

香港特別行政區
立法會
議事規則委員會

**Committee on Rules of Procedure
of the Legislative Council
of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

2000 年 10 月至 2001 年 6 月的工作進度報告

**Progress Report for the period
October 2000 to June 2001**

**2001 年 7 月 11 日
11 July 2001**

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Review of the procedural arrangements relating to Council meetings	2
—	Procedure to debate the Policy Address	2
—	Allocation of debate slots for motions with no legislative effect at Council meetings	8
—	Procedure for the House Committee to recommend speaking time limits for debates on motions with no legislative effect	9
3.	Review of the procedures and working mechanism of the committees of the Council	10
—	Working mechanism of Panels and Bills Committees for the scrutiny of legislative and financial proposals	10
—	Standing arrangements for signification of Panel membership	15
—	Other issues	15
4.	Fine-tuning of provisions and expressions used in procedural rules	16
—	Saving provision in private bills	16
—	Chinese text of House Rules	17
5.	Acknowledgement	18

Chapter

Page

Appendix

I. Membership list

II. List of issues studied by the Committee on Rules of Procedure during the 2000-2001 Legislative Council Session

1. Introduction

1.1 The Committee on Rules of Procedure (the Committee) is a committee of the Legislative Council established under Rule 74 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council. The functions of the Committee are to review the Rules of Procedure of the Council and the committee system, propose to the Council any amendments or changes as are considered necessary, and examine matters of practice and procedure relating to the Council referred by the Council or its committees or the President, or raised by its own members.

1.2 The Committee consists of 12 members, including the Chairman Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, the Deputy Chairman Hon Margaret NG and 10 other members, appointed by the President in accordance with the recommendations of the House Committee. The membership list is in **Appendix I**.

1.3 This report covers the period from October 2000 to June 2001, during which a total of 7 Committee meetings were held to study a wide range of subjects under the following categories:

- (a) review of the procedural arrangements relating to Council meetings;
- (b) review of the procedures and working mechanism of the committees of the Council; and
- (c) fine-tuning of provisions and expressions used in procedural rules.

A complete list of the subjects studied by the Committee in the current session is in **Appendix II**.

2. Review of the procedural arrangements relating to Council meetings

2.1 In the 2000-2001 session, the Committee examined a number of procedural arrangements relating to meetings of the Council referred to it by the President of the Legislative Council and by the House Committee, including -

- (a) the procedure to debate the Policy Address;
- (b) the allocation of debate slots for motions with no legislative effect at Council meetings; and
- (c) the procedure for the House Committee to recommend speaking time limits for debates on motions with no legislative effect.

Procedure to debate the Policy Address

2.2 The Committee was invited to review the current procedure in relation to the Motion of Thanks having regard to the function of the Legislative Council to receive and debate the Policy Addresses of the Chief Executive (CE) under Article 73(4) of the Basic Law. The Committee was also requested to review the appropriateness of the present wording of the Motion and the arrangement of allowing amendments to the motion only by way of adding words at the end of the motion.

2.3 In the course of the review, the Committee has focused on the following areas:

- (a) how far the current rules in the Rules of Procedure have provided for the Legislative Council to exercise its function to debate the Policy Address; and
- (b) whether the present arrangement is the most effective way to debate the Policy Address.

In undertaking this review, the Committee has made reference to the practices of the United Kingdom (UK), Canada and Australia, where there is a tradition for the legislature to respond to the Address delivered by the Head

of State.

Appropriateness of current rules

2.4 The Committee notes that the current arrangement for a Motion of Thanks to be moved to thank CE (or the former Governor) for his Policy Address delivered at the first meeting of a session can be traced back to 1968 when the relevant procedure was incorporated in the former Standing Orders. This practice is based on the practice in UK where a session of the Parliament is opened by the Queen's Speech which sets out the Government's business, including the legislative programme, for the session. After the Queen's Speech has been read, an Address in Reply is moved and seconded by two government back-benchers in the form of a motion expressing thanks to the Queen for her Speech. The Address in Reply in the House of Commons in Canada and that in the House of Representatives in Australia are also moved in the form of a motion with similar wording.

