香港特別行政區政府
保安局

The Government of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Security Bureau

香港添馬添美道 2 號

2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

本函檔號 Our Ref.:　　SRD 101/3/R VIII

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

29 December 2011

Mrs Constance LI
Secretariat, Finance Committee
Legislative Council
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Mrs Li,

Reply to Question raised in the Finance Committee Meeting
held on 2 December 2011
Recoverability of the outstanding advances to
the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

With regard to the question raised by Hon Emily Lau, Chairman, Finance Committee, in the captioned meeting on the recoverability of the outstanding advances to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), we would like to provide the latest information for the Committee's reference.
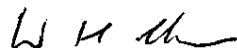
The Administration has continued to urge UNHCR to make renewed efforts to appeal to the international community for donations with a view to settling the outstanding advances, which remain at $1,162 million. The Security Bureau wrote to the Head of Hong Kong Sub-office of the UNHCR in March and August 2011 to reiterate the Administration's stance on the matter and register the Hong Kong community's expectation of an early recovery of the outstanding advances.

The UNHCR has expressed that due to other more pressing refugees and humanitarian issues around the world, they are facing substantial

difficulties in appealing for donations from international communities earmarked for repaying the outstanding debts to Hong Kong.

While the Administration's assessment is that it is not optimistic that full recovery of the amount due, or partial recovery could be achieved in the near future, it remains our understanding that the UNHCR has not withdrawn its commitment to repay such advances and that UNHCR's reimbursement to Hong Kong is subject to availability of funds. As such, we do not have any plans to write-off the advances as irrecoverable debt for the time being.

Yours sincerely,

(W H CHOW)
for Secretary for Security