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22 December 2004

Clerk to the Legislative Council Panel on  
Home Affairs  
Legislative Council  
8 Jackson Road  
Hong Kong  
(Attn: Ms Joanne Mak)

By fax: 2509 9055  
Total: 2 pages

Dear Ms Mak,

**Panel on Home Affairs:  
minutes of the meeting on 9 November 2004**

Thank you for your letter of 13 December and its enclosure. There are three items for action by the Administration, namely -

(a) **pupillage (paragraph 11):** we have sought the advice of the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accounts and will inform the Panel of the outcome when we have heard from them;

(b) **ministers of religion (paragraph 22):** we proposed including this provision for consistency with the Sex Discrimination Ordinance. A number of racial groups, such as the Jews and the Sikhs, are also religious communities. In view of possible religious susceptibilities, we have proposed that ministers of religion should be made a special case. We have received useful comments on this proposal during the consultation and will further review this provision in drafting the Bill; and

(c) **report on the outcome of the consultations (paragraph 41):** the Panel will be aware that we have extended the consultation period to 8 February. We will therefore need to defer reporting on the outcome to either the March or April meetings. We expect the post-consultation analysis to be extensive and it is likely that any report to the March session will be of an interim nature.

**Yours sincerely,**

**(John Dean)**  
**for Secretary for Home Affairs**