2.5 As regards amendments to the Motion of Thanks, the practice in the Hong Kong Legislature also models on that in UK. In the House of Commons in UK, amendments to the Address in Reply may be moved in the form of an addition of words to the Address. In the case of Hong Kong, it had all along been laid down in the Standing Orders of the previous Legislative Council that amendments might be moved to the Motion of Thanks only by way of adding words at the end of the motion. The same provision is adopted in the current Rules of Procedure (Rule 13).

2.6 The Committee finds that the delivery of a Policy Address is now an obligation of CE under the Basic Law and the Legislative Council has the duty to receive and debate it. As the present rules only provide for a debate to take place after a motion has been moved and the President to propose the question thereon, the current arrangement of debating the Policy Address upon a motion is not inconsistent with the Basic Law.

2.7 The Committee has considered the wording of the motion, in particular if it is more appropriate to adopt a neutrally worded motion. In this connection, some members consider that although the delivery of a Policy Address is an obligation of CE, the Council could still thank CE for his address. They therefore do not see any need to change the wording. Another suggestion is to change the wording of the motion to "That this Council supports the Policy Address of the Chief Executive" so that there will be an indication of the Council's stance on CE's Policy Address at the end of the debate. Some members however consider that the responsibility of the Legislative Council is to receive and debate the Policy Address. The

wording of the motion should therefore only reflect that the Council has carried out its duty instead of indicating any stance on the address. A more neutrally worded motion: "That this Council takes note of the Policy Address of the Chief Executive" has been put forward.

2.8 The Committee notes that the idea of providing a more neutrally worded motion is to enable the motion to be passed more easily. The word "thanks" gives the impression of support and is more likely to lead to a defeat of the motion if different Members are not happy with different aspects of the Policy Address. The majority of members of the Committee consider that the change of the wording to some neutral wording such as "takes note of" could not on the one hand remove the possibility of the motion being negated; and would give rise to more confusion if the motion were defeated on the other. The majority of members also do not consider it appropriate to adopt the word "supports" in place of "thanks".

2.9 In the circumstances, the Committee concludes that the present wording of the motion, i.e. "That this Council thanks the Chief Executive for his address", should be retained. The Committee also considers that the motion should continue to be moved by the Chairman of the House Committee.

Effectiveness of the debate on the Policy Address

2.10 While reviewing the current procedure for debating the Policy Address, the Committee sees the need to make the debate more substantial and meaningful. In this connection, the Committee finds the practice in other jurisdictions such as UK worth referring to as the debate allows Members to speak on specific policy areas on specified days of the debate period with the Ministers concerned responding on the specific policy areas. General debate on cross-subject issues or general policies takes place on a separate day and on the last day, amendments to the motion will be dealt with and the motion voted on.

2.11 The Committee considers that structuring the debate by policy areas has the merits of making the debate more focused and efficient. It will also facilitate the relevant Bureau Secretaries to attend the part of the debate at which issues relating to their policy areas will be spoken on.

2.12 Having consulted the House Committee and the Administration, the Committee has come up with a new mode of debate, comprising a three-day debate on specific policy areas and one day on general policies, to be

tried out in October 2001 when the new session commences. The new arrangements are as follows:

- (a) After CE has delivered his Policy Address at the first Council meeting, the Chairman of the House Committee will give notice not later than the following day to move a motion to debate the Policy Address at the second Council meeting; notice of amendments to the motion should be given not later than two clear days before the day on which the motion is moved;

First three days of the debate

- (b) At the second Council meeting, the Chairman of the House Committee moves the motion; debate by specific policy areas will commence and continue for three consecutive working days. There will be two sessions for each of the three days, i.e. a total of six sessions focusing on six groups of specific policy areas, as follows:

1st group : Administration of Justice and Legal Services,
Constitutional Affairs, Security

2nd group : Commerce and Industry, Economic Services,
Financial Affairs

3rd group : Environmental Affairs, Food Safety and
Environmental Hygiene, Health Services

4th group : Housing, Planning, Lands and Works,
Transport

5th group : Education, Manpower, Public Service,
Information Technology and Broadcasting

6th group : Welfare Services, Home Affairs

- (c) The two sessions of each day will start at 2:30 pm and 6:15 pm. Members will speak on the specific policy areas until a specified time, e.g. 5:30 pm for the first session and 9:15 pm for the second session, after which the Bureau Secretaries concerned are expected to respond;

