

Panel on Commerce and Industry

List of outstanding items for discussion

(position as at 16 February 2006)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. Promotion of inward investment

This is the annual briefing by Director-General of Investment Promotion on the work of investment promotion to the Panel.

April/May 2006

The briefing will cover InvestHK's strategy for attracting foreign and Mainland investment; InvestHK's organizational set-up and work procedures; InvestHK's efforts to promote Hong Kong as the ideal location for investment, in particular the promotional efforts to attract Mainland enterprises to invest in Hong Kong; InvestHK's achievements in 2005 and its work plan for 2006.

2. Consultation on the Review of Copyright Protection in the Digital Environment

The Administration is examining whether amendments to the Copyright Ordinance are necessary for more effective protection of copyright works in the digital environment. The Administration intends to conduct a consultation exercise after completing the examination and will provide a briefing to the Panel.

First half of 2006
(Tentative)

3. Review of the effectiveness of the Professional Services Development Assistance Scheme

Last discussed on 17 May 2005. The Panel requested the Administration to revert to the Panel in the legislative session of 2005-06 on members' proposals.

18 July 2006
(Tentative)

4. Progress and impact of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA)

The Panel was briefed on the key findings of a study on the economic impact of CEPA I on Hong Kong's economy on 19 April 2005. The Administration has advised that it will brief the Panel on issues related to the implementation of CEPA from time to time. Members have also agreed that the Administration should report the progress and impact of CEPA to the Panel periodically, say, on an annual basis.

18 July 2006
(Tentative)

The Panel discussed issues relating to the implementation of CEPA III at its meeting on 15 November 2005.

5. Improving the business environment

Issues relating to improving the business environment were discussed at the Panel meeting on 10 June 2002 and on 10 May 2004. A Motion Debate on "Actively Improving the Business Environment for Small and Medium Enterprises" moved by Hon Vincent FANG, as amended by Hon Fred LI and Hon CHAN Kam-lam was carried on 8 June 2005. The progress report has been issued to all Members on 31 August 2005 vide LC Paper No. CB(3)831/04-05.

Second half of
2006

The same subject was covered in paragraphs 16 to 18 and paragraph 61 of the Chief Executive's 2004 and 2005 Policy Address respectively. Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG expressed the view that the Government should strive to provide the business and industrial sectors with an "enabling environment".

Under the steer of the former Economic and Employment Council (EEC), the Subgroup on Business Facilitation and its dedicated task forces have been studying ways to remove outdated or unnecessary regulations on business sectors that have significant impact on the economy and employment. Concrete recommendations have been made to simplify and improve the regulatory regimes impacting on the real estate, construction, retail and entertainment business sectors. The concerned government bureaux and departments are taking forward the improvement measures where consensus has been reached, including simplification of lease conditions, setting up of an enquiry system on land matters, parallel processing the modification and ordinance-related issues pertaining to land leases; and simplifying and improving the food retail and cinema licensing regimes.

At the Panel meeting held on 12 October 2004, Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG recapped her concern about the importance of an "enabling" business environment. She said that the Panel might wish to explore the subject further with the Administration and that in due course, the Panel might consider requesting the Research and Library Services Division of the Secretariat to conduct some research on the subject.

With the disbanding of the EEC and its Subgroup on Business Facilitation, a Business Facilitation Advisory Committee (BFAC) has been set up in January 2006 to take forward the business facilitation efforts. The BFAC will advise and report to the Financial Secretary the development and implementation of programmes and measures to facilitate business, and take up the work of the former EEC Sub-group in developing and overseeing a programme to review government regulations and procedures impacting on business. It will steer the task forces and the Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit to take forward the ongoing regulatory reviews and business facilitation initiatives and examine other relevant areas to facilitate business as appropriate.

6. New Strategic Framework for Innovation and Technology Development

Last discussed on 17 May 2005. The Administration undertook to report on the operation and performance of the Research and Development centres and the implementation of the new framework to the Panel annually.

Second half of
2006

7. Measures for monitoring the operation of the AsiaWorld-Expo (AWE)

At the Panel meeting on 12 July 2004, it was proposed that the Panel might consider exploring the subject further with the Administration in the next term having regard to members' concern about the measures in place for monitoring and ensuring the effective operation of the AsiaWorld-Expo.

To be confirmed

8. Draft Copyright (Prescription of Copyright Registers) Regulation

At the Panel meeting on 12 May 2003, members noted the Administration's proposal of prescribing the copyright registers maintained by the United States, Canada and India with a view to simplifying the proof of copyright ownership in legal proceedings under section 121(2) of the Copyright Ordinance (Cap.528). Members asked the Administration to consider the setting up of a copyright register in Hong Kong. The Administration undertook to consider members' views and revert to the Panel in due course.

To be confirmed

**Proposed timing
for discussion**

9. Proposed amendments to clarify certain transitional matters under the Trade Marks Ordinance (Cap. 559)

The Administration plans to make legislative amendments to clarify certain transitional matters under the Trade Marks Ordinance (Cap. 559). The Administration will consult the Panel on the proposed amendments in due course.

To be confirmed

10. Operation of ETOs in the Mainland

At the meeting on 15 November 2005 when issues relating to the establishment of a new ETO in Shanghai and Chengdu were discussed, members expressed the view that the functions of the Mainland ETOs should be expanded so that better support and assistance could be provided to Hong Kong residents in distress. The Administration has undertaken to review the matter in the light of the operational experience. It has also agreed to consider the feasibility of arranging separate briefings by the heads of the Mainland ETOs and providing written reports on the work of the ETOs for LegCo Members on a regular basis.

To be confirmed