

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2191/09-10(05)

Ref. : CB1/PL/CI

Panel on Commerce and Industry

Meeting on 15 June 2010

**Updated background brief on
the work of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices and
the Office of the Government of the HKSAR in Beijing**

Purpose

This paper provides a summary of views expressed by the Panel on Commerce and Industry (the Panel) on the work of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices¹ (ETOs) and the Office of the Government of the HKSAR in Beijing (BJO) in 2008-2009.

Background

2. The ETOs and BJO, with the exception of the Geneva ETO whose main function is to represent the HKSAR as a member of the World Trade Organization, perform the major function of promoting Hong Kong's economic and trade interests, and strengthening economic ties and cooperation between Hong Kong and its trading partners. The ETOs and BJO also seek to promote Hong Kong's image as an international city, a vibrant and free economy. In conjunction with Invest Hong Kong, the ETOs help to attract more inward investment into Hong Kong and overseas business entities to set up their regional offices or headquarters in Hong Kong. The ETOs monitor the political and economic developments in the countries/places which fall within their respective purviews, and maintain close network of contacts with the governments, legislative bodies, business communities, the media, think-tanks and academia. BJO is responsible for enhancing liaison and communications between the HKSAR Government and the Central People's Government.

¹ ETOs include Geneva ETO, Washington ETO, New York ETO, San Francisco ETO, Brussels ETO, London ETO, Berlin ETO, Tokyo ETO, Sydney ETO, Singapore ETO, Toronto ETO, Guangdong ETO, Shanghai ETO and Chengdu ETO.

3. Since 1995, it has been the practice for overseas/Mainland ETOs and BJO to report their work to the Panel on an annual basis.

Discussion by the Panel on Commerce and Industry

4. At the Panel meeting on 16 June 2009, the overseas/Mainland ETOs and BJO briefed members on their work between June 2008 and May 2009.

5. Noting the State Council Premier WEN Jia-bao's announcement of the goal of developing Shanghai into an international financial centre by 2020, Panel members urged the Administration to strive for participation in important finance forums held in the Mainland. The Shanghai ETO advised that it was the Central People's Government's stance to develop HKSAR and Shanghai as complementary financial centres so that greater and wider synergies could be generated resulting in win-win-situations. To this end, the HKSAR Government had maintained close liaison with the Shanghai authorities and shared experience with them on relevant financial issues.

6. Some Panel members raised concern about the development of the multilateral trade negotiations under the Doha Development Agenda of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Geneva ETO advised that Hong Kong had been participating actively in the negotiation process by working intensively with other WTO Members to bridge the gaps among different groups on a number of key modalities of the negotiations on non-agricultural market access.

7. As regards the progress of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) signed with various wine-producing countries, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development advised that Hong Kong had already signed MOUs with five wine-producing countries and one wine-producing region, namely, France (and its Bordeaux region), Spain, Australia, Italy and Hungary. Negotiations on the signing of MOUs were underway with the United States, New Zealand and Chile.

Latest position

8. The Heads of ETOs and BJO will brief the Panel on 15 June 2010 on their work since their last report in June 2009.

Relevant papers

Information paper on reports on the work of the overseas Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices provided by the Administration for the Commerce and Industry Panel meeting on 16 June 2009

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ci/papers/ci0616cb1-1866-5-e.pdf>

Information paper on report on the work of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's Offices in the Mainland provided by the Administration for the Commerce and Industry Panel meeting on 16 June 2009

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ci/papers/ci0616cb1-1866-6-e.pdf>

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the Commerce and Industry Panel meeting on 16 June 2009

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ci/papers/ci0616cb1-1866-7-e.pdf>

Minutes of Commerce and Industry Panel meeting on 16 June 2009

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ci/minutes/ci20090616.pdf>

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
11 June 2010