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消費者委員會 CONSUMER COUNCIL

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18 June 2008

Ms Percy Ma
 Clerk to the Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services
 Legislative Council
 Legislative Council Building
 8 Jackson Road
 Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Ma,

**Reports of the Consultancy Study
 on the Demand for and Supply of Legal and Related Services**

Further to my discussion with the Panel at its Special Meeting on 29 May 2008 regarding the omission of information in the said Reports regarding the mediation service provided by the Consumer Council in resolving consumer disputes and the legal assistance offered by the Consumer Legal Action Fund, we write at the request of the Chairperson to provide further details.

The Council receives complaints from aggrieved consumers and resolves their disputes with traders by mediation. The number of complaints received by the Council is shown as follows:

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 (Jan-Apr)
No. of Complaints Received	25,756	36,614	35,962	38,521	11,314

On the other hand, legal assistance is offered to aggrieved consumers by the Consumer Legal Action Fund established in 1994 with a Government grant of \$10 million. The Fund aims to give easier consumer access to legal remedies by providing financial support and legal assistance for the benefit of consumers, particularly, groups with similar grievances in cases involving significant public interest and injustice. Through supporting justifiable cases, the Fund also aims to deter business malpractices and enhance public awareness of their consumer rights.

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The Consumer Council, as the Trustee, is responsible, through a Board of Administrators, for the overall administration and investment of the Fund. The Board of Administrators is in turn underpinned by a Management Committee. The latter, whose members were appointed by the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (formerly the Economic Development and Labour Bureau), is responsible for advising on the eligibility and merits of applications seeking assistance from the Fund.

Since its establishment, the Fund has considered 109 groups of cases. The number of applicants of each group ranges from 1 to 406. Assistance has been granted to 32 groups of cases.

We note that consumer related matters are one of the major concerns of the household respondents as illustrated in Chapter 3 of the Reports. As such, we believe that the above information may throw light on both the demand and supply of the local legal and related services addressed by the Reports.

For the Panel's information, it is not shown in the record of the Council that the Council has been invited by letter or otherwise to participate in the consultancy study that the Reports concern.

It is our pleasure to offer any further assistance should the Panel require.

Yours sincerely,



Simon CHUI
Senior Legal Counsel
Consumer Council