

**Legislative Council Panel on
Information Technology and Broadcasting**

Special Meeting on 16 June 2011

Internet Learning Support Programme

**Speaking Notes of Mr Bassanio So
Former Deputy Government Chief Information Officer**

Chairman,

I would like to make the following clarifications in relation to Mr Jeremy Godfrey's representation to the Panel that in July 2010, after proposals had been received and while they were formally evaluated, a civil servant in the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) reported to him about a tele-conversation with the Financial Secretary's Office (FSO).

I confirm that it was me who reported to Mr Godfrey about my tele-conversation with Mr Frankie Yip of the FSO. Details as follows.

In my daily work as Deputy Government Chief Information Officer, I was responsible for promoting the use of social media within the Government, esp. among Principal Officials. In 2010, OGCIO presented the FSO with a proposal to set up a social networking platform for the Financial Secretary to interact with the public, particularly the younger generation, on the Budget. Because of that, I liaised frequently with Mr. Frankie Yip on the phone. Occasionally, during our discussion on the social media proposal, Mr Yip would enquire about the progress of the Internet Learning Support Programme (ILSP). Since it was Financial Secretary's initiative to set up the ILSP, the FSO would like to be kept informed about the progress.

It was during one of our tele-conversation on the social media proposal in July (after we had received five proposals but before the selection panel had concluded the exercise) that Mr Yip asked me about the likelihood of iProA being selected. I replied that it was for the selection panel consisting of representatives from OGCIO, OFTA and the Education Bureau and chaired by Mr Godfrey to decide. Mr Yip then asked me if Mr Godfrey were aware of Financial Secretary's views. Nevertheless, he didn't clarify with me what the views were. I replied that I didn't know but would let Mr Godfrey know that the FSO had asked about this. When I met Mr Godfrey subsequently at a meeting, I reported to him about the conversation with Mr Yip.

In conducting the “Request for Proposal” (RFP) exercise, I didn’t personally feel any political pressure from above nor did I favour iProA in the selection. Indeed, I first got involved in the ILSP when I joined a meeting between former Permanent Secretary Mr Duncan Pescod and Mr Godfrey to discuss how to conduct a RFP exercise to select the organization to run the programme. At the meeting, Mr Pescod categorically directed that, despite the indication from the FSO that iProA had the ability to execute the programme, OGCIO should ensure that the organization be selected through a fair and open process. From that, I knew very well that my role was to assist Mr Godfrey to ensure that the bidding process be competitive and fair. And I believe I did carry out that role faithfully.

As a matter of fact, after the last meeting of the selection panel in early August when it was clear that the Hong Kong Council for Social Service (HKCSS) had the highest score among all bidders, on my last working day in OGCIO, I discussed with Mr Godfrey on how to conclude the exercise. I recall that I told Mr Godfrey that it was our duty as civil servants to honestly reflect the views of the selection panel and to conclude the exercise apolitically.