

13 September 2001

Secretary for Planning & Lands
(Attn: Mr Stephen Fisher)
Planning and Lands Bureau
9/F, Murray Building
Garden Road
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Fisher

**Follow-up to Meeting of the Legco Panel
on Planning, Lands and Works on 9 July 2001**

On behalf of the Urban Renewal Authority, I am writing to respond to a concern raised by the Honourable Emily Lau Wai-hing over Professor Cecilia Chan Lai-wan's Deputy Chairmanship of our Lands, Rehousing and Compensation Committee ("the Committee") and Chairmanship of the Appeals Panel ("the Panel"). The Honourable Member was concerned that there might be a role conflict.

The terms of reference of the Committee are as follows:

- (a) To consider, advise and make recommendations on:
 - policies and matters relating to land grants, acquisition of property by negotiation or resumption;
 - policies and matters relating to compensation;
 - policies and matters relating to rehousing;
 - the policy and terms and conditions of loans to persons under Section 12 of the URA Ordinance and;

- (b) To receive reports from management on the progress and oversee the effectiveness of implementation of the above matters.

As can be clearly seen, the Committee is policy-oriented and does not deal with grievances of individuals allegedly caused by the Authority's acquisition, re-housing or compensation policies ("the Policies"). The latter will instead come under the jurisdiction of the Panel which is charged with the duty to consider and determine appeal cases relating to the acquisition of property, rehousing matters and compensation matters. There is therefore a very clear distinction between the two and dual membership does not give rise to a role conflict.

The rationale behind Professor Chan's nomination to be the Chairman of the Panel was simple – it was considered both practical and highly desirable for someone who has a firm grasp of the relevant policies to preside over the deliberations of the Panel which will invariably revolve around the interpretation and implementation of the Policies. Members of the Panel will require appropriate guidance from time to time and being one of its key drafters, Professor Chan will be able to offer her intimate knowledge of the background and intention behind any “contentious” aspects of the Policies and also the manner in which they were expected to be implemented.

We hope the above will allay the concern of the Honourable Member.

Yours sincerely

Canice Mak
Managing Director