

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)677/10-11
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/SE

Panel on Security

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 2 November 2010, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon James TO Kun-sun (Chairman)
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Dr Hon Margaret NG
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon CHIM Pui-chung
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
- Members attending** : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
- Members absent** : Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun
Hon WONG Yuk-man

**Public Officers : Item IV
attending**

The Administration

Mr LAI Tung-kwok, SBS, IDSM, JP
Under Secretary for Security

Mr NGAI Wing-chit
Deputy Secretary for Security

Mr Howard YAM
Assistant Commissioner for Tourism
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau

Mr LEUNG Po-tak
Chief Superintendent (Organized Crime & Triad Bureau)
Hong Kong Police Force

Dr LIU Shao-haei
Chief Manager (Infection, Emergency & Contingency)
Hospital Authority

Mrs Anna MAK CHOW Suk-har
Assistant Director (Family & Child Welfare)
Social Welfare Department

**Clerk in : Mr Raymond LAM
attendance Chief Council Secretary (2) 1**

**Staff in : Ms Connie FUNG
attendance Senior Assistant Legal Adviser 1**

Miss Josephine SO
Senior Council Secretary (2) 1

Ms Camy YOONG
Clerical Assistant (2) 1

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**I. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting
(LC Paper No. CB(2)124/10-11)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2010 were confirmed.

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II. Information papers issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(2)98/10-11(01))

2. Members noted that a letter from Hon Albert CHAN suggesting that the Panel should discuss the right of abode of children born in the Mainland who had resided in Hong Kong for more than seven years had been issued since the last meeting.

III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper No. CB(2)158/10-11(01) and (02))

Regular meeting in December 2010

3. Members noted that the Security Bureau ("SB") and the Independent Commission Against Corruption ("ICAC") had proposed two and one items respectively for discussion at the regular meeting to be held on Tuesday, 7 December 2010, at 2:30 pm, as follows -

- (a) Privacy Compliance Assessment Report for the Smart Identity Card System;
- (b) Sharing of confiscated drug trafficking proceeds with the United States Government pursuant to the Drug Trafficking (Recovery of Proceeds) (Designated Countries and Territories) Order, Cap 405A; and
- (c) Creation of a Forensic Accountant Grade and a Chief Commission Against Corruption Officer Rank.

4. Regarding the item proposed by SB in paragraph 3(b) above, the Chairman suggested and members agreed that, instead of placing it on the agenda for the meeting in December 2010, the Administration should be requested to provide an information paper on the subject for circulation to members. Members would then decide whether the item should be discussed at a meeting.

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5. Expressing concern over recent media reports about overseas/Mainland-based syndicates employing different defrauding tricks to deceive Hong Kong people, the Chairman suggested that the Panel should discuss the measures adopted by the Hong Kong Police Force ("the Police"), including cooperation with the Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies, to combat cross-boundary deceptions at the next

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regular meeting on 7 December 2010. Members agreed.

Special meeting in November 2010

6. The Chairman reminded members that a special meeting would be held on 11 November 2010 from 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm.

Other issues

7. Ms Emily LAU noted that ICAC had conducted an analysis of issues involved in election-related reports received in recent years. On the basis of the major findings of the analysis that most of the reports concerned relatively minor and technical breaches of the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance (Cap. 554) ("ECICO") and involved irregularities relating to insignificant amounts of election expenses, the ICAC Operations Review Committee had proposed earlier to the Administration to review the existing mechanism for handling election-related complaints and to consider whether election-related complaints alleging technical and minor breaches of ECICO could be dealt with by alternative means such as administrative action. Ms LAU was concerned about the progress and result of the review undertaken by the Administration. The Chairman shared the view of Ms LAU that there was a pressing need to address the issue, given that there would be a District Council Election in 2011. Members agreed that the Administration should be requested to provide information on the way forward in respect of the handling of election-related complaints of a trivial nature or involving minor irregularities, as well as the implementation timetable.

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8. Ms Audrey EU said that she had learned from press reports that there were cases where people completed transactions of luxury properties in cash. She expressed concern whether any of these cases involved proceeds derived from uncovered criminal activities. She was particularly concerned about the adequacy and effectiveness of existing legislation and measures against money laundering. She suggested that the Administration should be requested to provide the Panel with up-to-date information on the general money laundering situation in Hong Kong, as well as measures taken by law enforcement agencies in monitoring and combating such activities. In this connection, the Chairman said that a bill on anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing had been gazetted on 29 October 2010.

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9. The Chairman informed members that he had attended a meeting on 1 November 2010 with the Secretary for Security ("S for S") to discuss the Panel's work plan for the 2010-2011 session. During the meeting, S for S had indicated that the Administration was devising a statutory screening mechanism for torture claims, and the relevant bill would be introduced into the Legislative Council ("LegCo") within the current legislative session. To facilitate future scrutiny of the Bill by Members, the Chairman suggested and members agreed that a research study on overseas legislative framework for handling torture claims should be conducted by the Research Division of the LegCo Secretariat. Dr Margaret NG said that the research study should also cover the views of the two legal professional bodies on the subject matter.

IV. Follow-up on the incident in the Philippines on 23 August 2010 involving a tour group from Hong Kong
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)158/10-11(03) and (04))

10. Under Secretary for Security ("US for S") and Chief Superintendent of Police (Organized Crime & Triad Bureau) ("CSP") briefed Members on the latest progress of the follow-up work undertaken by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("HKSAR") in respect of the hostage incident in Manila on 23 August 2010 involving a tour group from Hong Kong ("the incident"), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper.

11. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked about the Police's timetable for completing the formal investigation report on the incident and the Administration's next course of action after the Police had submitted its report to the Coroner's Court. Referring to a press statement issued by the HKSAR Government on 12 October 2010 regarding the decisions of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines ("the Philippine Government") after the latter had reviewed the first report of the Incident Investigation and Review Committee of the Philippines ("IIRC") on the hostage-taking incident in Manila, Mr WONG enquired about the follow-up action to be taken by the Administration. He noted with concern that the HKSAR Government found the Philippine Government's decision to lessen the recommended actions against the relevant officers named in IIRC's first report hard to accept and disappointing.

12. In response, US for S and CSP made the following points -

- (a) IIRC was set up by the Philippine Government to investigate

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into the causes and sequence of events leading to the incident, the accountability of persons involved in handling the incident and to evaluate the action and response taken by relevant government departments. According to the Administration's understanding, IIRC was only responsible for making recommendations to the President of the Philippines ("the President") on the accountability of those involved and the punitive actions to be taken, and it would be the President who made the final decision. IIRC started hearings into the incident on 3 September 2010 and submitted its first report to the President on 17 September. On 20 September, the Philippine Government released part of the report, which mainly covered the causes and sequence of events leading to the incident, as well as comments on those handling the incident. Those parts of the report concerning the accountability of persons involved and recommendations against these persons were reviewed by a legal team in the Office of the President. On 11 October 2010, the President made public the remaining part of IIRC's first report, which covered the accountability of those involved, IIRC's recommendations on punitive actions, as well as the review report of the legal team and the President's final decision on the punitive actions to be taken;

- (b) on 12 October 2010, the HKSAR Government issued a press statement which stated that the people of Hong Kong, especially the survivors and the victims' families, would find the decision of the Philippine Government to lessen the recommended actions against the relevant officers named in IIRC's report hard to accept. The HKSAR Government was also disappointed with the decision. The Administration had conveyed its views to the Philippine Government through the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR ("OCMFA") and the Chinese Embassy in the Philippines ("the Embassy"). It should be noted that the HKSAR Government had requested the Philippine Government to follow through the required actions against the persons involved, which must live up to the pledge of the Philippine Government that the actions would be accountable to the public;

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- (c) the Philippine Government had yet to complete the investigation into the causes of death of the eight victims and causes of injury of others. The HKSAR Government hoped that the Philippine Government would make public their findings as soon as possible. As IIRC would in due course submit a second report on the review of the mechanism and procedures of handling similar incidents, it was hoped that the report would come up with concrete improvement measures to enhance the crisis management mechanism, protect the safety of travellers and avoid recurrence of such incidents; and
- (d) the Administration fully understood the wide public concern over the incident. The Police had accorded the highest priority to and was going full steam with the investigation as required by the Coroner's Court. It had submitted a progress report on the investigation to the Coroner's Office and was seeking to submit the formal report at the earliest possible time. The Coroner would, upon receipt of the Police's investigation report, decide whether a death inquest should be conducted. The Administration was confident that the Coroner's Court would arrive at a fair and professional judgment.

