

Legislative Council Secretariat

新聞稿 Press Release

Chairman of the LegCo House Committee calls for improvement to the relationship between the Executive Authority and the Legislature

Hon Miriam LAU, the Chairman of the House Committee of the Legislative Council (LegCo), described the current relationship between the Executive Authority and the Legislature as "stagnant". She hoped that both the Executive Authority and the Legislature could show sincerity and determination in making efforts to improve their relationship, in order to achieve the effect of "exalting the good and eliminating the bad".

At a session-end press conference of the LegCo House Committee today (14 July), Hon Miriam LAU said: "Although there is still room for improvement in the approach adopted by some officials appointed under the Political Appointment System in handling matters, the relationship between the Executive Authority and the Legislature has never been as irreconcilable as ice and hot coals". She said that when there were occasions at which government officials had not handled matters properly, Members had a duty to point them out. For example, some Members had expressed dissatisfaction with the response and attitude of some officials appointed under the Political Appointment System at committee meetings as well as the Administration's failure to provide the discussion topic for a special committee meeting, which had affected the relationship between the Executive Authority and the Legislature. On the other hand, when government officials had done an outstanding job, Members

had spared no praise for them. For instance, the Government's handling of the Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill 2008 and the Voting by Imprisoned Persons Bill had been commended by LegCo Members.

Hon Miriam LAU said: "The current relationship between the Executive Authority and the Legislature is indeed in a somewhat 'stagnant' state. To break the stalemate, the Executive Authority has to be more positive and proactive in communicating with the Legislature and take LegCo Members' views seriously, while the latter needs to be more understanding about the former's situation, so as to fulfil their respective responsibilities on the basis of mutual trust and respect."

Hon Fred LI, the Deputy Chairman of the House Committee, said that according to the Legislative Programme provided by the Administration to LegCo, the Government had intended to introduce 20 bills into LegCo in this session. In the end, it had introduced 18 of them. Including another seven bills which were not in the Legislative Programme, the Government had introduced a total of 25 bills into LegCo in the current legislative session.

He further said that despite Members' repeated requests for early introduction of bills, most of the bills were introduced towards the end of the current session. Of the 25 bills introduced into LegCo, 20 were introduced in May or later and five of them were not introduced until the last Council meeting of the current session on 8 July. To facilitate the expeditious processing of these five bills, the House Committee had held an additional meeting on 10 July.

Hon Miriam LAU found the above situation plainly undesirable, and she hoped that the Administration would make keen efforts to improve it. She also pointed out that since the beginning of this LegCo term, Members had already been fully engaged in their work, with numerous meetings held by Bills Committees and subcommittees on policy issues and the duration of these meetings being very long. This reflected

the serious work attitude of LegCo Members on one hand, and it also showed that there were many issues of public concern on the other. Where major public interest was involved, Members would hold meetings to have in-depth discussions, or even appoint subcommittees dedicated to study the issues concerned.

Hon Miriam LAU stated that this session was also unprecedented in that two committees had been appointed and authorized to exercise the powers conferred by the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance at the beginning of the session, to study issues arising from Lehman Brothers-related minibonds and structured financial products and matters relating to the post-service work of Mr LEUNG Chin-man respectively. As the issues concerned were very complicated and involved a large number of witnesses, the two committees had held hearings and closed meetings intensively. She hoped that the two committees would complete their work soon and present their reports to LegCo, to let the public know the truth and to make forward-looking recommendations to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents.

Regarding duty visits, Hon Miriam LAU said that the House Committee had given support for three committees to conduct duty visits during the summer recess, including the visit to South Korea and Taiwan by the Subcommittee on Poverty Alleviation in July, the visit to Eastern Europe by a delegation organized by the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee in September and the visit to the USA and Canada by the Subcommittee on Harbourfront Planning in September. She said that the committees concerned would need to undertake a lot of preparatory work before the visits and they would also have hectic visit programmes. The committees concerned would prepare detailed reports in no time after the visits to report their findings and observations. As a matter of fact, duty visits are indeed a "physically and mentally demanding" task for Members.

On LegCo Members' request to visit Sichuan in connection with the reconstruction support for the earthquake and the

utilization of the funds from Hong Kong, Hon Miriam LAU hoped that the visit could take place soon. She also said that the Panel on Economic Development and the Panel on Environmental Affairs had been invited to visit Guangdong Province in the middle of May, and she hoped that more LegCo Panels would also have the opportunities to conduct duty visits to the Mainland in future to enhance communication with the Mainland Authorities.

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