Last day of the debate

- (d) On the last day, a general debate will take place. The meeting will start at 2:30 pm, and Members may speak on any general government policies or policy areas or programmes which straddle the portfolios of different Bureau Secretaries;
- (e) Members should refrain from speaking on a specific policy area unless they have not had the chance to speak in the session concerned. Members should also refrain from speaking in relation to the responses made by Bureau Secretaries at the end of the previous six sessions. Where a Member's speech is challenged, the President will then decide if the Member should continue to speak on the subject;
- (f) Members who have not spoken at the previous six sessions will be given priority to speak on the last day, followed by those who have spoken fewer times. Members may speak until a specified time, e.g. 7:00 pm, and then Government officials who wish to speak will be called to speak. It is for individual Government officials to decide if they wish to speak;
- (g) After the Government officials have spoken, amendment(s) by adding words at the end of the motion, if any, will be moved and voted on but no debate would be allowed on the amendment(s); and
- (h) After the amendment(s) is disposed of, the Chairman of the House Committee will reply. Voting on the motion, or the motion as amended, as the case may be, will take place.

2.13 On the grouping of policy areas, the Committee considers that the grouping should be determined beforehand in consultation with the Administration and where possible, be spelt out in the Rules of Procedure or the House Rules. The Committee however notes that the Administration would like to have an opportunity to refine the grouping in the light of the emphasis of each Policy Address, and to determine in consultation with the Legislative Council the order of the six sessions.

2.14 The Committee observes that to maintain a quorum of 30 throughout the four-day debate will require Members' full commitments.

Speaking time limits

2.15 The Committee proposes that a Member may speak not more than once in each session of the debate, and in the general debate. To facilitate the efficient conduct of the debate, the Committee considers it important to limit each speech to no more than seven minutes. However, the Committee recognizes that longer speaking time may be needed for a Member to speak on the group of policy areas which is of utmost concern to the Member. To cater for this need, each Member may choose to speak for not more than 15 minutes in any one of the six sessions on specific policy areas. Prior notice to the President is required.

Policy briefings for Panels

2.16 The Committee considers that with the new mode of debate on the Policy Address, the current practice of individual Panels conducting special meetings to receive policy briefings from the Bureau Secretaries concerned before the debate should be discontinued. Individual Panels may, if considered necessary, invite the Bureau Secretaries concerned to brief members on their policy objectives at a regular meeting of the Panel in the beginning of a session.

2.17 Nevertheless, the Administration should continue to issue the "Policy Objectives" for their respective policy bureaux to Members after the Policy Address.

The way forward

2.18 The Committee will continue to fine-tune the arrangements before the first Council meeting of the next session. To enable the new mode of debate to be tried out, a motion to suspend the relevant Rules of Procedure may be moved at the first Council meeting.

Allocation of debate slots for motions with no legislative effect at Council meetings

2.19 The Committee was invited to consider the need for putting in place a procedure to deal with untaken debate slots after the cut-off date for application for debate slots but before the deadline for giving notice of motions. The need for the review arose from the availability of an untaken slot for the Council meeting of 22 November 2000. The House Committee considered it appropriate to review the current procedure with a view to maximizing the use of debate slots.

2.20 During the review, the Committee notes that since 1991, not more than two such debates had been allowed for each regular meeting of the Council. Applications for debate slots should be submitted to the Secretariat not less than 24 days before the relevant Council meeting, with or without the subject or wording of the motion. If more than two applications were received in respect of the same meeting, lots would be drawn by the Chairman of the House Committee to decide on the allocation. In the event of the availability of an untaken slot, a circular would be issued to invite Members to submit applications by an extended cut-off date.

2.21 The Committee also notes that allocation of debate slots had all along been operating under an honour system. Where a Member chose to ignore the application procedure and submit to the Clerk notice of his proposed motion 12 clear days before the relevant Council meeting, the President could not disallow the motion. In considering whether the procedure should be formalized and incorporated in the Rules of Procedure, the Committee concludes that it is not necessary to do so, having regard to the fact that Members have all along followed the current arrangements provided in the House Rules. However, the Committee considers that there is no need to set a cut-off date for the application for a debate slot 25 days before the relevant Council meeting. After reviewing the working procedure of the Secretariat, the Committee decides that the application for debate slots should be submitted with the wording of the motion to the Secretariat not later than 14 clear days before the relevant Council meeting. The drawing of lots, if required, would take place on the following working day, allowing one day for the Members who are allocated the debate slots to do some final touching-up of the wording of their motions before giving notice of motions to the Clerk. No application will be accepted after the cut-off date, even if there is any untaken slot.

