

SCED speaks on impact of "Occupy Central" on businesses

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, to the media on the impact of "Occupy Central" on businesses after meeting with representatives of the business sector today (October 3):

Reporter: Do you have any concrete figures to what extent on this is happening, because if we don't, people may think you are trying to exaggerate the impact of "Occupy Central". For example, one of the representatives said all visitors dare not go to Hong Kong, that's simply not true. So, is it the Government's strategy to exaggerate the negative impact of "Occupy Central"?

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: The purpose of today's meeting is actually for us to understand what is the latest impact on businesses. As you know, the event is happening very fast, and we in the Government are very concerned about the normal operation of businesses. This is precisely why we have this meeting today with various major chambers as well as SME organisations which employ a large number of people in Hong Kong. We will not exaggerate, these are coming from the business sector. I did not indicate any extent to which the businesses have suffered. That is precisely why we have this meeting today to hear from them. Now, overall I could hear that there are issues or concern about the reputation risk of Hong Kong. This reputation of Hong Kong has been established over decades. We work very hard to build it, and we should not be fast in terms of damaging it. And this is very crucial for us to conduct normal business. In fact in the regional competition, we should not undermine our strength.

Secondly, I hear concern about cost, especially with SME organisations, cost is really a paramount factor. I have impressed upon the different chambers that the interest of employees must be looked after, even though the situation may be difficult, but they should try their best to think from the perspective of employees. So today, no, we are not here to exaggerate any figure, we are here for facts finding, and for Government to come up with measure to meet their needs.

Third thing I could hear from the business sector is that, especially with externally-oriented economy like Hong Kong, trade is very important. If there are concerns about exhibitors not coming to Hong Kong, or business partners not coming here, we will have to do much more work in order to remediate the situation. I will be working closely with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council to come up with

measures to promote Hong Kong, to eliminate any doubt that our exhibitors may have about not coming to Hong Kong. We, together with the people of Hong Kong, must work very hard together to impress upon them that Hong Kong is safe, Hong Kong is stable, Hong Kong is ready for business. That is the message I want to bring across. Thank you.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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