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Chairman
House Committee
Legislative Council Secretariat
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**Arrangements for Attendance at Full Council Meetings
of the Legislative Council
During the Temporary Absence of Principal Officials**

At the regular meeting this afternoon, the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) has briefly explained to you, and to the Deputy Chairman of the House Committee, the arrangements for attendance at full Council Meetings of LegCo during the temporary absence of relevant Principal Officials (POs). Let me set out in writing the detailed arrangements as follows.

As the CS has reaffirmed at the meeting, POs under the Accountability System will attend full Council Meetings of LegCo to speak on behalf of the Government, to respond to Members' questions, initiate bills and motions, and carry out other related duties. POs will endeavour to organize their business so that no major issues relating to their respective portfolios will arise in LegCo during their absence. But if, due to unexpected circumstances or other reasons (for example, representing Hong Kong in international conferences or engaged in overseas duty visits), a PO is unable to attend a full Council Meeting, we will arrange for another PO to attend the meeting and speak on behalf of the Government.

More specifically, during the absence of the CS or the Financial Secretary (FS), the Director of Bureau who stands in as acting CS or Acting FS will attend the meeting and speak on behalf of the Government. In the case of the Secretary for Justice and the Secretary for the Civil Service, given their special roles and responsibilities, arrangements will be made for a designated Law Officer and the Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service to attend the full Council Meeting on their behalf respectively. During the absence of the other Directors of Bureaux, another Director of Bureau will speak on behalf of the Government on established policy relating to the absent Director of Bureau under his/her own title. The above-mentioned arrangements have been briefly set out in the paper (ref: CB(2)2075/01-02(01)) submitted by the Constitutional Affairs Bureau to the LegCo Subcommittee to Study the Proposed Accountability System for Principal Officials and Related Issues on 27 May 2002.

Where, in future, any PO is unable to attend a full Council Meeting to speak on behalf of the Government, the Administration Wing will inform the LegCo President beforehand of the relevant arrangements as soon as possible.

(Andrew H Y Wong)
Director of Administration