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GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT
LOWER ALBERT ROAD
HONG KONG

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7 July 2008

Clerk to Panel on Commerce and Industry
Legislative Council Secretariat
3rd floor, Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road
Hong Kong

By Fax No. 28696794

(Attn: Ms YUE Tin-po)

Dear Ms YUE,

Panel on Commerce and Industry
Meeting on 17 June 2008

At the meeting of the Panel on Commerce and Industry on 17 June 2008, Hon. SIN Chung-kai asked whether the Government would consider reviewing and relaxing the current entry policy for Taiwan residents in view of the improved cross-strait relations. Our reply is set out below.

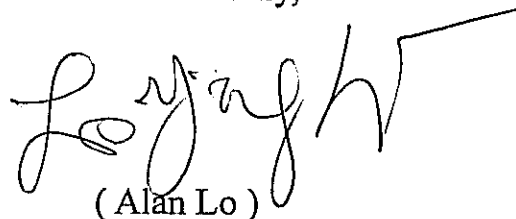
Under the existing arrangements, Chinese residents of Taiwan should apply for entry permits (i.e. Taiwan Visit Permits) for visits to Hong Kong. Applications for single or multiple Taiwan Visit Permits should be submitted through the authorised airlines in Taiwan to the Hong Kong Immigration Department (ImmD) for processing. Single Taiwan Visit Permits are valid for 3 months and good for a stay of up to 90 days. Multiple Taiwan Visit Permits are valid for either 1 year (regular-size) or 3 years (jumbo-size), both good for a stay of 14 days on each landing. The ImmD pledges to finalise 100% of the applications for visit permits for a stay of 14 days or less within 2 working days, and 95% of the applications for visit permits for a stay of more than 14 days within 15 working days, upon receipt of all necessary documents.

Over the past few years, the ImmD has proactively taken various measures to enhance the travel convenience of visitors from Taiwan. In March 2002, the ImmD introduced the iPermit scheme which offers an additional choice for Taiwan residents in applying for entry permit to visit Hong Kong. Chinese residents of Taiwan may approach the office of an authorised airline (or its authorised representative) in Taiwan to make an application. The application is transmitted through the Internet to the ImmD's iPermit System. The result of the application will be made known to the applicant instantly. The applicant may board a flight for Hong Kong with an e-notification slip and collect his iPermit at a designated service desk in the Hong Kong International Airport prior to presenting for immigration arrival clearance. An iPermit is valid for 2 months and good for 2 trips to Hong Kong, with a stay of up to 14 days on each landing. The scheme is particularly convenient for "pack-and-go" travellers coming to Hong Kong for sight-seeing.

Before June 2006, Taiwan residents holding "Mainland Travel Permit for Taiwan Residents" 《台灣居民來往大陸通行證》(MTP) [commonly known as "Tai Bao Zheng" (台胞證)] bearing a valid entry/exit endorsement (入出境簽注) for the Mainland may only enter Hong Kong and stay for 7 days when they are passing through Hong Kong en route to or from the Mainland. With effect from June 2006, holders of valid MTP with a valid entry/exit endorsement for the Mainland may visit Hong Kong and stay for 7 days irrespective of whether they are transiting Hong Kong, provided that the normal immigration requirements are met. The new arrangement has provided Taiwan visitors and businesspeople with greater flexibility in planning their journey.

The Government will continue to review from time to time the entry policy on visitors from around the world (including Taiwan) to facilitate their visits to Hong Kong. Further facilitation measures will be implemented as and when appropriate.

Yours faithfully,



(Alan Lo)

for Secretary for Security

c.c.

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (Attn: Mr. Alex Chan)
Director of Immigration (Attn: Dr. Helen Chan)