

Replies to questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Draft Estimates
of Expenditure 2001-02

Bureau Secretary/Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Session No. : 2

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Bureau Serial No.

BJO 001

Question Serial No.

0235

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead(No. & title) :
Beijing Office
Programme: (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

How much will the Beijing Office pay for rent for the year 2001-02?

Asked by : Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming

Reply :

Rental for the premises of the Beijing Office for the year 2001-02 is HK\$3,470,000.

Signature Signed on Chinese version

Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 15.3.2001

Bureau Serial No.

BJO 002

Question Serial No.

0236

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Beijing Office
Programme : (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

In 2000, what specific issues on which the Beijing Office took necessary action with the Mainland authorities? What programmes or functions did the Beijing Office organise to enable the Mainland authorities to better understand how the policies of 'One Country, Two Systems' and 'Hong Kong people running Hong Kong' with 'a high degree of autonomy' are put into practice?

Asked by : Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming

Reply :

In 2000, the Beijing Office discussed many specific issues with the concerned Mainland authorities which cannot be listed out in detail here. However, the major topics discussed included the Mainland's latest legislation, regulations, policies and measures, China's accession to the WTO and market-opening process, preparation for the HKSAR Delegation to the Western Region of the Mainland, development plans of the Mainland and Hong Kong, transportation issues, development of Mainland's information industry, Mainland tourists to Hong Kong, etc.

Through regular liaison work, the Beijing Office briefs the Mainland authorities on the successful implementation of the policies of 'One Country, Two Systems' and 'Hong Kong people running Hong Kong' with 'a high degree of autonomy' in the HKSAR. In 2000, the Beijing Office also held major promotional programmes in Tianjin, Hebei and Shaanxi. Through various activities such as exhibitions and seminars, we publicised to the Mainland residents the successful implementation of the policy of 'One Country, Two Systems' and the Basic Law after reunification, as well as Hong Kong's latest developments in various aspects.

Signature Signed on Chinese version

Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 16.3.2001

Bureau Serial No.

BJO 003

Question Serial No.

0237

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :

Beijing Office

Programme : (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

Regarding China's accession into the World Trade Organisation (WTO), has the Beijing Office set aside any provision in 2001-02 for any programmes to help the Hong Kong business sector identify business opportunities? If yes, please provide details. Will the Beijing Office consider setting up a web site to disseminate the trade and business information they have collected?

Asked by : Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming

Reply :

One major responsibility of the Beijing Office is to enhance trade and economic interface and cooperation between Hong Kong and the Mainland. In this connection, we keep a close watch on the progress of market opening and the promulgation of related Mainland regulations and policies upon China's accession into the World Trade Organisation (WTO). We transmit such information to the relevant HKSARG bureaux and departments once they are available for onward dissemination to the Hong Kong business sector through their established channels. This is to enable the trade to better understand the market development in the Mainland for early planning and identification of business opportunities. On the other hand, the Beijing Office also conveys information on investment opportunities in the provinces and cities gathered through regular liaison with the local authorities to the relevant HKSARG bureaux and departments. Moreover, the Beijing Office organises promotional functions in different provinces and cities from time to time. Apart from promoting Hong Kong's role as a bridge linking up the Mainland and the world in trade and business, we also aim to provide opportunities for the Hong Kong business sector and the Mainland governments and enterprises to contact each other and identify business opportunities through activities such as trade seminars. This is one major aspect of our regular liaison work. The expenditure is reflected in the Recurrent Account in the Draft Estimates 2001-02.

Information on trade and business collected by the Beijing Office is forwarded to the relevant HKSARG bureaux and departments for dissemination through their established channels. The Trade and Industry Department and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council have already set up their own web sites for such purpose. For optimisation of resources, there is no need at present for the Beijing Office to set up a web site for this purpose.

Signature Signed on Chinese version

Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 15.3.2001

Bureau Serial No.

BJO 004

Question Serial No.

0238

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Beijing Office
Programme : (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

In 2000, the Beijing Office handled over 390 enquiries and requests for assistance. Please provide breakdown by category. Which Mainland authorities were these cases referred to? Has the Beijing Office tried to understand which categories of Hong Kong residents are denied the issue of Home Visit Permits and entry to the Mainland? Please provide related figures.

Asked by : Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming

Reply :

In 2000, the Beijing Office handled 212 requests for assistance and 180 public enquiries. The breakdown of requests for assistance is as follows: commercial disputes in the Mainland (39), complaints about real estate deals in the Mainland (45), complaints against the Mainland administrative, law enforcement and judicial authorities (77), and others (51). The breakdown for public enquiries is: business and trade matters (71), information about the HKSAR Government and Hong Kong organisations (56), and others (53).

The Beijing Office referred the cases to appropriate Mainland authorities for necessary action according to the contents and nature of the cases. These Mainland authorities include various Central People's Government authorities, local governments and judicial authorities at different levels.

Issuance of Home Visit Permits and entry to the Mainland are Mainland immigration policy matters. Under the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems', the Beijing Office does not have such information related to these cases.

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Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 15.3.2001

Bureau Serial No.

BJO 005

Question Serial No.

0663

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Beijing Office
Programme : (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

- (a) How many public enquiries and requests for assistance did the Beijing Office handle in 1999 and 2000 respectively?
(b) Please categorise the requests for assistance.
(c) Will the Administration increase manpower or set up a dedicated department to handle requests for assistance?

Asked by : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan

Reply :

- (a) Between March and December 1999, the Beijing Office handled 124 requests for assistance and 110 public enquiries. In 2000, the Office handled 212 requests for assistance and 180 public enquiries.
(b) The breakdown of the 124 requests for assistance processed in 1999 is as follows:
commercial disputes in the Mainland (29)
complaints about real estate deals in the Mainland (24)
complaints against Mainland administrative, law enforcement and judicial authorities (33)
others (38)
The breakdown of the 212 requests for assistance processed in 2000 is as follows:
commercial disputes in the Mainland (39)
complaints about real estate deals in the Mainland (45)
complaints against Mainland administrative, law enforcement and judicial authorities (77)
others (51)
(c) Handling enquiries and requests for assistance is taken as part of the daily liaison work of the Beijing Office. At present, the Beijing Office has no plan to increase manpower or set up a dedicated section to cope with this task.

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Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 16.3.2001

Bureau Serial No.

BJO 006

Question Serial No.

0773

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Beijing Office
Programme : (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

Regarding consultancy studies for policy making and assessment commissioned by the departments/services under your Bureau,

(1) Was there any financial provision allocated for commissioning consultancy studies in 2000-01?

If yes, please reply with the following details:

| Names of consultants (if available) | Consultancy fees | Status of consultancy studies (in plan / in progress / finished) |
|--|------------------|---|
| | | |

(2) Will there be any financial provision allocated for commissioning consultancy studies in 2001-02? If yes, please reply with the following details:

| Names of consultants (if available) | Consultancy fees | Status of consultancy studies (in plan / in progress / finished) |
|--|------------------|---|
| | | |

Asked by : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan

Reply :

(1)

| Names of consultants (if available) | Consultancy fees | Status of consultancy studies (in plan / in progress / finished) |
|--|------------------|---|
| -- | nil | -- |

(2)

| Names of consultants (if available) | Consultancy fees | Status of consultancy studies (in plan / in progress / finished) |
|--|------------------|---|
| -- | nil | -- |
| | | |

Signature

Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 15.3.2001

Bureau Serial No.

BJO 007

Question Serial No.

0925

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Beijing Office
Programme : (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

Regarding Programme 1, please provide information on the nature, working approach, progress or results, as well as expenditure in relation to the 390 public enquiries and requests for assistance handled by the Beijing Office in the past year.

Asked by : Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong

Reply :

In 2000, the Beijing Office received 212 requests for assistance and 180 public enquiries. The requests for assistance concerned commercial disputes in the Mainland (39), complaints about real estate deals in the Mainland (45), complaints against Mainland administrative, law enforcement and judicial authorities (77) and others (51). Public enquiries involved trade and business matters (71), information about the HKSARG and Hong Kong organisations (56) and others (53).

In handling requests for assistance, the Beijing Office's main role is to make referrals and provide information about redress channels. On request, we refer the cases to the authorities concerned and take follow-up actions as appropriate. In handling these cases, we have to abide by the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems' and not interfere with the administrative or judicial procedures in the Mainland. Replies from the concerned Mainland authorities have been received for some of the cases. There are also individual cases which have been resolved. Expenditure for the handling of enquiries and requests for assistance forms part of the daily liaison work of the Beijing Office.

Signature Signed on Chinese version

Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 16.3.2001

Bureau Serial No.

BJO 008

Question Serial No.

0970

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Beijing Office
Programme : (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

How does the Government assess the effectiveness of the Beijing Office in fulfilling its responsibilities under this Programme?

Asked by : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

Since its establishment in March 1999, the Beijing Office has been broadening and enhancing its liaison network with the Central People's Government and other Mainland authorities, with a view to promoting understanding and exchanges between Hong Kong and the Mainland. If practicable, we have set out specific targets for assessing our work, such as visa processing work under Programme (2): HKSAR Immigration-related Matters. On liaison work, it is difficult to quantify in a comprehensive and objective way the nature and effectiveness of our activities in this area. We have, therefore, not set out specific targets under Programme (1). Instead, we incorporate the details of our work in the sections 'Brief Description' and 'Matters Requiring Special Attention'. Moreover, the Beijing Office regularly reviews its work, consults relevant HKSARG bureaux/departments and consolidates related experience, so as to keep improving its work. As is the case of other HKSARG departments, the Beijing Office is also under the scrutiny of the Legislative Council, the media and the general public.

Signature Signed on Chinese version

Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 16.3.2001

Bureau Serial No.

BJO 009

Question Serial No.

