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**NARCOTICS DIVISION
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT**
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6 May 2008

Clerk, Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
(Attn: Ms Serena CHU)

Dear Ms CHU,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the
results of value for money audits (Report No. 50)**

**Chapter 5: The Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation
of Drug Abusers (SARDA)**

Thank you for your letter of 30 April 2008. Our response is set out in the following paragraphs.

Roles and responsibilities of the representative of the Narcotics Division (ND) in the Executive Committee (EC) of SARDA

All along an ND representative has sat on the EC of SARDA as an observer, and provided advice to SARDA on anti-drug policy matters in relation to its operation. Attendance of an observer is provided for in Article 27(a) of the Constitution of SARDA:

Article 27(a): “The Executive Committee may invite any person to attend any meeting of the Executive Committee or any General Meeting of the Society in an advisory capacity or in the capacity of an observer.”

Whether the ND representative has voting right in the EC according to the Constitution of SARDA

The following articles of the Constitution of SARDA are relevant -

Article 11: “Besides the Trustees, who shall not be less than three nor more than seven in number, the members of the Executive Committee shall be elected in general meeting from members of the Society, and thereafter members of the Executive Committee shall elect among themselves the following Officers :

- (i) A Chairman
- (ii) A Vice Chairman
- (iii) An Honorary Treasurer
- (iv) An Honorary Secretary
- (v) An Immediate Past Chairman and
- (vi) such other officer(s) as the Executive Committee shall from time to time see fit. (*Underlining added.*)”

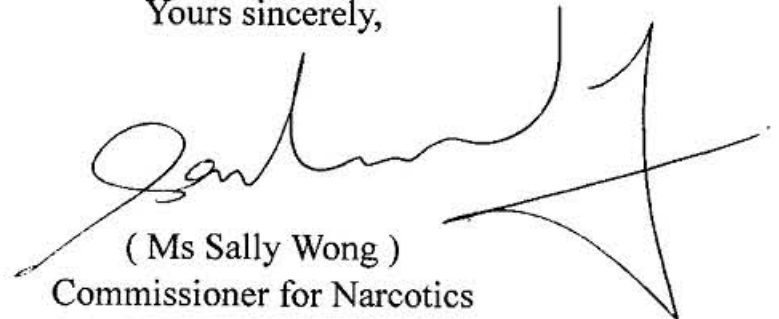
Article 14(a): “There shall be an Executive Committee consisting of the Officers (other than the Trustees) and not more than sixteen other members of the Society excluding official Government representatives, ex-officio members and co-opted members.”

Article 18: “Questions arising shall be decided by a majority of votes of those present. In the event of any equality of votes, the Presiding Member shall be entitled to a casting vote.”

Most issues discussed at the EC were resolved without the need to vote. But on the several occasions when voting was necessary, Government representatives attending the EC meetings were not expected to vote and did not vote. Supporting examples have been given in the Director of Health’s reply of 5 May to you.

I note the latest position taken by SARDA in its letter of 2 May, and agree with SARDA that this issue should be clearly stated in the Funding and Service Agreement to be concluded between DH and SARDA. I will be pleased to work with DH, SWD and SARDA on the appropriate government representation in SARDA in future taking into account the respective roles of different government parties.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Sally Wong)
Commissioner for Narcotics

c.c. Secretary for Security
Director of Health
Executive Director of SARDA
Director of Social Welfare
Secretary for Financial Services &
the Treasury
Director of Audit