

立法會  
*Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(2) 1831/07-08

Ref : CB2/H/5/07

**House Committee of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 21st meeting  
held in the Legislative Council Chamber  
at 2:30 pm on Friday, 2 May 2008**

**Members present :**

Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP  
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan  
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP  
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBM, GBS, JP  
Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, SBS, JP  
Hon Margaret NG  
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS  
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP  
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP  
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum, JP  
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP  
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP  
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP  
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP  
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP



Mrs Justina LAM	Assistant Secretary General 3
Mr LEE Yu-sung	Senior Assistant Legal Adviser 1
Mr Arthur CHEUNG	Senior Assistant Legal Adviser 2
Mrs Pandora CHAN	Acting Principal Council Secretary (Complaints)
Mr Simon WONG	Chief Public Information Officer
Miss Odelia LEUNG	Chief Council Secretary (2)6
Mr KAU Kin-wah	Assistant Legal Adviser 6
Ms Amy YU	Senior Council Secretary (2)3
Mr Arthur KAN	Legislative Assistant (2)7

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**I. Confirmation of the minutes of the 20th meeting held on 25 April 2008**  
(LC Paper No. CB(2) 1736/07-08)

The minutes were confirmed.

**II. Matters arising**

**Report by the Chairman on her meeting with the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS)**

*(Letter dated 25 April 2008 from the Chairman of the House Committee to CS and CS's reply dated 30 April 2008 regarding the attendance of the Financial Secretary at the Legislative Council meeting on resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Appropriation Bill 2008 (LC Paper Nos. CB(2) 1779/07-08(01) and (02))*

Attendance of the Financial Secretary (FS) at the Legislative Council meeting on Resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Appropriation Bill 2008 (the Bill)

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2. The Chairman said that at the last House Committee meeting, Members had further expressed their dissatisfaction about FS's prolonged absence during the resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill. She had written to CS immediately after the House Committee meeting to convey to him the various points raised by Members. She had also reiterated the points to CS during their meeting on 28 April 2008.

3. The Chairman further reported that CS had reiterated that the Administration's policy had not changed and had undertaken to convey the points made by Members to FS. CS had stated that -

- (a) constitutionally, the Administration had the prerogative to designate public officers to attend Council meetings;

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- (b) the convention was that the public officer related to the bill concerned would attend for the particular item; and
- (c) it was up to the public officer to determine his/her duration of attendance, one of the considerations being how best to get the bill passed by the Council.

4. The Chairman further said that CS had confirmed that all the Principal Officials who attended the Council meeting of 16 and 17 April 2008 were public officers related to the Bill. She added that CS's written reply dated 30 April 2008 had been circulated to Members.

5. Referring to the point made by CS that the Administration's policy had not changed, Ms Emily LAU sought clarification on whether CS meant that it was the Administration's policy that in future, FS would no longer sit through the Council meetings during the resumption of the Second Reading debate on Appropriation Bills, as opposed to the past practice where FS attended most part of such debates.

6. The Chairman said that she had relayed CS's reply to Members verbatim, and it was up to Members to interpret its meaning.

7. Ms Emily LAU was dissatisfied with CS's response which showed that the only concern of the Administration was to get the bills passed. She considered that CS had failed to respond to Members' concern that relevant public officers should sit through the Council meetings to listen to Members' views.

8. Mr James TO said that CS had referred in his reply to the Administration's policy regarding attendance of public officers at debates on bills in general. In his view, Appropriation Bills were different from other bills. In the course of scrutiny of bills, the Bills Committees concerned would study both the policy aspects and the detailed provisions of the bills. As for Appropriation Bills, their merits and principles would be discussed during the resumption of the Second Reading debate instead of at Bills Committee meetings. It was, therefore, important for FS to listen to Members' views at the debates on Appropriation Bills. Mr TO further said that it was the established practice for the public officer in charge of a bill to stay through the Council meeting during the resumption of the Second Reading on the bill. If the same policy applied to Appropriation Bills, FS should have sat through the Council meeting during the debate on the Bill. He considered that CS's attention should be drawn to the difference between Appropriation Bills and bills in general.

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9. The Chairman said that to her understanding, the three points stated in CS's reply in paragraph 3 above should apply to the attendance of public officers at debates on motions and bills in general including Appropriation Bills.

