

# 立法會 *Legislative Council*

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## **Paper for the House Committee meeting on 10 October 2008**

### **Arrangements for the debate on the 2008-2009 Policy Address**

#### **Purpose**

This paper invites the House Committee (HC) to take note of the arrangements for the debate on the 2008-2009 Policy Address. The arrangements are the same as those for the debates on the Policy Addresses in the past three years.

#### **Schedule for the debate**

2. According to Rule 13(1) of the Rules of Procedure, at a Council meeting not less than 14 days after the Chief Executive has presented a Policy Address to the Council, a motion may be moved for an address of thanks to the Chief Executive for his address. In line with the established practice, such a motion, which is generally known as the “Motion of Thanks”, is moved by the Chairman of HC.
3. Subject to the President’s determination of the dates of the Council meetings for the 2008-2009 session, the Secretariat anticipates that the Policy Address will be delivered on 15 October 2008, and the debate on the Motion of Thanks will be held on 29, 30 and 31 October 2008, i.e. two weeks after the delivery of the Policy Address.
4. To enable Members to have the opportunity to understand the contents of the Policy Address and the policy commitments of Policy Bureaux, policy briefings for Panels will be held after the delivery of the Policy Address and before the commencement of the debate.

## **Arrangements for the debate on the 2008-2009 Policy Address**

5. The arrangements for the debate on the 2008-2009 Policy Address are as follows:

### Duration of the debate

- (a) The debate will be held on three consecutive days in five sessions. Each debate session will be dedicated to a group of policy areas to be agreed between the Administration and HC;
- (b) The sequence of the debate sessions will also be agreed between the Administration and HC. The starting time of each debate session will depend on the length of the previous session;
- (c) The first day of the debate (29 October 2008) will start at 11:00 am, and the second and third days (30 and 31 October 2008) at 9:00 am. The ending time for each of the three days of the debate will be about 9:00 pm but might be extended for 30 minutes if necessary, provided that the total duration of the debate does not exceed three days;
- (d) There will not be any breaks for meals on any of the three days of the debate;

### Mode of debate

- (e) A Member may speak once in one or more sessions of the five debate sessions, but subject to the total speaking time limit of 30 minutes. The HC Chairman, as mover of the Motion of Thanks, will have an additional 15-minute speaking time for moving the Motion and making his/her reply;
- (f) Members' speeches in a session should be confined to the policy areas specified for that session;
- (g) After Members have spoken in each session, there will be a 10-minute suspension of the meeting for the designated public officers for that session to co-ordinate their response to the Council. The President may exercise discretion not to suspend the meeting if the designated public officers consider the break not necessary;
- (h) The total speaking time limit for designated public officers in each debate session is as follows:

- (i) for one or two officers, each officer may speak for not less than 15 minutes, subject to the total time limit of 45 minutes. Under this arrangement, where two officers are to speak, the officer speaking first should not speak for more than 30 minutes, leaving at least 15 minutes for the other officer. Subject to such a restriction, it is up to the officers to determine their actual speaking time; and
  - (ii) for three or more officers, it will be calculated on the basis of 15-minute speaking time limit for each officer;
- (i) Once all designated public officers for a particular debate session have spoken, the next session will begin immediately unless the time is approaching 9:00 pm; and
  - (j) If there is/are amendments to the motion, the HC Chairman will have another five minutes to speak on the amendment(s) at the end of the last session. Voting on the amendment(s) will then take place. The HC Chairman may then use the remainder of the 15 minutes given to him/her for moving the Motion for making his/her reply. No Member may speak after the mover of the Motion has made his/her reply. The Council will then vote on the Motion.

### **Advice sought**

6. Members are invited to take note of the schedule and arrangements for the debate on the 2008-2009 Policy Address set out in paragraphs 3 to 5 above.

Legislative Council Secretariat  
8 October 2008

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