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14 July 2014

Miss Debbie YAU
Clerk to Panel on Administration of
Justice and Legal Services
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

By Fax & By Email
Fax: 3151 7052

Dear Miss YAU,

Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services

Follow-up to meeting on 25 March 2014

At the meeting of the Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services on 25 March 2014, Members considered the Administration's paper entitled "Project to Implement a Verified, Authenticated, Searchable Electronic Database of Hong Kong Legislation" (LC Paper No. CB(4)486/13-14(03)). This letter sets out the response of our Law Drafting Division to the two enquiries raised at the meeting.

2. The first enquiry related to the serviceable period of the Bilingual Laws Information System ("BLIS"). The BLIS is a searchable electronic database of Hong Kong legislation which was first developed and launched in 1990 and was subsequently made available to the public for free access over the internet in November 1997 for reference purposes. Whilst the BLIS does not have a specific "serviceable period" and can continue to deliver its functions for the time being, the system was not designed to carry legislation data with legal status and could not be re-designed to be used as a database that enjoys legal status, bearing in mind that the system on the current platform was developed in the 1990s. Hence there is a need to develop a new database, as approved by the LegCo

Finance Committee in May 2010.

3. The second enquiry related to the amount of total expenditure incurred over these years for the implementation and maintenance of the BLIS. The current BLIS platform was put in place in the 1990s and there were hardware and software updates over the years. The development and maintenance of BLIS have been part of the routine duties of various officers of the Department for years. The total cost for its development and maintenance is therefore not readily quantifiable.

4. As colleagues of our Law Drafting Division explained at the Panel meeting on 25 March 2014, the new Database will provide the public with a website facilitating free and convenient access to accurate and up-to-date Hong Kong legislation with legal status. We will make our best endeavours to implement the new database, which will have improved features as compared to the BLIS.

Yours sincerely,



(Gary Poon)
Administrative Assistant
to Secretary for Justice

c.c. Law Draftsman