2.22 Amendments to House Rule 13 (Number of Debates Initiated by Members), House Rule 14 (Allocation of Slots for Debates) and House Rule 17 (Motion Debates) to effect the above changes were endorsed by the House Committee on 12 January 2001.

Procedure for the House Committee to recommend speaking time limits for debates on motions with no legislative effect

2.23 The Committee was invited to streamline the procedure for the House Committee to recommend speaking time limits for debates on motions with no legislative effect.

2.24 Rule 37(1) of the Rules of Procedure provides that the House Committee may recommend the speaking time limits for debates on motions with no legislative effect. It was the practice of the House Committee to agree at its meetings the speaking time limits to be recommended for each motion debate. To streamline the procedure, the Committee proposed an amendment to House Rule 17(b) to the effect that unless otherwise decided by the House Committee, the speaking time limits stipulated therein shall be deemed to have been agreed by the House Committee and shall be recommended to the President. The proposed amendments to the House Rules were endorsed by the House Committee on 16 March 2001.

3. Review of the procedures and working mechanism of the committees of the Council

3.1 In the 2000-2001 session, the Committee has also examined the current procedures adopted by committees of the Council, including the working mechanism of Panels and Bills Committees for the scrutiny of legislative and financial proposals.

Working mechanism of Panels and Bills Committees for the scrutiny of legislative and financial proposals

3.2 The Committee was invited by the House Committee to consider Ms Margaret NG's proposal on the working mechanism of Panels and Bills Committees for the scrutiny of legislative and financial proposals, and the Chief Secretary for Administration's view that channels be explored to improve communication between the Administration and the Legislative Council, including putting forward options for Members' deliberation before finalizing its proposals.

3.3 In the course of its study of the subject, the Committee examined the current arrangements for the scrutiny of legislative and financial proposals in the Hong Kong Legislature and made reference to the practices in overseas legislatures, including UK, Australia, Canada and the United States. The Committee also invited views from the chairmen and deputy chairmen of various Panels (Panel Chairmen) and representatives of the Administration on the current working mechanism and Ms Margaret NG's proposal.

3.4 Having regard to the views of the Panel Chairmen and the Administration, the Committee came up with a series of improvement measures which were accepted by the House Committee in January 2001. The Committee conducted a review in May 2001 and submitted its report to the House Committee on 15 June 2001. A gist of its findings is summarized in the following paragraphs.

Updating of Legislative Programme

3.5 In relation to the Committee's request for periodic updates of the Legislative Programme, the Administration provided an updated Programme for the current session, which was circulated to Members on 23 March 2001.

As regards the Committee's request for the inclusion of the expected time of presentation of the bills in the Legislative Programme, the Administration advises that it is not in a position to include such dates as the presentation of bills is, among other things, subject to the Executive Council's approval.

3.6 The Committee notices that as at 22 May 2001, of the 35 bills listed on the updated Legislative Programme issued in March, only eight bills have been presented to the Council or given notice of presentation.

Lead time for consultation

3.7 The Committee has also requested the Administration to consult the relevant Panel(s) on major legislative and financial proposals as early as practicable, preferably before the Administration has finalized the proposals. For this purpose, a lead time of three to six months is considered appropriate in assessing whether the Administration is seeking Members' view at the earliest opportunity.

3.8 As the review period is from February to April 2001, the Committee notes that many of the proposals already put to Panels during this period have not yet been presented to the Council or the Finance Committee. It cannot be ascertained at this stage if the proposals discussed by the Panels are the final version or not, and whether the requested lead time has been followed. During the review period, out of the 32 legislative proposals, at least 13 (39%) had been put forward to the relevant Panels at least three months before the relevant bills were presented to LegCo. Of the 50 financial proposals put to the Finance Committee (FC) and Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC)/Establishment Subcommittee (ESC), 47 (94%) had been discussed by or circulated to the relevant Panels prior to inclusion on the agenda of FC and PWSC/ESC. Only three of the 50 financial proposals had been referred back to the relevant Panels for more detailed discussion before they were further considered by FC and PWSC/ESC. Of the three proposals, one had been discussed by the Education Panel, one discussed by the Planning, Lands and Works (PLW) Panel, and one circulated to the Housing Panel before submission to FC and PWSC/ESC.