10. Mr James TO reiterated his view on the difference between Appropriation Bills and bills in general. He said that FS should stay through the Council meeting on the Second Reading debate on Appropriation Bills given their difference from bills in general. Moreover, should the established practice regarding the attendance of public officers at debates on bills apply equally to Appropriation Bills, FS should also sit through the debate.

11. The Chairman said that CS had not made such an analysis.

12. Mr James TO said that he was trying to put across the point that CS's reply could not stand from the perspectives of both established practice and rational analysis.

13. Mr Martin LEE said that Members should carefully consider the matter. Even the President had expressed concern about the poor attendance of FS at the Council meeting during the resumption of the Second Reading on the Bill. He said that he would no longer be a Legislative Council (LegCo) Member during the debate on next year's Appropriation Bill. If he were still a Member then, he would not vote for the Bill if FS was not present in the Chamber when he spoke during the debate. He further pointed out that if it was up to FS to determine his duration of attendance at the debate on Appropriation Bills, the likely scenario would be that other Principal Officials would follow suit and their only concern would be to secure enough votes to get the bills passed. He considered such an attitude unacceptable.

14. Dr KWOK Ka-ki enquired whether CS had responded to the request raised by a Member at the last House Committee meeting that FS should apologise for his disrespectful act.

15. The Chairman said that she had conveyed the request to CS both during their meeting and in her letter. CS had not responded to the request.

16. Mr CHIM Pui-chung said that there was nothing more the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman could do on the matter. In his view, Members who were dissatisfied with FS's attitude could vote against the Appropriation Bill next year. If Members who were dissatisfied with FS did not exercise their right to vote against the Appropriation Bill, they had only themselves to blame and should not criticize FS.

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17. Mr James TIEN said that under the accountability system, Principal Officials had the obligation to attend Council meetings to listen to Members' views. As he had previously pointed out, Principal Officials should make every effort to attend Panel meetings to explain new policy proposals and to exchange views with Members. He surmised that FS did not sit through the Council meeting on the Bill probably because he had already got a full grasp of Members' views on the Budget after his meetings with various political parties and groupings and through media reports. It might also be possible that given the wide public support for the Budget, FS considered it unlikely for Members to object to the Bill. Even so, he considered it inappropriate for FS to have been absent from the Council meeting for most of the time. He requested the Chairman to convey to CS again the inappropriateness of FS's behaviour.

18. The Chairman said that she would convey Mr TIEN's views to CS.

19. Dr YEUNG Sum said that Members should convey to CS through the Chairman their strong view that FS should respect and follow the established practice to stay through the Second Reading debate on Appropriation Bills. It was a matter of mutual respect between the Executive Authority and the Legislature. He considered that FS should not give further excuse for his prolonged absence from the meeting and should apologize for his disrespect for the Legislature.

20. Ms Margaret NG said that FS had met with the Civic Party when he was drawing up the Budget. She recalled that during the meeting, FS had not made much response on the views expressed by the Civic Party. She had, therefore, remarked in a joking manner that the Civic Party could have sent FS a videotape on their views in lieu of the meeting as there was no mutual exchange, and FS considered this agreeable. In her view, FS might not have intended to be disrespectful to Members as he considered that there were other means for him to collect Members' views outside the Chamber. However, it should be brought home to FS that direct dialogues and exchanges with LegCo Members were important. This would set an example to other Government officials, and would be all the more important with the creation of the posts of Under Secretary. Ms NG added that once this message had been put across to FS, it might not be necessary to pursue the matter further.

21. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that FS had refused to account for his prolonged absence from the Council meeting and to make an apology, and CS's reply had not answered Members' questions. He considered it necessary to request CS to explain FS's whereabouts during the debate on the Bill.

22. The Chairman said that CS had explained in his reply that FS had begun working with colleagues concerned in preparing his response immediately after listening to Members' speeches at the Council meeting of 16 and 17 April 2008.

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CS had also pointed out that although FS was not able to sit through the entire meeting, FS had monitored the discussion throughout using different means.

23. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that he did not find FS's explanation plausible. He considered that CS should give a detailed response as to whether FS would sit through Council meetings on Appropriation Bills in future. He considered CS's latest reply that it was up to public officers to determine whether and when to attend Council meetings unacceptable.

24. The Chairman said that the point made by CS was that it had always been the Executive's prerogative to designate public officers to transact Council business.

25. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed dissatisfaction with CS's reply. He considered it necessary to find out the whereabouts of FS and the persons who were with him during his absence from the debate on the Bill.

