

Panel on Commerce and Industry

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 9 October 2006)

Proposed timing
for discussion

1. 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.

Second half of
2007
(Tentative)

The Panel discussed issues relating to the implementation of CEPA III at its meetings on 15 November 2005 and 18 July 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.

December
2006/First Quarter
2007

3. 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" was carried on 8 June 2005. The progress report was issued to all Members on 31 August 2005 vide LC Paper No. CB(3)831/04-05.

First half of
2007
(Tentative)

The same subject was covered in 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Council (EEC), the Subgroup on Business Facilitation and its dedicated task forces have been studying ways to remove outdated or unnecessary regulations on business sectors that have significant impact on the economy and employment.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.

At the Panel meeting held on 12 October 2004, Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG considered 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) was set up in January 2006 to take up the work of the former EEC Sub-group. 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. The BFAC will report to the Financial Secretary the development and implementation of the facilitation measures.

4. 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

5. 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

**Proposed timing
for discussion**

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

The Administration originally planned to make legislative amendments to clarify certain transitional matters under the Trade Marks Ordinance (Cap. 559). However, as lately advised by the Administration, the emergence of new legal issues had led to a review of the entire matter. Hence, the Panel was not consulted on the proposed amendments as originally planned. The Administration now does not see any imminent need to pursue the proposed legislative amendments. It will consult the Panel if and when the proposed amendments are put forward.

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7. Management of the Applied Science and Technology Research Institute (ASTRI)

At the Panel meeting held on 16 May 2006, members agreed that matters relating to the operation and management of ASTRI should be discussed as and when appropriate. (A letter dated 27 April 2006 from ASTRI in response to allegations against the management of ASTRI lodged by anonymous persons was issued vice LC Paper No. CB(1)1418/05-06.)

To be confirmed