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URGENT BY HAND

21st January 2006

Mrs. Percy Ma
 Clerk
 AJLS Panel
 LegCo Secretariat
 Jackson Road
 HONG KONG

Dear Percy

The Ombusman's critical comments on the supervision system of the Department of Legal Aid on lawyers assigned to legal aid applicants have aroused public concern. The incidents complained of not only reveal serious unfairness to legal aid clients and the public, but also unfairly tarnishes the numerous assigned lawyers who have served their legal aid clients conscientiously. I suggest this matter be discussed in this Panel. Meanwhile, please write to the Director of Legal Aid for his response and to request for all relevant information including

- (1) An account of the cases referred to in the Ombusman's comments;
- (2) The present procedure and criteria of assigning lawyers
- (3) The number of cases assigned over the last 3 years to lawyers in private practice together with the maximum number of cases assigned to a law firm;
- (4) The system of supervision;
- (5) The number of complaints received over the last 3 years, their nature and any action taken or sanctions applied;
- (6) The date of the last review of the system of assignment and supervision systems respectively, and any changes resulting from it; and
- (7) Any other information the Director considers relevant.

Yours sincerely


 Margaret Ng

c.c. Members of the AJLS Panel
 Director of Legal Aid
 Chairman, Legal Aid Services Council