26. The Chairman noted Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's view, and said that CS had made his points clear in his reply.

27. Mrs Selina CHOW said that the issue under discussion probably arose from her speech during the debate on the Bill which was directed at not only public officers but also LegCo Members and the media. Members had on many previous occasions expressed dissatisfaction with the attendance of public officers at Council or committee meetings. The Administration's position had always been that it had the prerogative to field the most appropriate public officers to transact Council business, and it was up to the public officers concerned to determine the duration of attendance at Council or committee meetings. In her view, while Members were entitled to express their views and make requests to the Administration, it was meaningless and unnecessary for the Legislature to relay the subject matter repeatedly to the Administration because of its refusal to accept Members' views or accede to Members' requests. She considered it best to leave the matter to the public for judgment as Members' discussions and the relevant correspondences were made public. She could not envisage what further action could be taken by the Chairman to resolve the matter. She hoped that Members would not waste any more time discussing a matter which could not be resolved.

28. Mr Frederick FUNG considered CS's reply unacceptable. He said that as the public officer in charge of the Bill, FS should sit through the Council meeting during its Second Reading debate. He was dissatisfied that FS had not accounted for his prolonged absence during the Council meeting. If FS had other public duties to attend to during the Council meeting, he should make this known. If his engagement during the Council meeting was unrelated to public duties, this would be entirely unacceptable. He did not agree with the

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view that Members should not pursue the matter further. On the contrary, he considered that Members should send a strong message to FS that he had the obligation to sit through the meeting to listen to Members' views. Referring to the point made in CS's reply that FS had monitored the discussion throughout using various means although he was not able to sit through the meeting, Mr FUNG queried why FS had chosen to listen to Members' views outside the Chamber. He stressed that FS's attendance or otherwise at the Council meeting reflected the importance he attached to the Bill and the relationship between the Executive Authority and the Legislature, as well as his respect for the Legislature. Referring to Article 62(6) of the Basic Law, which provided that the Executive Authority had the power and function to designate officials to sit in on the meetings of LegCo, Mr FUNG said that Members might need to consider whether the Administration should be required to inform the Council in advance of the public officers designated to attend debates on bills and motions.

29. Mr James TIEN made reference to a suggestion by Mr LAU Wong-fat who had suggested that Members could ask the Chief Executive (CE) directly during his Question and Answer Session on 15 May 2008 about the Administration's policy regarding the attendance of FS at debates on Appropriation Bills.

30. The Chairman said that Members had the right to raise whatever questions they liked at CE's Question and Answer Session.

31. Summing up the discussions, the Chairman said that she would reiterate to CS Members' views that the relevant Principal Officials, including FS, should sit through the Council meetings to listen to Members' views on bills introduced by the Executive Authority and motion debates on important issues. She would also convey to CS the point made by Mr James TO on the difference between Appropriation Bills and other bills which made it all the more important for FS to sit through the Council meeting on the Second Reading debate on Appropriation Bills. She added that as the Administration had already replied on the matter twice, she would not ask for a further reply. Members agreed.

32. Ms Emily LAU said that CS should also be reminded that FS had deviated from the practice of his predecessors who sat through the Council meetings during the resumption of the Second Reading debate on Appropriation Bills.

33. The Chairman said that she had already made the point to CS twice and did not consider it necessary to repeat it again. She reiterated that she would relay to CS Members' strong view that Principal Officials should sit through the Council meetings to listen to Members' views.



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34. Mr Martin LEE moved the following motion -

"本會全心全意甘心接受財政司司長對本會採取不睬不理可來則來，可不來則不來的態度並致以熱烈鼓掌作支持。"

(Translation)

"That this Council wholeheartedly and willingly accepts and supports with warm applause the Financial Secretary's adopting an attitude of showing a disregard for this Council and choosing whether to come to attend the meetings of this Council at his own will."

35. The motion was seconded by Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung.

36. The Chairman invited Members' views on Mr Martin LEE's proposed motion.

37. Mr James TIEN indicated that Members belonging to the Liberal Party did not support the motion which was flattering in nature.

38. Mr LAU Kong-wah said that he objected to the motion which was both flattering and unbecoming.

39. Ms Emily LAU enquired which types of flattering motions Members of the Liberal Party and of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong would support.

