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The Honorable Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Chairman of the House Committee
Legislative Council
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Timing for the Delivery of Policy Address

As discussed at our regular meeting yesterday, the Administration has reviewed the timing for the delivery of the Chief Executive's Policy Address. I am writing to set out the new timetable, and explain the rationale behind the change.

The practice has been for the Chief Executive to deliver his Policy Address in October of the year, and for the Financial Secretary to announce the Budget in March the following year. There is thus a five-month gap between the Policy Address and the Budget. This has resulted in a considerable delay in the implementation of those proposals in the Chief Executive's Address which require new funding. This delay has given rise to public concern. To rectify this, we intend to change the delivery date of the Policy Address. Let me explain our plan.

Starting from the next Legislative Council session, the Chief Executive proposes to deliver his Policy Address in the second week of January. Timing for the Budget will remain unchanged. According to

this new timetable, the next Policy Address will be delivered on 8 January 2003, and the Budget speech on 5 March 2003. The new arrangement will enable us to narrow the time gap between the Policy Address and Budget, and in turn ensure the speedy implementation of new policy initiatives, to the benefit of the community at large.

We appreciate that the delivery date of the Policy Address may have implications for the Legislative Council's annual work plan. We would therefore wish to give Members early notice of the new timetable. I should be grateful if you could inform Members of our plan at the coming House Committee meeting, so as to facilitate Members in planning their work ahead. The Director of Administration stands ready to discuss with Members the revised timetable and arrangements for Members' debate on the Policy Address.

(Donald Tsang)
Chief Secretary for Administration