

CSO/ADM CR 14/3231/97

Tel No. : 2810 3838

Fax No. : 2804 6870

6 June 2002

The Hon Selina Chow Liang Shuk-ye, JP
Chairman of the House Committee
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Hong Kong

Proposed Priority in the Scrutiny of Bills by Members

I am writing to suggest that priority be accorded by Members to the scrutiny of three bills, in the following order –

- (a) Public Officers Pay Adjustment Bill;
- (b) Registration of Persons (Amendment) Bill 2001; and
- (c) Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2001.

Public Officers Pay Adjustment Bill

The Public Officers Pay Adjustment Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council on 5 June 2002. The Bill provides for adjustments, with effect from 1 October 2002, to the pay of public officers remunerated in accordance with, or by reference to, civil service pay scales or the ICAC pay scale. To enable the pay adjustments to take effect on 1 October 2002, the Bill has to be enacted by the Legislative Council within the current legislative session. In light of this timeframe, we suggest that first priority be allocated by Members to the scrutiny of the Bill so that the Bills Committee, if set up, may commence operation immediately.

Registration of Persons (Amendment) Bill 2001

The Registration of Persons (Amendment) Bill 2001, introduced into the Legislative Council on 9 January 2002, seeks to provide for the

application and issue of the new smart identity cards. With the funds approved by the Finance Committee in March 2001 and May 2002, we have been developing the supporting computer system which is expected to be ready for the launch of the territory-wide identity card replacement exercise in July 2003.

To ensure that the introduction of smart identity cards, and other automation plans which will deploy smart card and related biometric identification technologies may proceed on schedule, we suggest that priority be allocated to the Bill, so that the Bills Committee may commence scrutiny of the Bill as soon as possible.

Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2001

The Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2001 was introduced into the Legislative Council on 28 November 2001. It seeks to exclude Mainland officials from being treated as ordinarily resident in Hong Kong during any period when they are directed to work in Hong Kong in their official capacity. The Bill, once enacted, will confer upon the Director of Immigration the necessary statutory power to reject applications for permanent resident status from these Mainland officials. We suggest Members to accord priority to the scrutiny of the Bill so as to empower the Director of Immigration to implement this new arrangement as soon as possible.

I should be grateful if you would put forward our above suggestions for Members' consideration at the coming House Committee meeting on 7 June 2002.

(Andrew H Y Wong)
Director of Administration