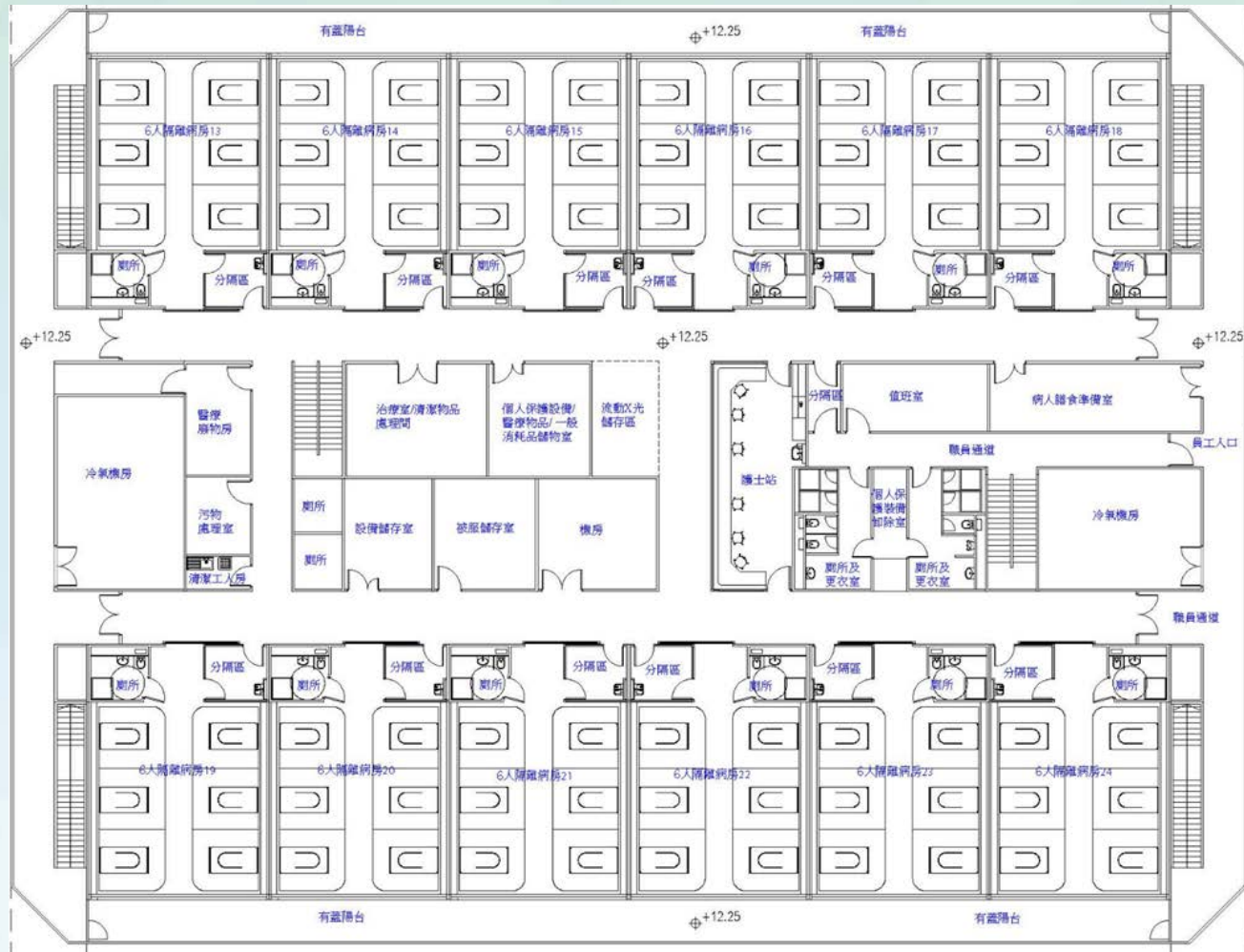
- The location of the temporary hospital is near the AWE



Hong Kong

# Support of the Central Government (Con't)

- A two-storey structure including ward buildings and a composite building
- Provides negative pressure wards with over 800 beds and related medical equipment





