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2 November 2007

Mrs Percy Ma
Clerk to Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs
Legislative Council Secretariat
3/F, Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Mrs Ma,

**Enquiry regarding meeting with candidates
of 2007 Legislative Council By-election**

At the meeting of the Panel on 15 October 2007, a Member asked the Administration to provide a written response on when and the circumstances under which the Administration had made a policy decision that the Principal Officials ("POs") may meet with Mrs Regina Ip and other candidates standing for the LegCo Hong Kong Island Geographical Constituency By-election. Our response is set out below.

The Government welcomes suggestions from members of various sectors of the community for improving governance and facilitating the development of Hong Kong. We are also fully committed to upholding the fair, open, and just election system and promoting public participation in elections.

In early October 2007, the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Savantas Policy Institute, Mrs Regina Ip, requested to meet with the POs to discuss various policy issues. In our view, such meetings, if held, would be part of the POs' engagement with the public. However, as Mrs Ip had already announced her intention to run for the

2007 LegCo by-election, the Government considered it necessary to handle the request carefully.

We considered that given Mrs Ip's declared intention, despite the fact that such meetings would not be election-related, we need to ensure parity of treatment for other candidates in the by-election should we accede to her request. We did not expect too many candidates to take part in the by-election and the possible meeting commitments thus generated would not create undue workload on the POs. Therefore, if the schedules of the POs permitted, meetings with Mrs Ip could be arranged. To ensure parity of treatment, POs who decided to meet with Mrs Ip should also accede to similar requests from other candidates in the by-election. Thus, the whole matter has been handled fully in accordance with the principle of fairness and with election-related requirements.

Yours sincerely,

(Ivanhoe Chang)
for Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs