
立法會秘書處

Legislative Council Secretariat

新聞稿 Press Release

LegCo to debate procrastinating public consultation on constitutional development

The Legislative Council will hold a meeting this Wednesday (February 11) at 11 am in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building. During the meeting, Members will debate a motion on procrastinating public consultation on constitutional development.

The motion, to be proposed by Hon Albert HO, says: "That this Council strongly condemns the Chief Executive Mr Donald TSANG Yam-kuen for failing to honour his pledge made in the Policy Address by procrastinating public consultation on constitutional development, hence breaking faith with the people."

Members will debate another motion on relaxing the eligibility criteria for legal aid. The motion, to be moved by Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG, says: "That, as the high litigation fees in Hong Kong are beyond the means of the middle class in general, in particular cases for which appeals may be lodged to the Court of Final Appeal where the litigation fees incurred are often astronomical, it is not uncommon that middle-class people go bankrupt because of their involvement in legal proceedings, hence the provision of appropriate legal aid services to such middle-class people is very important; however, under section 5 of the existing Legal Aid Ordinance (Cap. 91), the asset limit for legal aid applicants is \$165,700, which is far below the actual need, rendering the majority

of the middle class being excluded from the protection net of legal aid; if involved in litigation, the middle-class people are neither able to pay the high lawyer fees on their own nor eligible to apply for legal aid, they are therefore deprived of judiciary justice; on the other hand, the existing legal aid services only cover litigation cases in Hong Kong, and over the past two decades, a large number of Hong Kong permanent residents have been working and living in the Mainland, and it is very likely that they may get involved in legal proceedings in their daily lives, business operation or work, but they have nowhere to turn to for any legal assistance; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to:

(a) conduct a comprehensive review on the existing legal aid system;

(b) relax the asset limit for legal aid applicants (including that for the Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme) to a reasonable level so that more people in need are eligible to apply for legal aid; and

(c) extend the scope of the existing legal aid services to cover litigation cases in the Mainland involving Hong Kong permanent residents who are in the Mainland."

Dr Hon Margaret NG, Hon Albert HO and Prof Hon Patrick LAU will move separate amendments to Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG's motion.

On Government motion, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development will move a resolution under the Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation Ordinance to resolve that the contingent liability of the Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation under contracts of insurance shall not at any time exceed the sum of 30,000 million dollars.

On Members' motion, Hon TAM Yiu-chung will move a

resolution under Article 75 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China to amend Rule 80 of the Rules of Procedure of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on attendance of witness.

On bill, the Adaptation of Laws Bill 2009 will be introduced into the Council for First and Second Readings. Debate on the Bill will be adjourned.

During the meeting, Members will also ask the Administration 20 questions on various policy areas, six of which require oral replies.

The agenda of the above meeting can be obtained via the Legislative Council InfoFax Service (Tel: 2869 9568) or the Legislative Council web site (<http://www.legco.gov.hk>).

Members of the public are welcome to observe the proceedings of the meeting from the public galleries of the Legislative Council Chamber. They may reserve seats by calling 2869 9399 during office hours. Seats will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Members of the public can also listen to the meeting via the audio webcast system on the Legislative Council homepage.

Ends/Monday, February 9, 2009

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