## Support of the Central Government (Con't)

- All of the aforementioned work is conducted in accordance with the laws and regulations of Hong Kong
- Relevant central authorities and support teams in continual communication with relevant departments of the HKSAR Government to work out the details
- The HKSAR Government expresses heartfelt gratitude to the Central Government for its care and support



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# Win the battle against the epidemic with confidence

- Until an effective vaccine is developed and widely applied, the epidemic situation will continue to fluctuate. Hong Kong is better prepared even if there is another epidemic wave or a winter surge:
  - Testing capability of the public and private sectors significantly enhanced
  - Contact tracing capability of the CHP enhanced
    - ✓ Cap 599D amended to authorise more public officers to investigate sources of infections
    - ✓ An exposure notification app to be developed to let users know if they have visited places that have been visited by confirmed patients, with full protection of privacy
  - AWE to be converted into multi-purpose facilities: a community treatment facility (1 700 beds) and dedicated quarantine facility for residential homes for the elderly /people with disabilities (640 beds)





# Win the battle against the epidemic with confidence (Cont'd)

- Purpose-built quarantine centre: 3 500 units in Penny's Bay





## Win the battle against the epidemic with confidence (Cont'd)

- 800 negative pressure beds to be available in the temporary hospital (there are currently 1 250 first-tier negative pressure beds and 500 second-tier negative pressure beds under the Hospital Authority)
- Local capability to develop and produce face masks and other personal protective equipment enhanced. It is estimated that more than 45 million face masks can be produced each month by the production lines subsidised by the Government and the production lines of the Correctional Services Department
- Technology extensively applied, such as anti-bacteria coating, thermometers, robots for disinfection, electronic wristbands, 3D-printed protective gear and real-time epidemic dashboards
- Enterprises subsidised through the Distance Business Programme to open online shops, install electronic payment channels, adopt logistical services that work with smart self-service systems, etc. so that they can continue operation even with social distancing measures in place. The programme has approved about 13 000 cases involving \$540 million, 95% of which are small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
- Procurement of vaccines for the public





# Overcome the epidemic Rebuild the economy

- Leverage the “health code” system to resume normal contacts between people in Hong Kong and in the Mainland, meeting gradually the aspirations for family visits, businesses, education and travel
- Explore the set-up of "travel bubbles" to resume gradually contacts with other countries and regions
- Continue to support the Hong Kong Trade Development Council to utilise online platforms to help explore business opportunities for SMEs
- Make good use of the \$1.02 billion Convention and Exhibition Industry Subsidy Scheme to revitalise the convention and exhibition industry in Hong Kong
- Building on the good momentum of Initial Public Offerings and through enhancing mutual access to the financial markets with the Mainland, strengthen the status of Hong Kong as an international financial centre
- Launch Wealth Management Connect as soon as possible to promote cross-boundary flows and use of Renminbi (RMB) to further strengthen the status of Hong Kong as a global offshore RMB business hub



## Overcome the epidemic Rebuild the economy (Cont'd)

- Continue to subsidise enterprises through “technology vouchers” to boost productivity or upgrade and transform business processes
- Accelerate to take forward works worth more than \$175 billion approved by the Legislative Council in 2019-20 to inject impetus to the construction industry and increase employment opportunities
- Streamline approval procedures by various Government departments in areas including land administration and license approvals, as well as clarification of regulatory guidelines to create a favorable business environment
- Recruit as soon as possible for the 30 000 time-limited jobs created with \$6 billion subsidy of the Anti-epidemic Fund
- Continue to promote the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area to further open up the Mainland market for professionals and enterprises



## Riding out difficult times with concerted efforts

- Government to continue to implement the second tranche of the Employment Support Scheme and other support programmes
- Launch the third round of the Anti-epidemic Fund
- Landlords of shops to provide relief to tenants of hard-hit sectors
- Banks and large enterprises to support SMEs to tide over difficult times together
- Citizens to continue to strictly observe social distancing and personal hygiene and not let down their guard in the fight against the epidemic



# Thank You