40. Mr Jasper TSANG said that Members of the opposition parties would interpret any support for the Administration's proposals as flattering. He pointed out that Members of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong would support any proposal which, in their view, was appropriate, irrespective of whether it was put forward by the Administration.

41. Mr Albert CHAN said that the motion proposed by Mr Martin LEE was sarcastic and black humour. It was intended to condemn and not flatter senior Government officials. He considered it deplorable that some Members could have interpreted the motion as flattering in nature, and this reflected indiscrimination between right and wrong.

42. Mrs Selina CHOW said that she objected to the motion which, in her view, was an insult to the Legislature and its proceedings. She considered that the moving of a motion was an instrument to achieve an intended purpose and not for mockery or entertainment. She disapproved such an attitude.

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43. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that since the Administration was disrespectful to the Legislature and FS had refused to apologize, he considered it appropriate for the motion to be moved. Should Members find FS's disrespectful act unacceptable, they should vote down the motion. He further said that he was ready to support the Administration for proposing any measures beneficial to the poor but these were not forth-coming.

44. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that the moving of a motion in the Legislature would be recorded and should be treated seriously. He considered it inappropriate to use it as a means to express humour or sarcasm.

45. Ir Dr Raymond HO said that he noted that the relationship between the Executive and the Legislature was not very good but it was improving. He considered the moving of the proposed motion not conducive to enhancing the relationship between the Executive and the Legislature. He added that Members of The Alliance would object to the motion.

46. Mr LAU Kong-wah recalled that when Members discussed the subject matter at an earlier House Committee meeting, Mr Ronny TONG said that although FS was disrespectful to LegCo, Members should not adjourn the Third Reading of the Bill because LegCo should not adopt a retaliatory attitude. He agreed with Mr TONG's view. He considered that the proposed motion was unbecoming. He pointed out that members of the public already did not have a high regard for LegCo, and the moving of such a humorous and sarcastic motion would further affect the public image of LegCo. He added that after being a LegCo Member for so many years, Mr Martin LEE should think about the impact of moving such a motion on himself and on LegCo. He appealed to Members to object to the motion.

47. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that he had come across even more absurd motions before. He did not consider it unbecoming to move a motion to express appreciation of and support for the Administration. He added that Members should not criticize another Member for moving a motion but should express their stance on the motion by voting.

48. Mr Albert CHAN said that if the proposed motion was considered flattering, Members should not move a motion of thanks to the Chief Executive for his Policy Address annually. He pointed out that many absurd motions had been moved at and passed by LegCo before, such as the listing of The Link Real Estate Investment Trust. Should Members be concerned about the motion being flattering, he could propose a motion to condemn FS for his prolonged absence at the debate on the Bill in the event that Mr Martin LEE's proposed motion was voted down.

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49. Mr Martin LEE said that many Members failed to understand his intention of moving the motion. He had earlier proposed moving a motion to adjourn the Third Reading of the Bill to express Members' dissatisfaction with FS for his disrespectful act. Had his proposal been supported, Members could have expressed their views on the matter at the Council meeting which would have been recorded. However, his proposal was not supported. In order to send a clear message to FS of LegCo's disapproval of his act, he had resorted to an indirect means of achieving this purpose by moving the proposed motion at the meeting. His intention was to give an opportunity for Members to restore their dignity on the matter. He felt sad that he had to use such a means, but he was pleased to learn that Members would object to the motion.

50. Mr Frederick FUNG said that Members should move a motion to regret the disrespectful act of FS. He considered CS's reply unacceptable given the constitutional obligation of the Executive Authority under the Basic Law. In his view, a Member's right to move a motion should be respected provided that his exercise of the right was in accordance with the Rules of Procedure (RoP) and the motion was worded in parliamentary language. It should not be a matter of concern as to whether the motion was worded humorously or satirically, and the mover should not be dissuaded. He further said that he would object to the proposed motion in order to express his dissatisfaction with the phenomenon of the Administration showing disrespect for LegCo. He appealed to Member to object to the motion.

51. Mr Martin LEE enquired whether he could vote against the motion.

52. The Chairman replied in the affirmative.

53. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that Members who moved and seconded a motion should support it, otherwise it would be wasting other Members' time. He asked Legal Adviser whether the mover and the Member who seconded the motion could vote against it.

54. In response, Legal Adviser said that there was no provision in RoP in this regard.

55. Ms Margaret NG said that there were precedents where the Chairman of a committee moved a motion on behalf of a committee and Members belonging to the same political grouping as the mover voted against the motion.

56. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that although RoP did not provide for the matter, he considered it a convention that the mover of a motion should not vote against it. Moreover, the proposed motion was moved by a Member in his personal capacity and not on behalf of a committee.

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57. Mr WONG Ting-kwong said that if a motion was objected to by all the Members voting, the motion should not exist.

58. The Chairman said that irrespective of the outcome of voting, the moving of any motion would be recorded.

59. Mr Martin LEE said that very often, Members would vote against a motion for adjournment debate.

60. The Chairman put the motion to vote. The result was: no Member voted for and 30 Members voted against the motion, while one Member abstained.

61. The Chairman declared that the motion was not carried.

**III. Business arising from previous Council meetings**

**Legal Service Division report on subsidiary legislation gazetted on 25 April 2008 and tabled in Council on 30 April 2008**

*(LC Paper No. LS 77/07-08)*

62. The Chairman said that a total of five items of subsidiary legislation, including three Commencement Notices, were gazetted on 25 April 2008 and tabled in the Council on 30 April 2008.

63. Members did not raise any query on these five items of subsidiary legislation.

64. The Chairman reminded Members that the deadline for amending these items of subsidiary legislation was 28 May 2008.

**IV. Business for the Council meeting on 14 May 2008**

**(a) Questions**

*(LC Paper No. CB(3) 568/07-08)*

65. The Chairman said that 20 questions (six oral and 14 written) had been scheduled for the meeting.

**(b) Bills - First Reading and moving of Second Reading**

66. The Chairman said that no notice had been received yet.

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(c) **Bills - resumption of debate on Second Reading, Committee Stage and Third Reading**

**Munsang College and Heep Yunn School (Change of Corporate Names and General Amendments) Bill 2008**

67. The Chairman said that at the House Committee meeting on 18 January 2008, Members did not raise objection to the resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill.

(d) **Government motion**

68. The Chairman said that no notice had been received yet.

(e) **Members' Bills - resumption of debate on Second Reading, Committee Stage and Third Reading**

**Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Charity Foundation Bill**

69. The Chairman said that at the House Committee meeting on 11 April 2008, Members did not raise objection to the resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill.

(f) **Members' motions**

(i) **Motion on "Perfecting lawn facilities in parks"**  
(*Wording of the motion issued vide LC Paper No. CB(3) 577/07-08 dated 30 April 2008.*)

(ii) **Motion on "Legislating to strengthen the protection for the rights and interests of property buyers"**  
(*Wording of the motion issued vide LC Paper No. CB(3) 576/07-08 dated 30 April 2008.*)

70. The Chairman said that the above motions would be moved by Mr Bernard CHAN and Mr Albert CHENG respectively, and the wording of the motions had been issued to Members.

71. The Chairman reminded Members that the deadline for giving notice of amendments, if any, to the motions was Tuesday, 6 May 2008.

**V. The Chief Executive's Question and Answer Session on 15 May 2008**

72. The Chairman informed Members that the CE's Question and Answer Session would be held from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm. The Chairman invited Members' views on issues which they would like CE to cover.

73. Ms Emily LAU said that she would like CE to cover the issue of universal suffrage for the CE and LegCo elections.

74. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung suggested that CE cover the topic of the introduction of statutory minimum wage.

75. Mr Albert HO suggested that CE cover the topic of inflation problem.

76. The Chairman said that the topics suggested by Members would be conveyed to CS.

**VI. Position on Bills Committees and subcommittees**

*(LC Paper No. CB(2) 1737/07-08)*

77. The Chairman said that there were 14 Bills Committees, nine subcommittees under the House Committee and five subcommittees under Panels in action. She added that there was one subcommittee on policy issue on the waiting list.

**VII. Proposed invitation to the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary to attend a meeting to discuss the recent inflation and price rises**

*(Letter dated 28 April 2008 from Hon Andrew CHENG to the Chairman of the House Committee (LC Paper No. CB(2) 1753/07-08(01))*

78. Before inviting Mr Andrew CHENG to explain his proposal to invite CS and FS to attend a House Committee meeting to discuss the recent inflation and price rises, the Chairman said that CS had earlier agreed to attend a special House Committee meeting and would decide on a date. As House Committee meetings and Finance Committee meetings would be held in the same Friday afternoon during most of the weeks in May and June, she considered that the special House Committee meeting could be held on a date proposed by CS which would not necessarily be a Friday. The Chairman further said that FS would attend a meeting of the Panel on Financial Affairs (FA Panel) on 10 June 2008 at 2:30 pm to discuss the macro-economic situation.

