

For discussion on
16 December 2002

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

Attendance of Principal Officials at meetings of the Legislative Council and its Committees, Sub-committees and Panels

This paper sets out the Administration's position in respect of attendance of principal officials at meetings of the Legislative Council (LegCo) and its committees, sub-committees and panels.

2. Principal officials will attend full Council meetings of LegCo to speak on behalf of the Government, respond to Members' questions, initiate bills and motions, and carry out other related duties.

3. As regards meetings of LegCo committees, subcommittees and panels, much would depend on the nature and complexity of the subjects being discussed. Normally, principal officials would attend if there are important and complex issues to deal with. Otherwise, permanent secretaries and other senior officials would attend committee, subcommittee or panel meetings. The guiding principle is that the Government would send the most suitable representatives.

4. As the Chief Secretary for Administration assured the Chairman of the House Committee at their regular weekly meeting on 22 October 2002, the Administration is committed to enhancing communication with LegCo. While principal officials would take every opportunity to cultivate their relationship with LegCo Members, we also need to take into account the overall efficiency of the Administration in deciding on attendance at LegCo committee, subcommittee and panel meetings. All public officers attending LegCo meetings, including committee, subcommittee, or panel meetings, represent and speak on behalf of the Government. Irrespective of the level of Government representation, the relevant principal officials would continue to be accountable.

Constitutional Affairs Bureau
10 December 2002