13. Mr WONG Kwok-kin asked whether the independent investigation conducted so far by the Police revealed any faults or deficiencies in the Philippine investigation. He was concerned whether the findings of the Police's investigation were in great contrast to the Philippine findings and if so, how the Administration would take follow-up actions in respect of the findings of the two sides.

14. Mr CHAN Hak-kan said that the many obstacles experienced by the Police, as reported by the media, in the course of collecting evidence in the Philippines had inevitably undermined the confidence of Hong Kong people in the sincerity of the Philippine authorities in conducting a serious and thorough investigation into the incident. He hoped that the independent investigation conducted by the Police could throw light on the causes of and the circumstances leading to the death and injury of Hong Kong residents in the hostage-taking incident on 23 August 2010, and uncover the truth of the whole incident including the persons who should shoulder the responsibility for the serious failures that had occurred in the Philippine Government's rescue operation. Expressing concern about the Police's evidence collection work, Mr CHAN asked

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whether the Philippine Government had provided the delegations sent to Manila by the Police with the necessary support and assistance to facilitate their information and evidence gathering work.

15. Sharing the concern of Mr WONG Kwok-kin and Mr CHAN Hak-kan over the need to conduct a thorough investigation into the hostage incident so as to find out the truth, Dr LAM Tai-fai sought detailed information on how the Police conducted its investigation in Manila and the preliminary findings of the Police based on the information/materials in hand. He further asked whether the Hong Kong police officers deployed to Manila to collect evidence and conduct investigation could proceed with their work smoothly.

16. US for S and CSP responded that with strong support of OCMFA and the Embassy, the Police had worked closely with the Philippine authorities on the basis of the international police cooperation protocol. With the agreement and assistance of the Philippine authorities, four delegations, involving a total of 26 trips, had been sent to Manila to gather information and evidence since the occurrence of the incident on 23 August 2010. Actions taken by the Police included collecting evidence from the coach, conducting ballistic examinations, and interviewing some of the eye witnesses as well as the Philippine police officers participating in the rescue operation. The Philippine authorities also provided statements, reports and other relevant materials to the Police. On the whole, the Philippine Government had provided the necessary assistance, and the Police was able to proceed with its investigation work in Manila in a smooth and amicable manner.

17. CSP further advised that the Police had basically completed some major tasks, such as performing autopsies on the eight victims who died in the incident, collecting evidence inside the coach and conducting the forensic examination of the firearms concerned. The Police would seek to complete and submit to the Coroner its investigation report as soon as possible. US for S and CSP explained that as the investigation report would be submitted to the Coroner for consideration of whether a death inquest should be conducted, the *sub judice* rule would apply. It was inappropriate to disclose the findings or the content of the Police's investigation report at this stage as this might prejudice the decision of the Coroner.

18. Referring Members to paragraph 9 of the Administration's paper, the Chairman said that since the Administration was unable to state whether the Panel was a "properly interested person" within the meaning

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of the Coroners Ordinance (Cap. 504) to request from the Coroner various documents, including the Police's investigation report to be submitted to the Coroner, the Panel's request for the provision of the Police's investigation report on the death of the eight tour group members who died in the incident was forwarded to the Clerk to Coroners for consideration.

19. Dr LAM Tai-fai expressed doubt about the credibility of the investigation conducted by the Philippine Government. He was particularly concerned whether the Philippine authorities had made any deliberate attempts to conceal the truth, and whether the Police had identified any part of the Philippine investigation questionable.

20. The Chairman noted with grave concern from the first report of IIRC that a total of 14 bullet fragments were still recovered by the Hong Kong Forensics Team during its examination of the coach after the Philippine police had conducted its own examination. He said that this together with the other findings which came to light during the Police's investigation suggested that the Philippine investigation was rather perfunctory.

21. US for S responded that it was not unusual for more information about a case, particularly for those cases which were highly complicated in nature, coming to light at different stages of the investigation process. He stressed that the Police had all along been maintaining close cooperation with the Philippine authorities through the established international police cooperation protocol in carrying out investigation.