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79. Mr Andrew CHENG said that at a recent meeting of the Panel on Transport (Transport Panel) at which applications for fare increase from bus companies were discussed, members were concerned about the recent spate of fare increase applications by public utility companies. Members noted that at the debate on the Appropriation Bill 2008, FS had called on the public utility companies to have regard to their social responsibility in proposing fare increases. Members of the Transport Panel had requested to make a proposal to the House Committee to invite CS and FS to a meeting to discuss strategies to deal with inflation and price rises. While noting that FS would attend a meeting of the FA Panel, Mr CHENG pointed out that he was not a member of the FA Panel and the issue to be discussed was about the macro-economic situation. He sought Members' view on the best way to discuss the issue of inflation and price rises.

80. The Chairman enquired whether the Transport Panel had proposed the attendance of CS and FS at a special House Committee meeting or at a meeting of a subcommittee to be formed under the House Committee to examine the issue.

81. Mr Andrew CHENG said that the formation of a subcommittee had been proposed by a Panel member. The Transport Panel had not made a decision, and considered it appropriate to refer the matter to the House Committee for discussion as to whether CS and FS should be invited to a meeting of the House Committee to discuss the issue or whether a subcommittee should be formed under the House Committee.

82. Mr James TIEN said that he was also concerned about the recent inflation. He was a member of the FA Panel, and noted that the subject of inflation was normally discussed by the FA Panel. He considered it appropriate for the FA Panel to hold a special meeting and invite the relevant parties including CS, FS, the Chief Executive and other representatives of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and economists to discuss the subject. Non-Panel members should also be invited to the meeting.

83. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan considered it most important for FS to discuss with Members the measures to deal with the inflation problem, be it at a meeting of the House Committee or the FA Panel.

84. Dr YEUNG Sum shared the view that it was appropriate for the FA Panel to hold a meeting to discuss the subject of inflation and to invite non-Panel Members to attend the meeting as the issue was of common concern. He also agreed with the view that economists should be invited to the meeting.

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85. While agreeing that the broader subject of inflation and price rises could first be discussed by the FA Panel, Mr LAU Kong-wah said that the detailed deliberations on matters in various policy areas should be left to the respective Panels. In his view, it was more appropriate for the Transport Panel to discuss the fare increase of transport-related items as Panel members were more conversant with and had been following up the subject matter.

86. The Chairman said that the FA Panel would consider the overall issue of inflation and price rises from that perspective. Price rises of transport-related items would be dealt with by the Transport Panel, and not by the FA Panel. The Chairman added that the focus of discussions by the two Panels would be different.

87. Mrs Selina CHOW said that the subject of price rises was of concern to various Panels, and it had all along been the practice for different Panels to deal with Government fees and fees of public utilities falling within their respective policy areas. The FA Panel had invited FS to discuss important subject matters in the past. She considered it appropriate for the FA Panel to discuss the subject of inflation and to invite non-Panel Members to the meeting.

88. Mr Abraham SHEK said that Members belonging to The Alliance supported the discussion of the subject of inflation and price rises by the FA Panel and the invitation of non-Panel Members to join the discussion.

89. Mr CHAN Kam-lam, Chairman of the FA Panel, agreed that the issue be discussed by the FA Panel. He said that the FA Panel would invite FS and the Chief Executive of HKMA to its meetings once every six months to discuss the economic situation of Hong Kong, and non-Panel Members were invited to attend these meetings. The FA Panel had invited FS to its meeting in June 2008, and non-Panel members would also be invited. He added that unless the majority of members of the FA Panel considered it necessary to hold a special meeting in May 2008 to discuss the issue, he would adhere to the original schedule for FS to attend the meeting of the FA Panel in June 2008.

90. The Chairman said that Members were of the view that FS should be invited to the meeting of the FA Panel to discuss not only the macro-economic situation but also inflation, price rises and measures to deal with these problems.

91. Mr CHAN Kam-lam noted Members' views, and said that the FA Panel would write to FS in this regard.



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**VIII. Any other business**

92. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 3:37 pm.

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Legislative Council Secretariat  
8 May 2008  
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