

LegCo Panel on Economic Services
Meeting on 26 February 2007

Follow-up to
“Modifications to the Tropical Cyclone Warning System”

The Administration’s response

- (a) During the period from 1998 to 2006, a total of 46 tropical cyclones affected Hong Kong. Of these, three met the old criterion for the issue of No.8 signal with a total duration of 14 hours and 10 minutes, and four met the new criterion with a total duration of 19 hours and 20 minutes. The actual frequency and duration for issuing No.8 signals would be higher than the aforesaid figures due to the inevitable forecast uncertainty.

- (b) Figure 1 shows the tropical cyclone 24-hour forecast position error of the Hong Kong Observatory for the past years. It reveals a long-term steady decreasing trend, illustrating the continued improvement in the skills of the Observatory in forecasting tropical cyclones.

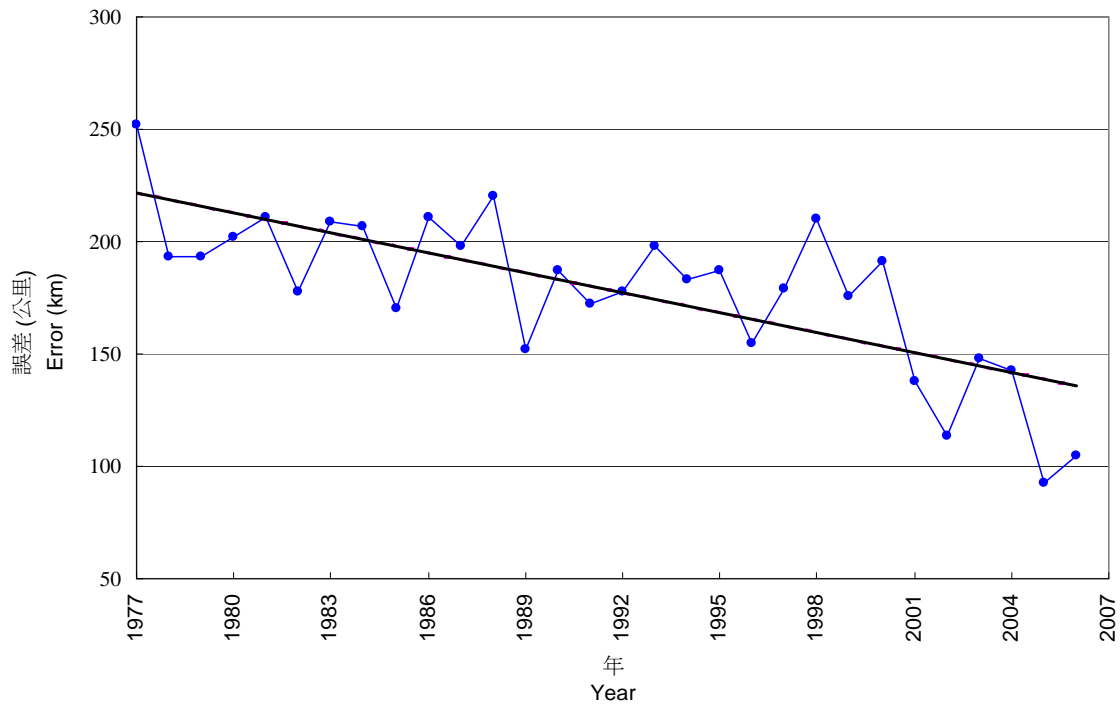
Figure 2 shows the ratio of the number of hours with No.3 signal or above issued per year relative to that with tropical cyclones located within 500 km of Hong Kong (tropical cyclones further than 500 km from Hong Kong usually do not warrant consideration of issuing No.3 signal) for the past years. A small ratio indicates that, under broadly similar situations, the duration

with No.3 signal or above is shorter. A long-term decreasing trend can be seen from the figure. This illustrates that with advances in science and technology and more confidence in the forecast of the tracks of tropical cyclones, the duration of signal has been decreasing. From the early 80s to recent years, the decrease amounts to nearly half. (Since the sample size for No.8 signal is too small for meaningful statistical calculation, there is no corresponding figure for No.8 signal.)

Economic Development and Labour Bureau

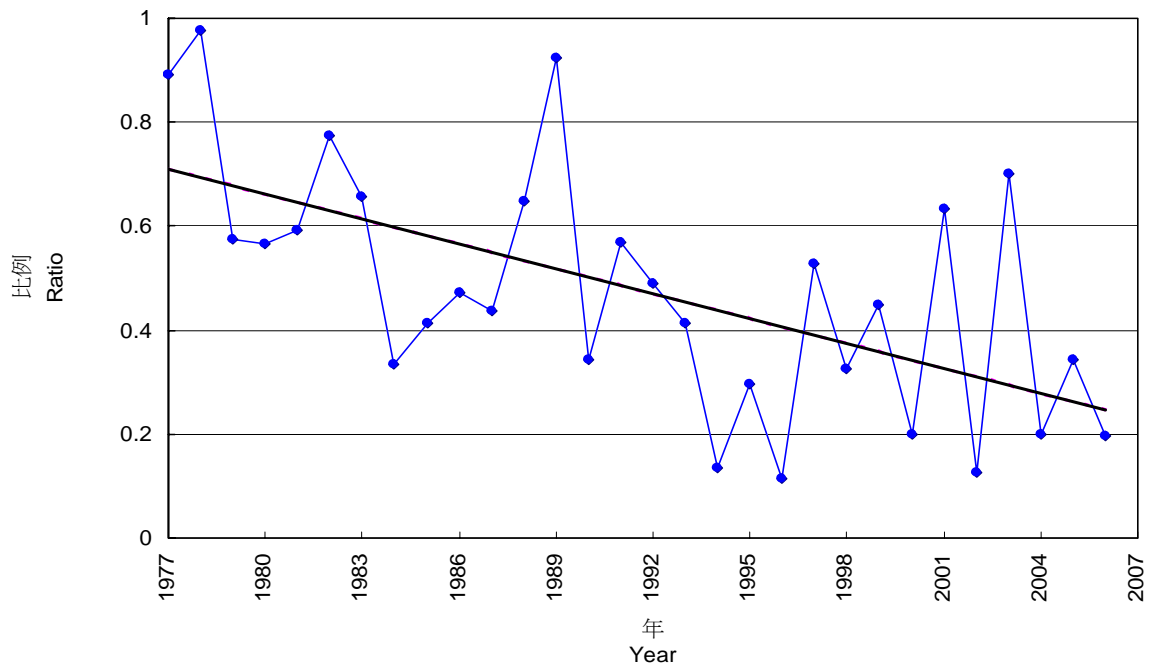
Hong Kong Observatory

March 2007



附圖一 香港天文台 24 小時熱帶氣旋位置預測誤差

Figure 1 Tropical cyclone 24-hour forecast position error of the Hong Kong Observatory



附圖二 發出 3 號或以上信號時數與熱帶氣旋位於香港 500 公里以內時數的比例

Figure 2 Ratio of number of hours with No.3 or above signal relative to that with tropical cyclones within 500 km of Hong Kong