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Remarks by SHYA and SLW at media session regarding follow-up work on No. 5 alarm fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po

The Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, and the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, met the media today (November 29) regarding the follow-up work on the No. 5 alarm fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po, after attending a radio programme. Following are their remarks at the media session:

Reporter: Miss Mak, you earlier mentioned that the Government is planning to roll out an e-platform for people who are willing to donate supplies to those in need to register on the platform. Could you tell us maybe how soon the public can expect the platform to be set up? Would the Government consider adding more services? Given that we can see a lot of volunteers at Tai Po, apart from offering supplies, some of them are offering like counselling services.

Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs: Definitely, the e-platform is going to be launched in these few days, the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry has talked to me that the platform can be rolled out in these few days. Before the rolling out of the platform, the public can reach us through our WhatsApp hotline, 9213 2388. If anybody wants to offer voluntary services or resources that can be offered to our residents, please do register through this WhatsApp platform. Moreover, the Information Services Department has already launched a website for this incident, the website address is [www.taipofire.gov.hk](http://www.taipofire.gov.hk). We have provided all the relevant information, including government hotlines and services available by the NGOs. The public can find the appropriate information through this website, thank you.

Reporter: Mr Sun, you earlier mentioned that a notice was issued last week on the fire prevention because there are reports saying that workers were seen smoking at the site. In your point of view, what can the Government do more to ensure that, contractors in similar cases really take action to avoid violating rules and regulations or even possibly leading to incidents like this? Also, we know that a number of domestic helpers were still missing in the incident and many of the Filipinos or Indonesians are still looking for them. Will the Government help them, and does the Government have any idea on how to assist these people?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: Thank you. Since July last year, the Labour Department (LD) has conducted six rounds of inspections to the Wang Fuk Court site. Over the 16 inspections, the LD has issued six improvement notices and also carried out three prosecutions, mainly concerning safety of workers. The major concern at that time was the safety of working at height. This is the major concern. During the inspections, the LD has also issued written warning to the contractors over the importance of fire safety. The last inspection was conducted on November 20. At that inspection, the LD also issued a written warning to the contractor, reminding it of the importance of fire safety. It is because one of the complaints received was about smoking of workers at the site. The LD have taken a precautionary measure of warning the contractors.

As for the foreign domestic helpers, the LD is also working together with the two Consulates in Hong Kong. That

includes a visit on-site to Tai Po so that they could look for, and also help the foreign domestic helpers on site. We are receiving more information from the two Consulates, including confirmed death of at least two Indonesian foreign domestic helpers and also a number of them are still missing. I have to thank the foreign domestic helpers at Wang Fuk Court. We understand many of them took care of elderly people and children at the Court. We know, many of them stayed inside together with their employers, taking care of them even at the height of the fire. You can be rest assured, we will provide all the necessary assistance to all the foreign domestic workers and make sure their stay in Hong Kong is safe, and to cater to their needs.

Reporter: How would the condolence money be distributed to domestic helpers?

Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs: The Government will offer \$200,000 condolence donation to those families with deceased. Social workers from the Social Welfare Department will contact these families and facilitate the distribution of the money.

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

Ends/Saturday, November 29, 2025

Issued at HKT 13:40

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