

立法會
Legislative Council

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Tel : 3919 3300

Date : 11 November 2011

From : Clerk to the Legislative Council

To : All Members of the Legislative Council

Council meeting of 23 November 2011

**Motion on
“Defending freedom of the press”**

Hon Emily LAU has given notice to move the attached motion on “Defending freedom of the press” at the Council meeting of 23 November 2011. The President has directed that “it be printed in the terms in which it was handed in” on the Agenda of the Council.

(Mrs Justina LAM)
for Clerk to the Legislative Council

Encl.

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Defending freedom of the press”
to be moved by Hon Emily LAU
at the Council meeting of 23 November 2011**

Wording of the Motion

That, freedom of the press has recently sustained severe impact, and the findings of an opinion poll released by the University of Hong Kong on 20 September showed that the rate of people’s satisfaction with freedom of the press dropped from 68% to 58%; the occurrence of such a worrying situation is due to the authorities’ restrictions on media news coverage, including obstructing filming by photographers, expelling reporters, setting press positions a long way from scenes requiring coverage, rejecting media news coverage and instead distributing only official footage and press releases (commonly known as ‘propaganda footage’ and ‘propaganda articles’), and replacing press conferences with informal briefings by informed sources; the recent misreporting of former State President JIANG Zemin’s death by the News and Public Affairs Division (‘News Division’) of Asia Television Limited (‘ATV’) has revealed that the head of the News Division was not able to stop the broadcasting of incorrect information in news programmes, and someone had interfered with the editorial independence of the News Division; ATV staff have also complained that the broadcasting of ‘paid news’ by the station has severely damaged the credibility of news reporting; in this connection, this Council urges the authorities to:

- (a) arrange for the media to freely cover all official activities;
- (b) lift the news coverage restrictions imposed on the press;
- (c) stop distributing ‘propaganda footage’ and ‘propaganda articles’; and
- (d) inquire into whether anyone has interfered with the editorial independence of the News Division of ATV and forced the News Division to broadcast false information and ‘paid news’ in news programmes, and study whether the continued holding of a domestic free television programme service licence by ATV is in the interest of the public.