22. Mr Ronny TONG said that the HKSAR Government should compare the findings of the two sides to see if major deficiencies were identified in the report of IIRC. In his view, if the findings of the Police's investigation were largely the same as those in IIRC's report, it might not be necessary to conduct a death inquest into the incident, and it would be more appropriate and prudent for the Administration to focus its resources and efforts on providing support for the victims and their families. Mr TONG asked whether there was substantial difference in the findings of the investigations undertaken by IIRC and the Police.

23. In response, US for S advised that -

- (a) after the bodies of the eight deceased tour group members were brought into Hong Kong on 25 August 2010 by a charter flight, the Coroner had, by virtue of the Coroners

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Ordinance, issued an autopsy order and requested the Police to investigate into the death of the tour members. It should be noted that the Police had submitted a progress report on the investigation to the Coroner's Office in early October 2010 and was now seeking to submit a formal report at the earliest possible time. The Administration believed that the Coroner would, upon receipt of the Police's investigation report, determine whether a death inquest should be conducted; and

- (b) it should be noted that immediately after the incident, the Philippine Government had established an inquiry committee led by its Secretary of Justice. The HKSAR Government learnt from the media that the Philippine authorities, including the President and the Secretary of Justice, had repeatedly undertaken in public that they would conduct a thorough, impartial and comprehensive investigation, without suppressing the truth. The HKSAR Government hoped that the Philippine authorities would honour their commitment by taking concrete actions and releasing their investigation report as early as possible.

24. Responding to Mr WONG Kwok-kin's enquiry as to whether the Philippine Government had come up with concrete measures to protect the personal safety of Hong Kong travellers, US for S advised that to the knowledge of the Administration, IIRC's work consisted of two phases. For the first phase, it was tasked to make a comprehensive account of the sequence of events leading to the killing of the hostages, evaluate police action and response of offices and private entities to the incident, and recommend the filing of appropriate actions against those found culpable. For the second phase, IIRC would review operational plans and procedures, conduct a detailed audit of the training and equipment of responsible agencies, and review the Philippine police standards and procedures for handling similar incidents. It was hoped that IIRC would complete the relevant review as soon as practicable and come up with concrete recommendations on enhancing the crisis management mechanism and protecting the safety of travellers. The Administration also noted from some media reports that to maintain public order and ensure the safety of travellers, the Philippine police had stepped up patrol at popular scenic spots and tourist attractions following the incident. The HKSAR Government was seeking further information from the Philippine Government on details of this enhancement measure.

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25. Ms Audrey EU recalled that the Chief Executive, upon learning the hostage-taking incident, had made a telephone call to the Philippine President in an attempt to request the latter to undertake all-out rescue efforts to ensure the safety of the hostages. However, the telephone call was not answered. She said that this had caused wide public concern as to whether there was a need to define clearly the negotiation channels and the role played by the HKSAR Government in similar incidents in the future. Ms EU asked whether the Administration had reviewed the existing contingency mechanism for dealing with unexpected incidents outside the Chinese territory involving Hong Kong residents.

26. US for S responded that to assist Hong Kong people caught in distress overseas, the Administration had, after the tsunami in South Asia, formulated the Contingency Plan for Emergency Response Operations outside the HKSAR ("the contingency plan"). With a view to enhancing the assistance for Hong Kong people caught in distress outside Hong Kong, a total of 30 improvement measures were implemented following a review of the contingency plan in 2009. The hostage-taking incident in Manila indicated that the enhanced contingency plan was effective. The Administration would keep the mechanism under regular review to ensure that it remained effective. Regarding the query on the propriety of the follow-up actions taken by the HKSAR Government immediately after the incident, including making telephone calls to the Philippine President, US for S stressed that the Administration had always, on the premise of protecting the safety and meeting the needs of the Hong Kong people in distress, strived to adopt the most appropriate, effective and efficient method to tackle the problem. The Administration was of the view that the actions taken were in the right direction.

27. The Deputy Chairman and Mr IP Kwok-him shared the view that the Philippine Government should offer a solemn apology and reasonable compensation to the injured and family members of the deceased. They asked whether the HKSAR Government had through OCMFA or the Embassy demanded the Philippine Government to do so.

28. In response, US for S said that the Consul-General of the Philippines in Hong Kong had made a public apology after the incident. The Administration believed that the prime concern of the victims and their family members at the present moment was to find out the truth as soon as possible. The HKSAR Government would definitely, on the basis of evidence and facts, follow up the question of accountability upon the completion of the investigation, with a view to delivering justice to the deceased and the injured.

