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GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

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13 February 2008

Clerk to the Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
Legislative Council Secretariat
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn : Ms Flora TAI)

Dear Ms TAI,

Further to our letter of 5 February 2008, we wish to confirm that it is a condition in the current domestic pay television programme service licence of the HK Cable Television Limited that upon receipt of written notice given by the Broadcasting Authority, HK Cable Television Limited shall within 6 months thereafter make available to the Government not more than three channels as may be specified in the notice free of charge and expense.

'Channel' as defined in the licence refers to a television programme channel which can transmit television programmes at a quality commonly known as standard definition television and be provided 24 hours a day.

For Government to contemplate making use of the said licence condition to develop a television channel for cultural and arts programmes, there will still be a need to make the necessary investment in programme development and production which is not covered by the said licence condition.

When the HK Arts Development Council (HKADC) approached carriers including HK Cable Television Limited to operate a cultural channel in 2003-04, HK Cable Television Limited had quoted a carriage fee because HKADC was not part of Government.

As mentioned at the Home Affairs Panel meeting on 14 December 2007, the Home Affairs Bureau, in conjunction with HKADC, has recently started an informal sounding out of television stations on the possibility of having cultural and arts programmes and information broadcast on television during specified time periods each week or each day.

The HKADC will be discussing the subject in more detail in its new term. In the event that the matter is to be taken forward, the HKADC will go through a due process of open tender. It is expected that amongst others, assessment on the audience reach of the television station, programming costs to be charged, carriage fee if applicable, will all be taken into account.

Yours sincerely,



(Winnie SO)
for Secretary for Home Affairs