

新聞稿 Press Release

LegCo Members' Operating Expenses Reimbursement

In response to media enquiries, the Secretary General of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat, Ms Pauline Ng, said today (June 2) that the current arrangement for Members' claims for reimbursement of their entertainment and travelling expenses on a non-accountable basis was part of the proposals put forward by the Administration in July 1999 for the Finance Committee's approval.

The proposals were based on the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Remuneration for Members of the Executive Council and the Legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the Independent Commission) to give LegCo Members greater flexibility in the use of their operating expenses reimbursements and more support to help them in discharging their functions.

Ms Ng pointed out that in 1999, the Independent Commission appreciated Members' wish to have more resources to improve office operation but considered it inappropriate to increase the operating expenses reimbursements due to the then economic environment. Instead, it recommended a number of new arrangements to provide Members with further flexibility in the use of the reimbursement for staff and office expenses. Among these new arrangements was the removal of the then 50% ceiling for the non-accountable portion (i.e. not supported by receipts) of the allowance for "entertainment and travelling expenses" to streamline administrative arrangement and save costs.

To meet Members' need to expend more on staffing, the Administration also put forward the proposal to allow Members to deploy up to 50% of the allowance for "entertainment and travelling expenses" for meeting staff expenses on an accountable basis. As the Government had to pick up the cost of severance payments to these staff upon the winding up of offices by Members, the requirement for such claims to be supported by receipts was considered necessary.

The above proposals were approved by the Finance Committee on 2 July 1999.

Ms Ng said, "LegCo Members are provided with reimbursements to cover expenses arising out of their LegCo duties. As the reimbursements are public funds, Members should use them in an open, fair and accountable manner. For this purpose, a "Guide for Reimbursement of Operating Expenses for Members of the Legislative Council" is provided for Members and is accessible on the LegCo Website. When submitting claims for reimbursement, Members must be in full compliance with the Guide."

"The LegCo Subcommittee on Members Remuneration and Operating Expenses Reimbursement will be meeting shortly to discuss matters relating to this subject. The Secretariat is currently preparing a background paper for the Subcommittee," she added.

Ends/Tuesday, June 2, 2009

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