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

Thank you for inviting me to attend the House Committee meeting on 5 July, to explain to Members the rationale behind the new timetable for delivering the Policy Address.

Allow me to repeat here, for Members' reference, the two major considerations prompting our decision to adjust the timing for delivering the Policy Address. I explained them to you during our meetings on 24 June and 2 July.

First, as I have highlighted in my letter of 25 June, narrowing the time gap between the Policy Address and Budget will help ensure speedy implementation of new initiatives announced in the Policy Address that require new funding. This will be of benefit to the community as a whole.

Second, as Members no doubt appreciate, the new team of the Principal Officials is just in place. The newly appointed Directors of Bureaux will need time in their new office to review on-going programmes, consult the relevant constituencies and stakeholders, and identify their respective priorities in support of the Chief Executive's next Policy Address. Taking into account the lead-time required to prepare the actual Address, keeping the existing timetable of delivering the Policy Address at October of the year will not be a realistic or practical option.

It is against this background that we have decided to defer the delivery of the next Policy Address to January next year, and to deliver subsequent Chief Executive's Policy Addresses in January every year. I appreciate that this new timing may have implications for the Legislative Council's annual work plan. I thus took the first available opportunity of our regular meeting on 24 June to inform Members of our intention.

I shall be away on overseas duty coming Thursday and Friday and am sorry for not attending the House Committee meeting on 5 July. Although I shall not be able to elucidate in person the rationale behind changing the timing for the Policy Address, Mr Michael Suen, Acting Chief Secretary for the Administration in my absence, has already re-arranged his commitments for the day so that he could attend the House Committee meeting to speak on behalf of the Administration and respond to Members' questions.

(Donald Tsang)
Chief Secretary for Administration