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By fax (2978 7569) and letter

19 February 2010

Ms YUE Tin-po
Clerk to Subcommittee
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms YUE,

**Subcommittee on Census and Statistics (Annual Earnings and Hours Survey) Order:
Response to Subcommittee's Comment at Meeting
on 10 February 2010**

At the meeting of Subcommittee on Census and Statistics (Annual Earnings and Hours Survey) Order held on 10 February 2010, there was an opinion that item "2(f)(vi): Cost of providing meal benefits in kind" of the Schedule be listed as a separate item under "(2): Employment information", rather than as a sub-item under "(2)f: amount of wage for the relevant wage period". Our response is as follows:

- (a) The Annual Earnings and Hours Survey (AEHS) was introduced by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) in May 2009 to provide statistics on wage distribution of employees in Hong Kong. These statistics are useful for studies on labour-related topics by the private sector and the Government, including but not limited to analyses related to the implementation of the Statutory Minimum Wage.

- (b) To facilitate international comparison on wage statistics, it is an established practice of C&SD to follow relevant international statistical standards promulgated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in conducting surveys collecting wage information. As far as the definition of "wages" is concerned, "meal benefits in kind" is included as a wage component in accordance with the recommendation of ILO. We therefore consider that the existing presentation in the Census and Statistics (Annual Earnings and Hours Survey) Order, i.e. listing "meal benefits in kind" as a sub-item under "amount of wage for the relevant wage period", is appropriate and would better be kept unchanged.

We note that different users may have different analysis/research needs and thus may wish to select different components of "wages" to suit their requirements. In this connection, C&SD would, if requested, compile different sets of wage statistics based on data collected from AEHS which can meet the users' needs for their reference.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the Subcommittee's valuable advice on the Order.

Yours' sincerely,



(Howard WONG Ho-fai)

for Commissioner for Census and Statistics

c.c.

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Attn: Ms Jenny CHAN, Fax: 2528 3345)
Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Attn: Mr FONG Ngai, Fax: 2544 3271)