



立法會
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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21 January 2002

The Hon Donald TSANG, JP
The Chief Secretary for Administration
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Central Government Offices
Lower Albert Road
Hong Kong

**Provision of Papers by the Administration for Discussion at
Meetings of Panels and Bills Committees**

As you are aware, the attached paper (LC Paper No. CROP1/01-02) prepared by the Committee on Rules of Procedure was discussed at the meeting of the House Committee on 18 January 2002. Regarding the provision of papers by the Administration for discussion at meetings of Panels, the following arrangements have been endorsed by Members -

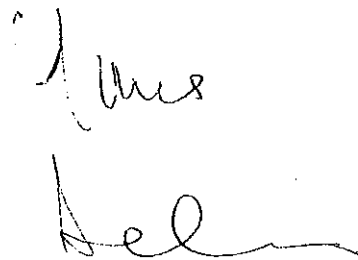
- (a) The Administration is required to provide papers *at least five clear days before the relevant Panel meeting* for items with at least three weeks' notice;
- (b) The Administration is required to provide papers *at least two clear days before the relevant Panel meeting* for items involving time critical proposals, e.g. urgent financial proposals, or where the need to consult Panels does not arise until a very late stage;
- (c) The Administration is required to provide papers *as soon as practicable* for items with less than three weeks' notice; certain policy initiatives which cannot be released prior to the approval of the Executive Council; and matters involving commercially sensitive information; and
- (d) Panel Chairmen will decide whether or not the relevant item should be deleted from the agenda if the papers are not received by the deadline.

Regarding the deadline for providing papers to Panels for items with at least three weeks' notice, the Administration's proposal of shortening the Committee's earlier suggestion of "six clear days" to "five clear days" before the meeting is in line with the existing practice which requires the Administration to provide papers at least one week before the relevant Panel meetings. Members note that under the Rules of Procedure, the expression "clear days" excludes the day of the giving of a notice, the day of the relevant meeting and intervening public holidays.

As regards some Members' concern expressed at an earlier House Committee meeting that sometimes draft Committee Stage amendments (CSAs) for discussion at Bills Committee meetings were provided by the Administration at the last minute, the House Committee concurs with the Committee on Rules of Procedure that it is difficult to set a deadline across the board for provision of discussion papers or draft CSAs for Bills Committee meetings, as the frequency of Bills Committee meetings vary from case to case. The House Committee has endorsed the Committee's proposal made in paragraph 8 of the paper that, in line with the arrangement for late provision of discussion papers for Panels, the Chairman of the relevant Bills Committee may decide not to discuss the draft CSAs that arrive too late before a meeting, if the situation warrants.

The House Committee has also endorsed the recommendations made in paragraph 9 (a) and (b) of the paper. In this connection, Members have instructed me to let the Administration know that the new arrangements should be implemented with effect from 1 March 2002, and to also ask the Administration to arrange, as far as possible, for papers to be provided by 11:00 am if a deadline falls on a day before a public holiday, so that they may be despatched to Members on the same day.

With best regards,



(Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye)
Chairman
Legislative Council House Committee