



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China



立法會
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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10 December 2007

(By fax and post)

Ms Clara CHONG

Dear Ms CHONG

Public Accounts Committee

**Public hearings on Chapters 5 and 6
of the Director of Audit's Report No. 49**

I refer to your letter dated 6 December 2007 which has been considered by the Public Accounts Committee at its meeting today.

The Committee has directed me to explain to you that it is a standing committee of the Legislative Council. It oversees the use of public expenditure through consideration of the reports of the Director of Audit laid before the Council on the Government's accounts and the results of value for money audits of the Government and those organisations which receive funding from the Government. The Committee's consideration of the Director's reports involves gathering evidence relevant to the facts contained in the reports, so that the Committee may draw conclusions and make recommendations in a constructive and forward-looking manner. The objective of the whole exercise is such that the lessons learned from past experience and the Committee's comments on the performance of the public officers or other personnel concerned will enable the Government to improve its control over the expenditure of public funds, with due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

As a standing committee of the Legislative Council, the Committee may exercise the powers conferred by the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap 382) to order any person to attend before it and to give evidence or to provide documents by way of summons. Where a person to whom a summons is issued does not attend before the Committee as required by the summons, a warrant may be issued to apprehend him and bring him before the Committee.

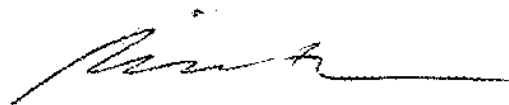
In your letter, you mentioned allegations against you and materials in support. I am directed to clarify that the holding of public hearings on the Director of Audit's reports is part of the Committee's established process for gathering evidence relevant to the reports for the purposes specified in the second paragraph. The Committee is not concerned with allegations against any person. Hence, there is no question of making allegations against you at the hearings.

The Committee has noted that you wish to be provided with a full set of the documents which are relevant to the matter and are likely to bear on the areas in which the Committee would require your assistance or evidence. You may recall that my letter of 6 December 2007 informed you that the Committee has requested the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) to allow you to have access to the relevant documents. I understand that HKTB is liaising with you in this respect.

Regarding the areas which the Committee would require your assistance or evidence, please note that the Committee may raise questions on any issues raised in Chapters 5 and 6 in order to ascertain the relevant facts contained therein. You will note that the Committee issued two letters on 6 December 2007 and another letter on 7 December 2007 to the Executive Director of HKTB, copied to you, setting out some specific questions and requesting documents relating to Chapters 5 and 6. The Committee also sent you a letter on 6 December 2007 enquiring about the performance-based variable payments. The questions and issues raised in these letters, though not exhaustive, indicate some of the areas on which the Committee may focus at the hearings.

As regards your request for alternative dates for the public hearings, as I have explained to you in my letter of 6 December 2007, the Committee has already considered your need for more time to obtain and study the relevant documents and hence has rescheduled the hearings to 13, 14, 17, 18 and 20 December 2007. The Committee requests that you appear before it on these dates as scheduled.

Yours sincerely



(Ms Miranda HON)
Clerk

Public Accounts Committee

c.c. Executive Director of the HKTB
Deputy Executive Director of the HKTB