1026

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Beijing Office
Programme : (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

The Beijing Office requires additional provision to increase activities to strengthen the liaison work and to promote Hong Kong in various parts of the Mainland. Please provide details of the work.

Asked by : Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye

Reply :

The main reasons for the increase in the provision for Programme (1) for 2001-02 are as follows: the full-year effect of office rental due to the cessation of a rent-free period, increase in provision for travelling expenses due to more liaison and publicity activities, as well as the provision required to pay one-off allowances to staff on transfer and to allow for increase in the number of staff eligible for higher married/family rates of allowances. In the coming year, the Beijing Office, with the existing manpower, will make best use of its resources to closely monitor the new regulations/policies and market-opening process arising from China's accession to the WTO, implementation of the Tenth Five-year Plan and of the strategy to develop the western region. We will collect related information and report to the HKSARG with a view to facilitating the identification of new opportunities and preparation for the coming challenges. Moreover, the Beijing Office will continue to collaborate with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the Hong Kong Tourist Association in organising large-scale promotional activities in major Mainland cities. The Beijing Office will also make better use of the Mainland's media at the national level to enhance Mainland residents' knowledge about and understanding of Hong Kong.

Signature Signed on Chinese version

Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 16.3.2001

Bureau Serial No.

BJO 010

Question Serial No.

1027

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Beijing Office
Programme : (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

What is the nature of the 390 public enquiries and requests for assistance handled by the Beijing Office in 2000? What kind of help did the Beijing Office provide in the assistance cases? What were the results?

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

In 2000, the Beijing Office received 212 requests for assistance and 180 public enquiries. The requests for assistance concerned commercial disputes in the Mainland (39), complaints about real estate deals in the Mainland (45), complaints against Mainland administrative, law enforcement and judicial authorities (77) and others (51). Public enquiries involved trade and business matters (71), information about the HKSARG and Hong Kong organisations (56) and others (53).

In handling requests for assistance, the Beijing Office's main role is to make referrals and provide information about redress channels. On request, we refer the cases to the authorities concerned and take follow-up actions as appropriate. In handling these cases, we must abide by the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems' and not interfere with the administrative or judicial matters in the Mainland. Replies from the concerned Mainland authorities have been received for some of the cases. There are also individual cases which have been resolved.

Signature Signed on Chinese version

Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 16.3.2001

Bureau Serial No.

BJO 011

Question Serial No.

1028

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Beijing Office
Programme : (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

Why has the Beijing Office not set any targets for measuring its performance under this programme?
Without such targets, how can the cost-effectiveness of its work be assessed?

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

Since its establishment in March 1999, the Beijing Office has been broadening and enhancing its liaison network with the Central People's Government and other Mainland authorities, with a view to promoting understanding and exchanges between Hong Kong and the Mainland. If practicable, we have set out specific targets for assessing our work, such as visa processing work under Programme (2): HKSAR Immigration-related Matters. On liaison work, it is difficult to quantify in a comprehensive and objective way the nature and effectiveness of our activities in this area. We have, therefore, not set out specific targets under Programme (1). Instead, we incorporate the details of our work in the sections 'Brief Description' and 'Matters Requiring Special Attention'. Moreover, the Beijing Office regularly reviews its work, consults relevant HKSARG bureaux/departments and consolidates related experience, so as to keep improving its work. As is the case of other HKSARG departments, the Beijing Office is also under the scrutiny of the Legislative Council, the media and the general public.

Signature Signed on Chinese version

Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 16.3.2001

Bureau Serial No.

BJO 012

Question Serial No.

1217

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 35 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Beijing Office
Programme : (1) Liaison

Controlling Officer : Director, Beijing Office

Bureau Secretary : Director, Beijing Office

Question :

The efficiency of the Beijing Office in processing visa application as reflected in the Report is not bad. However, the Office did not provide figures of requests for assistance by Hong Kong residents in the Mainland. Would the Administration please provide the following:

- (a) number of requests for assistance by Hong Kong residents in last year.
- (b) In the past year, what progress did the Beijing Office make in liaising with the Mainland provinces and cities to help Hong Kong residents in distress? What agreements did the Office reach with the provinces or cities? Does the Office need to increase manpower to speed up the liaison work to protect the legal rights of Hong Kong residents in the Mainland? If yes, how much is the recurrent expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon IP Kwok-him

Reply :

- (a) In 2000, the Beijing Office received 212 requests for assistance under Programme (1): Liaison. Among them, 194 were raised by Hong Kong residents.
- (b) For the requests for assistance handled by the Beijing Office, replies from the concerned Mainland authorities have been received for some of the cases. There are also individual cases which have been resolved. In handling these requests, the Beijing Office's main role is to make referrals and provide information about redress channels, not through agreements with the concerned provinces and cities. Handling such requests is part of the Beijing Office's regular liaison work. There is currently no plan to increase manpower.

Signature Signed on Chinese version

Name in block letters BOWEN LEUNG

Post Title Director, Beijing Office

Date 16.3.2001