

Transcript of SJ's media session after anti-drug seminar

Following is the transcript of remarks (English portion) by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Wong Yan Lung, SC, at a meet-the-media session after attending a seminar for primary and secondary school principals to share experience and discuss challenges in anti-drug education today (July 4):

Reporter: Can you talk about the Conference today?

Secretary for Justice: Today we are very happy to have many school principals and people involved in the education front to join us to discuss this very important issue about drug addiction among young people. Among the speakers are the Commissioner of Police, informing the audience of what the Police have been doing, not just on the law enforcement front, but in terms of liaison with the schools to enhance cooperation in combating the drug addiction problem among young people. We also have the Permanent Secretary from the Education Bureau informing the principals about our plans to enhance the education programme. In that connection, it's not just providing them with information about drugs, but also encouraging them to introduce a healthy campus curriculum, canvassing not just the information side of things, but also helping people to develop life skills and strengthen their ability to say "No" to temptation of all kinds. We believe that it would be very important for the long term success of our campaign. We also have experts sharing with the audience about questions like why young people are indulging in drugs and also medical experts telling us the symptoms in psychotropic and physical terms. We have principals sharing with us how they have in the past considered implementing the policy into their programme and how schools can help. What initiatives can be taken to pitch in with the present campaign. We have very good response from the principals, very enthusiastic questions. I am sure that we would all join our hands together to put in our effect to make it work.

Reporter: Can you talk about the drug test? When is that going to happen? How would you ensure the confidentiality of the test results?

SJ: If you are talking about drug test in school, this is indeed a subject that we have been considering. We understand that the situation in Hong Kong, particularly among local schools, might not be readily comparable with that in international schools or elsewhere in other jurisdictions. So it cannot be a case of our merely copying what's being done elsewhere in Hong Kong. This is a matter that we have to study quite carefully, including what you said about the question of privacy and the question about consent. We have to consider the effectiveness in the circumstances of Hong Kong, and we also have to think about the resources we have to put in, because once you, by way of earlier intervention, discover that probably more people are struggling with the problem, do you have enough resources in the school, by way of social workers and other resources available to help them? All these would have to be considered in one go. We are still very actively considering these things. As I said, we will tell you more when we report in detail in due course.

Ends/Friday, July 4, 2008