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16 February 2012

Mr Thomas Wong
Clerk to Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Wong,

Review of Chinese Temples Ordinance

Thank you for your letter dated 20 January 2012 to the Secretary for Home Affairs on the captioned issue. On behalf of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), I am writing to reply as follows –

The Chinese Temples Ordinance (Cap. 153) ("CT Ordinance") was enacted in 1928 according to the needs at that time, with an aim to suppress and prevent abuses in the management of Chinese temples and in the administration of the funds of Chinese temples. There were a total of 346 temples registered in accordance with the CT Ordinance as at the end of 2011.
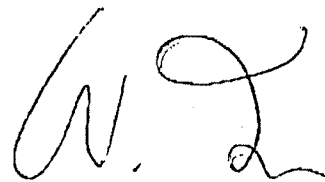
As the social circumstances change, some of the provisions of the CT Ordinance might become inapplicable. The HAB is currently conducting a review on the CT Ordinance. The review focuses on the power and responsibilities of the Chinese

Temples Committee as well as the religious matters of Chinese temples. The review also involves temple registration. It is estimated that the review will be concluded by the end of 2012.

On enhancing regulation of private columbaria, the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) proposed to formulate a new piece of legislation to be entitled the Private Columbaria Ordinance, under which all private columbaria, unless exempted, shall be subject to regulation under the licensing scheme. FHB has been consulting the public on the details of the proposed licensing scheme for private columbaria since December 2011. The consultation period will last until 30 March 2012.

Yours sincerely,

(Miss Winnie Tse)
for Secretary for Home Affairs