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中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部衛生福利及食物局  
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau  
Government Secretariat, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
The People's Republic of China

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Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki  
Chairman  
Panel on Health Services  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Dear Dr Hon. Kwok,

### **Panel on Health Services**

At the Health Services Panel meeting on 20 March 2006, the Administration presented to Members our initiatives in respect of prevention and control of poisoning and undertook to provide the following supplementary information to members.

#### **1. Enforcement of the labelling of environmental chemicals**

As revealed by the statistics collated by Hospital Authority (HA) in the latter half of 2005, poisoning by household products constitutes a majority of environmental chemical related poisoning cases. Household products, in this context, are mainly household cleaners and pesticides, both of which are subject to labelling requirements.

Under the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (CGSO), Cap. 456, and the Consumer Goods Safety Regulation (CGSR), consumer goods supplied

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in Hong Kong, including household cleaners, should be reasonably safe for use. For household cleaners which could cause potential threats to consumers if used improperly, they are required to be affixed with appropriate safety warnings or labels, in both Chinese and English. These safety warnings or labels allow consumers to understand the proper usage, storage, consumption and disposal of the goods.

Under the Pesticides Ordinance (Cap. 133) (PO) and Pesticides Regulations, a person shall not import, manufacture, sell or supply any registered pesticide unless with a licence and the licensee shall not sell or supply any registered pesticide unless there appears on the container a label setting forth clearly a set of essential information, which includes, inter alia, the registration number, composition by percentage of all active ingredients, instructions on the manner in which the pesticide is to be used, the antidote and first-aid action to be taken in the case of poisoning.

The CGSO and PO are enforced by the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) respectively. Both Departments undertake regular inspections to ensure compliance of the Ordinances, including the labelling requirements. They also conduct investigations upon receipt of complaints.

Since 2001, C&ED has conducted 51 checks on household cleansers and has issued written warnings to nine suppliers. In 2005, C&ED received six complaints about safety warnings of household cleaners and investigations were carried out subsequently. Two warning letters were issued to suppliers reminding them of the need to affix appropriate English and Chinese safety warning to their products.

In 2005, AFCD conducted a total of 2,768 inspections of pesticide licensees, and 26 warning letters, involving 40 different pesticide products, were issued with regard to improper labelling of registered pesticides. Of these 40 products, 24 had their labels rectified and 16 were subsequently withdrawn from the market.

## 2. Poisoning cases involving Western and Chinese Medicines from 1 July to 31 December 2005

Statistics of poisoning cases are collated from the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department of six key HA hospitals namely Queens Mary Hospital, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital,

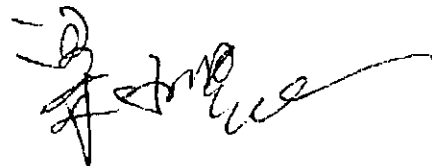
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Princess Margaret Hospital, Tuen Mun Hospital and United Christian Hospital. These six hospitals receive about half of the A&E cases in Hong Kong.

The following is a statistical breakdown of poisoning cases received in the latter half of 2005 involving western medicine and/or Chinese Medicines :

| <b>Poisoning Agent</b>                   | <b>No. of cases</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Western medicines alone                  | 591                 | 59.4                  |
| Chinese medicines alone                  | 33                  | 3.3                   |
| Western medicines plus Chinese medicines | 7                   | 0.7                   |
| Western medicines plus other agents      | 104                 | 10.5                  |
| Chinese medicines plus other agents      | 5                   | 0.5                   |
| Others                                   | 255                 | 25.6                  |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>995</b>          | <b>100</b>            |

Yours sincerely,



(Jeff LEUNG)

for Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food