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29. Responding to the Deputy Chairman's enquiry about the latest situation of the injured victims, Chief Manager (Infection, Emergency & Contingency) of the Hospital Authority advised that following the incident, the Hospital Authority ("HA") had continued to provide medical treatment and psychological support to the injured victims of the incident. Of the three injured victims, the two victims who sustained hand and face injuries respectively received surgeries and treatment in the Prince of Wales Hospital after they returned to Hong Kong on 25 August 2010. They were later discharged respectively on 11 September and 17 October 2010 and were currently receiving multidisciplinary care and regular follow-up at HA's specialist clinic. The other tour member who sustained serious head injury had received surgeries in Tuen Mun Hospital after returning to Hong Kong on 26 August 2010 and had been hospitalized since then. The medical and healthcare team of HA would continue to closely monitor the progress of recovery of the injured victims. In addition, HA's clinical psychologists had been providing psychological support to the victims and their family members.

30. Ms Emily LAU asked about the view of the Administration on IIRC's observations and findings as contained in its first report. She also enquired whether the Administration had anticipated the possibility that the findings of the Police's investigation might be in great contrast to the findings of IIRC and if so, how the Administration would take follow-up actions in respect of the findings of the two sides.

31. US for S responded that -

- (a) on 20 September 2010, the Administration issued a press statement announcing its receipt of IIRC's first report on the incident. IIRC's report gave a detailed account of the incident and contained severe criticisms of the key responsible Philippine officials. Final conclusions, however, had yet to be drawn as IIRC advised that the causes of the eight deaths and seven injuries needed further investigation. The Administration hoped that the Philippine authorities would step up their efforts to complete the work as soon as possible. It would continue to work with the Philippine authorities on follow-up forensic and ballistic examinations;
- (b) on 12 October 2010, the HKSAR Government issued a further statement expressing its disappointment at the decision of the Philippine Government, after reviewing the report of IIRC, to lessen the punitive actions recommended

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by IIRC against relevant officers named in the report;

- (c) the Administration was equally concerned about the progress of the investigation undertaken by the Police. As advised earlier, the Police had submitted a progress report on the investigation to the Coroner's Office in early October 2010, and was seeking to submit the formal report at the earliest possible time. After considering the report, the Coroner would decide whether or not to conduct a death inquest. The death inquest, if held, would be open to the public. It was inappropriate to unveil the details of the Police's investigation or disclose the content of its investigation report before its submission to the Coroner; and
- (d) as IIRC's second report and the Police's formal report on the incident had yet to be completed and released, it was too early for the Administration to take a view on the findings of the two sides at the present stage.

32. In reply to Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's enquiry about the actions taken by the HKSAR Government during the few hours when the tour group was being held hostage, US for S advised that upon learning the incident in the morning of 23 August 2010, the Immigration Department ("ImmD") immediately rang OCMFA and the Embassy, requesting for incident updates and assistance. At 12:20 pm, OCMFA informed ImmD that Embassy staff were already at the scene to provide assistance. SB also rang the Philippine Consulate-General in Hong Kong stressing that the safety of the hostages was of utmost importance and requesting that the incident be resolved in a peaceful manner so that all tour group members could be released safe and early. The Consulate-General undertook to relay the requests to the responsible authorities in Manila.

33. Deputy Secretary for Security advised that for more details, Members might refer to the Annex to the information paper provided by the Administration for the Panel meeting on 26 August 2010 (LC Paper No. CB(2)2205/09-10(01)) which set out a chronology of government actions in relation to the incident between 23 and 26 August 2010. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung requested the Administration to provide after the meeting an up-to-date chronological list of the government actions taken after the incident.

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34. Dr Philip WONG noted that the "Black" Outbound Travel Alert ("Black OTA") issued for the Philippines in the wake of the hostage

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incident was still in force. He asked under what circumstances would the Government consider lowering the alert level for the Philippines. He further asked whether staff members of airlines and travel agents would take the initiative to remind travellers that the Black OTA was in force when selling air tickets or package tours bound for different cities in the Philippines.

