

SCED speaks on scope of work of Commerce and Economic Development Bureau

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, to the media on the scope of work of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau after the establishment of the Innovation and Technology Bureau, at the Central Government Offices today (November 10):

Reporter: (On the work of the Innovation and Technology Bureau.)

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: As you know, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau has a very broad spectrum of policies. And therefore with the establishment of the new Innovation and Technology Bureau, that would allow the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau more focus in terms of economic development. And what I hope to achieve earlier is to introduce to you some of the tasks I would be focusing on mainly to really help to develop Hong Kong and create more opportunities for our businessmen to engage in business. Hong Kong is a very open and free economy. We are greatly honoured to be the super-connector of businesses coming through Hong Kong. And so we will strive to open up more doors for our businessmen for trade and investment and to continue our strength. As to the goal of the Innovation and Technology Bureau, I think it would be proper and appropriate for me to leave it for the new Secretary to introduce his work plan. But suffice to say that with more focus in terms of technology in the bureau, he would have a free hand to lead Hong Kong and to develop innovation and technology for the benefit of the economy.

Reporter: (On the scope of work of the Innovation and Technology Bureau and the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau.)

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: Currently, before the establishment of the new bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau has under it nine departments, and two of which will come under the new Innovation and Technology Bureau, namely the Innovation and Technology Commission as well as the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. And so these two departments will be under the purview of the Innovation and Technology Bureau. And remaining in my bureau there will be seven departments and 11 economic and trade offices overseas. As to the work plan of the new Innovation and Technology Bureau, I think it would be appropriate for me to defer to the new Secretary to introduce his work plan.

Reporter: (On overlapping of work of the Innovation and Technology Bureau and the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau.)

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: Invariably, I encourage overlap and I encourage cross-sectoral kind of development say in start-ups. There are innovations in terms of technology innovation as well as design innovation. So there will be overlap in terms of say even start-ups. In the past, the Government inter-bureau co-operation is seamless. So I have no concern about that.

Reporter: (On the appointment of the new Secretary for the Innovation and Technology Bureau.)

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: I would not comment on the appointment. As I said, the appointment will be announced in due course and the Central Government will be making the announcement. As to whether there is buy-in to the establishment of the Innovation and Technology Bureau, I think we have deputation in the LegCo, and if you read in newspapers and the comments from the ICT sector, there is overwhelming support for the establishment of the Innovation and Technology Bureau. And actually I am quite encouraged that on this aspect, I think we are of one mind. We need to move on to the development of innovation technology in terms of the economy. It is absolutely crucial.

Reporter: The Government is lacking a concrete plan?

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: I had a conversation with the people from MIT yesterday. They were quite surprised that there are some criticisms about this view. In the eyes of the people who visited Hong Kong, we have possessed excellent conditions here in the environment to develop innovation and technology. I think I have nothing but very positive comment about our environment and potential to move on so much so to set up an innovation node here. I think people would accept.

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

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