Timing for provision of discussion papers

3.9 The Committee has also requested the Administration to provide papers well in advance of the relevant Panel meeting, preferably at least one week in advance of the meeting. The Administration has provided a total of 182 discussion papers for the 177 items discussed at Panel meetings from

February to April 2001. About 54% (26.4% + 27.5%) of these discussion papers were provided by the Administration four working days or more before the relevant Panel meetings; and about 10% of the papers were provided one working day or less before the relevant Panel meetings.

3.10 The Committee finds the situation highly unsatisfactory as the late provision of papers will practically deprive Members of the opportunity to study the papers and consult their political groups before the meeting. This will in turn hinder the effective exchange of views between Members and the Administration during the meeting. To improve the situation, the Committee proposes the following arrangements:

- (a) The Administration should be requested to strictly observe the requirement that discussion papers should be provided at least one week before the relevant Panel meeting. To make the request more specific, the period should be described in working days, i.e. at least six working days* before the relevant Panel meeting. If the deadline falls on a day before a public holiday, the Administration should provide the papers by 11:00 am so that the papers could be dispatched to Members on the same day; and
- (b) if the Clerk to Panel does not receive the discussion paper for a particular agenda item by the deadline mentioned in item (a) above, he/she should draw this to the attention of the Panel Chairman who will decide whether or not the relevant item be deleted from the agenda. Only under very exceptional circumstances would the Panel Chairman allow the item to be discussed.

Participation of Members at Panel meetings

3.11 The Committee notes that the Administration expects Members, representatives of all parties, alliances and groups of different political affiliation, to attend and participate actively in Panel meetings. While the Committee appreciates the importance of Members' participation at Panel meetings, it considers that the timely provision of detailed discussion papers

* Under existing ordinances (e.g. Cap. 124, Cap. 127, Cap. 130), "working day" means any day other than a public holiday, or a gale warning day or black rainstorm warning day as defined in section 71(2) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1). For the purpose of determining the deadline for provision of discussion papers in the context of paragraph 3.10 of this report, "working day" means any day other than a public holiday.

by the Administration will certainly facilitate Members' participation. The Committee observes that some discussion papers on financial proposals for Panel meetings lack sufficient details for thorough discussion, such as the background leading to the need for the funding proposals. It is therefore difficult for Panel members to come to a view on whether to support the proposals or otherwise.

3.12 The Committee recommends that the Administration be requested to consider providing more information in its papers on financial proposals when consulting Panels.

Information to be provided in Legislative Council Briefs

3.13 One of the suggestions put to the Administration is to provide in Legislative Council Briefs (LegCo Briefs) any changes in the Administration's position after consultation with the relevant Panel and any differences between its position and the general views of Members. In view of the lead time required for such information to be included in LegCo Briefs, the Secretariat has reviewed the 19 LegCo Briefs provided by the Administration from April to mid-May 2001. In six of these LegCo Briefs, consultation with the relevant Panel was mentioned with some brief remarks. The Committee considers that it may take a longer period of time to assess how far the Administration has provided the required information in LegCo Briefs.

3.14 The Committee notes the Administration's point that the inclusion of information on changes would only be possible if the relevant Panel has come to a definitive view at the conclusion of the discussion and that view is set out clearly in the minutes of the relevant Panel meeting. The Committee considers that it is not always possible to have a definitive view on a subject after a brief discussion by the Panel.

Allocation of sufficient time for discussion of major proposals at Panel meetings

3.15 The Administration welcomes the Committee's suggestion that Panels should allocate sufficient time for the discussion of major legislative or financial proposals. There is however a concern that it may have implications on the number of items that can be dealt with at each Panel meeting. The Administration therefore requests that government business, especially proposals which are time critical, be given priority by Panels, as is the arrangement for business at Council meetings.

3.16 The Committee considers that the concern of the Administration in fact does not arise under the present arrangement for determining the agenda of a meeting. While agenda items are agreed by members of a Panel more than one month before a Panel meeting, the corresponding Bureau is often consulted and may suggest priority for the items proposed by the Bureau. In the event that there is a lot of business to be dealt with by a Panel at its regular meeting, special meetings are often held.

