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G10/34/16C Pt. 2

Urgent By fax: 2869 6794

14 December 2006

Clerk to the Finance Committee
(Attn: Ms Pauline Ng)
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Ng,

**Finance Committee
Meeting on 15 December 2006**

**Proposal on hosting of the 59th Session of the
International Statistical Institute (“ISI”) in 2013
(FCR(2006-07)27)**

With reference to the pre-meeting between the Finance Committee Chairman and the Deputy Secretary (Treasury) of the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau held on 12 December 2006, this supplementary note in relation to FCR(2006-07)27 is accordingly prepared.

Professional Services Development Assistance Scheme (“PSDAS”)

PSDAS, launched in February 2002 with an allocation of \$100 million, seeks to provide funding support for projects which are aimed at enhancing the professional standard and / or external competitiveness of Hong Kong’s professional service sectors such as accounting, legal, medical, construction and related engineering, and business consultancy including management, information technology and financial consultancy, etc. The list of eligible professional service sectors is drawn up with reference to the World

Trade Organization's classification of professional services, supplemented by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council's classification to take into account local circumstances. Non-profit-distributing organisations may apply for funding from the PSDAS with grants given on a dollar-for-dollar matching basis. The maximum amount of grant for an approved project is HK\$2 million. Details of the Scheme can be found in FCR(2001-02)56.

Hosting of International Events

In general, the Government would take into account all relevant factors, including benefits to Hong Kong, the status of the international event, vision and work of the relevant government services, etc., before deciding whether to host an international event. As explained in paragraph 4 of FCR(2006-07)27, we will pay due consideration to the general conditions that the event is to be organised for proper purposes and public money will be spent in a reasonable and lawful manner on the grounds of public interest. We have further explained in paragraphs 5 to 11 of FCR(2006-07)27 the specific factors that we have considered in recommending the present proposal of hosting the 59th ISI Session.

As regards the question on the circumstances under which the Government would consider it more appropriate for the professional bodies/professional service sectors to organise an international event, we would like to advise that whether the relevant professional bodies/professional service sectors would organise the event would be a separate matter for them to decide and the Government does not have a role to play in their decisions.

It should be noted that for some international events such as the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, the host would be confined to the Government of the hosting city. In such cases, it is essentially the call of the relevant international organisation as to whether the hosting rights should be awarded to the Government or professional body of the hosting city.

Proposed Hosting of the 59th ISI Session by the Census and Statistics Department ("C&SD")

In the case of the ISI Session, as we have explained in paragraph 8 of FCR(2006-07)27, an ISI Session is generally hosted by the official statistical agency of the hosting city. For example, the last three Sessions and the one to be held in 2007 are all organised by the relevant government agencies of the hosting cities. The ISI has invited the C&SD to host the 59th ISI Session.

In line with these precedent arrangements, if our bid is successful, the C&SD, being the official statistical agency of Hong Kong, will host the 59th ISI Session. We will actively engage the local statistical community, including professional practitioners and academic institutes, throughout the event. These may include the provision of technical assistance, advice and support to the C&SD as well as the organisation of and participation in seminars and satellite meetings to be held in local academic/professional institutes and nearby cities in the Mainland China and neighbouring countries.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Cora Ho)
for Secretary for Financial Services
and the Treasury

c.c. Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology
(Attn: Ms Alsa Choi)
Commissioner for Census and Statistics
(Attn: Mr. H W Fung)

Internal
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
(Attn: Mr. Alfred Fok)