

Item 48 : Reasons for and the circumstances leading to the provision of the inaccurate, incomplete or out-of-date information, and the relevant records.

- (a) The Director of Community Relations and Assistant Director/Administration had discussed the information required in answering the LegCo Finance Committee's initial question raised by Hon Dennis KWOK on the number of occasions on which Mr TONG had presented government officials of different places with gifts paid out of public funds during his tenure and their actual amount on each occasion. After discussion, they decided to provide the required information in relation to **souvenirs** given out on the understanding that food items like cakes and cookies, though presented to government officials, were meant for their staff's consumption. The fact that the information is related to **souvenirs** was clearly specified in the reply dated 3 April 2013 to the Finance Committee after endorsement by the ICAC's Commissioner's Weekly Meeting. When answering the two supplementary questions of the Finance Committee related to the original question, the ICAC built on its previous reply and provided the additional information on 22 April 2013.
- (b) Like many other Government departments using Treasury's Government Financial Management Information System (GFMIS), the ICAC does not keep a separate accounting and payment record or a central register of gifts bestowed. The GFMIS only keeps transaction records chronologically based on the transactions processed in a day by the Finance Office of the Administration Branch. Besides, it does not keep details of individual items and is not meant for the retrieval of transactions by the type of items. Given the time pressure when answering the questions of the LegCo Finance Committee, we had therefore based on the records readily available and kept by user departments, which we knew afterwards that some of the records were incomplete and there were a few inadvertent omissions in the replies. If we were to go through the 25 000 odd transaction records stored in the GFMIS, we had to dig out manually the relevant payment records and vouchers from some 600 paper files, which was a nearly impossible task to provide replies to the questions of the LegCo Finance Committee on or before the deadline.