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25 April 2008

The Hon Henry TANG Ying-yen, GBS, JP
The Chief Secretary for Administration
Government Secretariat
Central Government Offices
Lower Albert Road
Hong Kong

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

Thank you for your reply dated 23 April 2008 on the captioned subject. Your reply has been discussed at the House Committee meeting this afternoon, and I am writing again to reiterate the concern of Members.

Members are dissatisfied that your reply has not explained the prolonged absence of the Financial Secretary (FS) during the resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Appropriation Bill 2008 during the Council meeting of 16 and 17 April 2008. Members have asked me to remind the Administration that as the public officer in charge of the Appropriation Bill, FS has a constitutional obligation to sit through the debate to listen to Members' views on it. This responsibility cannot be discharged by other Principal Officials on FS's behalf.

You have advised in your reply that the Administration's established practice is for the relevant public officer to attend the Council meeting to listen to Members' views on motion debates and take his bills through the Council. However, as the approach taken by the incumbent FS deviates from this practice and is at variance with that of his predecessors, Members have sought clarification as to how such an approach is in compliance with the established practice as well as an explanation by FS to account for his absence. Members have also requested an undertaking by the Administration for the relevant

Principal Officials to sit through the Council meetings to listen to Members' views on bills introduced by the Executive Authority.

In addition, a Member has requested FS to apologize for his disrespectful act.

I would appreciate your clarification on and response to the above, and look forward to your early response.

(Miriam LAU Kin-yee)
Chairman
Legislative Council House Committee