35. In response, US for S and Assistant Commissioner for Tourism advised that -

- (a) travel agents had been asked to remind their customers of the colour alert in force at the time the latter made enquiries on tour or ticket reservation;
- (b) information on travel risk to other countries, including the colour alert issued by ImmD under the OTA system would be displayed at the Hong Kong International Airport; and
- (c) the Black OTA issued for the Philippines would remain in force until the risk of travelling to the Philippines was removed.

36. Mr Albert HO shared the view that the Philippine Government had moral as well as legal responsibility to offer the injured and family members of the deceased a sincere apology and reasonable compensation. He urged the HKSAR Government to raise the issue to the Philippine Government on behalf of the victims and their families. Mr HO also considered that there was room for improvement in the Government's handling of unexpected events outside Hong Kong. He asked whether the Administration had reviewed its established mechanism and procedures for handling sudden and unexpected incidents outside Hong Kong which had widespread impact on or posed significant threat to the personal safety of Hong Kong residents travelling abroad.

37. In response, US for S reiterated that -

- (a) as explained in paragraph 26 above, the HKSAR Government had an established emergency response mechanism to help Hong Kong residents caught in distress overseas. With a view to enhancing the mechanism, a total of 30 improvement measures were implemented following a review of the contingency plan in 2009. The measures included enhancement of training and equipment of

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emergency response team members, agreement with local airlines on seats arrangement. The experience in handling the hostage-taking incident in Manila demonstrated the effectiveness of the enhanced emergency response mechanism. The Administration would keep the mechanism under regular review having regard to the prevailing situation to ensure that it remained effective;

- (b) it should be noted that the close communication between the HKSAR Government and OCMFA as well as the assistance rendered by the local Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Missions ("CDCM") were an integral part of the emergency response mechanism for Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong. Close liaison had been established among ImmD, OCMFA and the Embassy right from the beginning of the incident. The direct and close communication among the three parties had been instrumental to the swift response to the situation. Building on this strong foundation, the Administration was exchanging views with OCMFA to explore ways to further enhance mutual cooperation on crisis management, for instance, to offer familiarization briefings on the work of Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of ImmD for more CDCM staff or to enhance direct communication and liaison between the staff members of CDCM and ImmD; and
- (c) on the issue of demanding the Philippine Government to offer a public and solemn apology as well as compensation to the injured and family members of the deceased, the Administration would definitely follow up the question of accountability upon the completion of the investigation in accordance with the wishes of the victims and their family members.

38. Dr PAN Pey-chyou noted that medico-legal officers of the Philippine police had conducted autopsies on five victims before the bodies of the eight deceased tour group members were returned to Hong Kong on 25 August 2010. He asked whether the Police had opportunities to observe the Philippine investigation of the causes of death during the autopsies performed on those five dead bodies, and whether the autopsies conducted by the Philippine police had in any way affected the validity of the subsequent autopsies on all the eight victims conducted in Hong Kong by the Police.

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39. In reply, CSP advised that the Police's forensic experts in the support team which had flown immediately to Manila to support the victims after the incident had, with the prior consent of the Philippine authorities, observed the autopsies performed on two dead bodies and collected relevant evidence at the scene. The Police had compiled a report on its observation afterwards. US for S said that after the bodies of the eight deceased tour group members were returned to Hong Kong on 25 August 2010 by a charter flight, the Coroner had, by virtue of the Coroners Ordinance, issued an autopsy order and requested the Police to investigate into the death. On 27 August 2010, the Police's forensic pathologists had conducted independent and thorough autopsies on all the eight dead bodies. The Police was currently in the process of finalizing the autopsy report and would submit it to the Coroner as an integral part of the Police's formal report on the incident.

40. Responding to Dr PAN Pey-chyou's enquiry about the assistance provided by OCMFA and the Embassy in dealing with the aftermath of the incident, US for S advised that the HKSAR Government had benefited from the frontline assistance rendered by the Embassy in the hostage-taking incident. With the staunch support of OCMFA and the Embassy, the Hong Kong support team managed to accomplish its relief tasks promptly.

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41. The Chairman asked the Administration to check with the Philippine authorities to see if they had prepared a verbatim record of the proceedings of the IIRC's hearings on the incident and if so, to request a copy of the English version of the verbatim record for submission to the Coroner and the Panel.

42. The meeting ended at 4:33 pm.