

Transcript of media session by Secretary for Justice

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, at a media session on her property today (January 10):

Reporter: On the first day of you taking the office, you already have this controversy broken. How do you expect the public...? In regard of illegal structures, so many public figures have already been involved in similar crises or controversies before. How did you not realise that this was a problem? How do you expect the public can trust you with your position?

Secretary for Justice: As I have said, when I bought the property in 2008, it was in the condition as it was. It was all renovated so we bought the place. At that point in time, I was involved in a number of projects as well as a number of community services. If you may remember, that was a time, I think, when it was the Minimum Wage Commission, the Transport Advisory Committee and so on. So I was very busy. And that, of course, is not and cannot be an excuse. It was an oversight, as I said, I could have done better. I could have spent more time and perhaps had thought about whatever has happened to engage an Authorized Person to go and inspect the property before I

take possession of it. So that is something that I have to say that I could improve my performance. I think this particular incident has given me a lot to learn and actually allowed me to strengthen myself in performing my duty as the Secretary for Justice in the future.

Reporter: You were on the committee handling appeal cases on buildings may be involving illegal structures. Are you saying that you still didn't know that there are illegal structures in your home?

The Secretary for Justice: The Buildings Appeal Tribunal (Appeal Tribunal Panel (Buildings)), I believe, I was appointed round about the year 2000, I believe. I can't remember the exact time. In so far as that is concerned, of course, one doesn't look at the thing and know whether that is illegal. That is why we have a system called Authorized Persons and of course, the building surveyors and so on, who will be able to verify whether or not there are illegal structures or authorised works by looking at the drawings. And this is exactly what I have engaged the Authorized Person to do as soon as I get the letter from the Buildings Department last Friday. Yesterday, the Buildings Department and my Authorized Person have already, by reference to the drawing, identified those unauthorised building works. Today, the rectification proposals have

been sent to the Buildings Department. As soon as that is approved, works can commence to put and rectify the unauthorised building works to what is in the approved plan.

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

Ends/Wednesday, January 10, 2018