3.17 As regards the time apportionment at Panel meetings, during the period from February to April 2001, the time allocated for discussion of a legislative or financial proposal normally ranged from 20 to 45 minutes. Some items which were more controversial in nature were allocated more time for discussion.

Committee Stage amendments (CSAs) to bills

3.18 The Committee notes that the Administration agrees to submit any proposed CSAs to the relevant Bills Committee for discussion as far as practicable.

Feedback from Members

3.19 The Committee notes that Members generally appreciate the early consultation on legislative and financial proposals and the opportunity to consider the policy aspect of the proposals. However, some Members have expressed concern about the increase in the number of financial proposals discussed at Panel meetings in recent months and suggested that only major financial proposals should be put forward to Panels for consultation. In this respect, the Committee considers it difficult to define what constitutes a "major" financial proposal. It is for individual Panels to decide whether a financial proposal proposed by the Administration should be placed on the agenda for a Panel meeting.

The way forward

3.20 The Committee will continue to monitor the implementation of the new measures. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the House Committee have in the meantime conveyed to the Chief Secretary for Administration the concern of Members about late provision of discussion papers for meetings, and invited the Administration to consider the Committee's proposal of the strict enforcement of the requirement for

provision of discussion papers at least six working days before Panel meetings.

Standing arrangements for signification of Panel membership

3.21 The House Committee, at its meeting on 4 October 2000, endorsed the standing arrangements for signification of Panel membership, as follows:

- (a) All Members, except the President of the Council, shall be invited to signify membership for the Panels of their choice at the beginning of a new term. The deadline shall be noon on the Saturday immediately following the first Council meeting of the new term; and
- (b) Members shall be given the opportunity to re-signify membership for the Panels of their choice at the beginning of each of the subsequent sessions of the term. The deadline shall be noon on the Saturday immediately prior to the first Council meeting in each of the subsequent sessions of the term.

3.22 Amendments to House Rule 22(b), (c), and (q) to reflect the above arrangements were endorsed by the House Committee on 16 March 2001. The House Committee also endorsed the amendments to House Rule 22(c) and (d) to specify at which point in time a Member's membership of a Panel shall take effect.

Other issues

3.23 During the session, the Committee also proposed amendments to the House Rules to rationalize the arrangement in distributing agenda and papers to the press/public observing committee meetings, and to refine the procedure for the election of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of a committee. Relevant rules and appendix of the House Rules were endorsed by the House Committee on 16 March 2001.

4. Fine-tuning of provisions and expressions used in procedural rules

4.1 In the 2000-2001 session, the Committee has fine-tuned the provisions of the Rules of Procedure and the wording of the Chinese text of the House Rules.

Saving provision in private bills

4.2 The Committee notes that prior to the reunification on 1 July 1997, the Royal Instructions provided that each private bill should contain a section "saving the rights of Her Majesty, Her heirs and successors". Such a provision was also included in the Standing Orders of the then Legislative Council. After the reunification, when the First Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region made its Rules of Procedure in July 1998, the saving provision in the Standing Orders was adapted to "saving the rights of the Government" (Rule 50(8) of the Rules of Procedure).

4.3 However, by virtue of paragraph 10 of Annex 3 to the "Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Treatment of the Laws Previously in Force in Hong Kong in accordance with Article 160 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China", any reference to the saving provision shall be construed as a reference to "nothing in this Ordinance shall affect or be deemed to affect the rights of the Central People's Government or the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Basic Law or other laws (本條例的條文不影響亦不得視為影響中央或香港特別行政區政府根據《基本法》和其他法律的規定所享有的權利)". In October 1998, the Administration introduced the Adaptation of Laws Bill 1998 which sought, inter alia, to adapt the saving provision in accordance with Annex 3 to the Decision of the Standing Committee. In view of the discrepancy between the Chinese and English texts of the Decision of the Standing Committee ("中央 (Central People's Government)", "和其他法律 (or other laws)", the Administration accepted the Bills Committee's view and introduced Committee Stage amendments to reflect the meaning of the Chinese text, i.e. to replace "Central People's Government" by "Central Authorities", and "or other laws" by "and other laws". The Bill, as amended, was passed on 28 April 1999 and enacted as the Adaptation of Laws (No.5) Ordinance 1999.

4.4 In view of the above developments, the Committee considers it necessary to bring the wording of the saving provision in Rule 50(8) of the Rules of Procedure in line with that of the above Adaptation of Laws Ordinance.

4.5 As a notice of presentation of a private bill shall be accompanied by a certificate signed by the Law Draftsman that the bill conforms to the requirements of Rule 50 and the general form of Hong Kong legislation, the Committee has consulted the Law Draftsman on the proposed amendments to Rule 50(8). The proposed amendments agreed by the Committee and the Law Draftsman have the support of the House Committee. A consequential amendment will be made to Rule 51(6).

4.6 Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, Chairman of the Committee, will move a motion at the Council meeting on 11 July 2001 to amend Rules 50(8) and 51(6) of the Rules of Procedure.

Chinese text of House Rules

4.7 The Committee has reviewed the wording of the Chinese text of the House Rules and its proposed amendments were endorsed by the House Committee on 16 March 2001.

5. Acknowledgement

5.1 Members of the Committee wish to record their appreciation of the views of Members of the Council and their support for the work of the Committee.

議事規則委員會委員名單
Membership list of Committee on Rules of Procedure

主席 Chairman	曾鈺成議員, JP	Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP
副主席 Deputy Chairman	吳靄儀議員	Hon Margaret NG
委員 Members	丁午壽議員, JP	Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
	李柱銘議員, SC, JP	Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
	李華明議員, JP	Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
	吳亮星議員, JP	Hon NG Leung-sing, JP
	黃宏發議員, JP	Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
	劉健儀議員, JP	Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP
	劉漢銓議員, GBS, JP	Hon Ambrose LAU Hon-chuen, GBS, JP
	劉慧卿議員, JP	Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
	胡經昌議員, BBS	Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
	葉國謙議員, JP	Hon IP Kwok-him, JP
	(合共： 12 位議員) (Total： 12 Members)	
秘書 Clerk	陳美卿小姐	Miss Salumi CHAN Mei-hing
法律顧問 Legal Adviser	馬耀添先生, JP	Mr Jimmy MA, JP

Committee on Rules of Procedure

**List of issues studied during the
2000-2001 Legislative Council Session**

Item	Issue	Reference	Progress/Remarks
1	To review the current arrangements for the debate on the Policy Address of the Chief Executive.	Rule 13 of Rules of Procedure	The House Committee considered the subject on 15 June 2001 and 29 June 2001. It accepted the Committee's recommendations that a four-day debate model on the Policy Address be implemented on a trial basis when the next session commences in October 2001.
2	To consider the need to bring the wording of the saving provision in Rule 50(8) (i.e. saving the rights of the Government) in line with the Council's decisions on the saving provisions in a number of ordinances.	Rules 50(8) and 51(6) of Rules of Procedure	The House Committee endorsed the proposed amendments to Rule 50(8) on 25 May 2001. A motion to amend the Rules of Procedure will be moved at the Council meeting on 11 July 2001.
3	To consider the need for putting in place a procedure to enable Members to bid for the untaken slot(s) after the deadline for applications for motion debate slots but before the deadline for giving notice of motions.	House Rules 13, 14 and 17	The House Committee endorsed the proposed amendments to House Rules 13, 14 and 17 on 12 January 2001.
4	To review the working mechanism of Panels and Bills Committees for the scrutiny of legislative and financial proposals.	House Rules 21 and 22	Following consultation with the House Committee on 12 January 2001 on the subject, the Committee put forward a series of improvement measures to the Administration. Having reviewed the effectiveness of the measures in May 2001, the Committee presented a report to the House Committee on 15 June 2001.

Item	Issue	Reference	Progress/Remarks
5	<p>To streamline the procedural arrangements in relation to the following:</p> <p>(a) procedure for the House Committee to recommend speaking time limits for debates on motions with no legislative effect (<i>House Rule 17</i>);</p> <p>(b) standing arrangements for signification of Panel membership (<i>House Rule 22</i>);</p> <p>(c) distribution of agenda and papers to the press/public observing committee meetings (<i>House Rule 24</i>); and</p> <p>(d) procedure for election of the chairman and deputy chairman of a committee (<i>Appendix IV of House Rules</i>).</p> <p>(The opportunity is taken to refine the wording of the Chinese text of the House Rules.)</p>	House Rules 17(b), 22, 24 and Appendix IV	The House Committee endorsed the proposed amendments to House Rules 17(b), 22, 24, Appendix IV and the Chinese text of House Rules on 16 March 2001.