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17 May 2016

Mr Daniel Sin
Clerk to Panel on
Information Technology and Broadcasting
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr Sin,

**Procurement of Additional Production Equipment and System for
Further Developing the Existing Digital Terrestrial Television Service
of Radio Television Hong Kong**

At the Panel Meeting held on 11 January 2016, Members requested the Government to provide additional information in respect of the proposal to procure additional production equipment and system for further developing the existing digital terrestrial television (DTT) service of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK). As the public service broadcaster of Hong Kong, RTHK will adhere to the programme areas and modes of service delivery set out in the RTHK Charter. Our responses to Members' enquiries are as follows.

(a) Details of DTT programmes provided by RTHK to serve a broad spectrum of audiences and cater for the needs of the minority interest groups

RTHK is planning to enhance gradually its DTT service on RTHK TV 31 to offer a wider spectrum of programmes to serve the public and also the minority interests. For example, the broadcasting hours of RTHK TV 31 has been extended to 19 hours a day (6:30 a.m. to 1:30 a.m.) from 2 April 2016. A morning news/information magazine programme with sign language has been provided from every Monday to Friday and a video news programme has been offered every night (26 minutes every night from Monday to Friday, and 15 minutes every night on Saturday and Sunday) from the same date.

RTHK will continue to arrange dedicated slots according to genres so as to better serve the intended target groups. These include dedicated slots for education and learning, arts and culture, elderly, home caretakers and parenting, youth and children, public and current affairs, global and international issues, science and technology, dramas, and English programming, etc. We will also continue producing programmes to serve minority groups, which include subjects depicting the life of the ethnic minority, on rehabilitation and sign language. Furthermore, we have selected some local productions to put up subtitles in ethnic minority language with Indonesian being the first of such language.

(b) Explanation on how the proposal to acquire programmes and commission productions for nurturing local talents was relevant to the procurement of additional equipment and system for developing DTT service of RTHK

The acquired and commissioned programmes would have to go through post production procedures by RTHK before broadcasting, such as file conversion, transcoding, editing, script translation, subtitling, quality checking, etc., which are similar to RTHK's in-house post production processes. Additional production equipment and system will be needed to

implement these necessary post production procedures as well as to store the original copies of these programmes which are all in digital file formats.

(c) RTHK's plan and estimated cost to prepare for a full launch of 24-hour service for RTHK TV 31

RTHK is planning to enhance gradually its DTT service. RTHK's DTT network coverage is expected to expand to reach about 99% of Hong Kong's population in early 2019. RTHK is preparing for a full launch of 24-hour service for RTHK TV 31 in future. At this point in time, RTHK plans to increase gradually its output of first-run TV programmes from about 1 335 hours in 2015-16 to 1 550 hours in 2020-21 with an increase of 215 hours in five years. On top of that, in 2016-17, a total of additional 416 hours of synergy programmes between radio and TV platforms are being produced. These include relay on TV of a radio phone-in current affairs programme every Monday to Friday and production of video news programmes on TV every night.

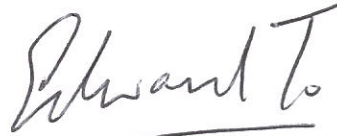
The amount of required resources for the increase in TV output hours will be reflected in the budget estimates of RTHK of the relevant years. In the 2016-17 Estimates, the total provision of the programme area of Public Affairs and General Television Programme of RTHK is \$523.7 million. Among them, \$464.3 million of the provision will be used for the programme production of the DTT service and all the related operational and supporting cost.

(d) Information on the audience ratings of DTT programmes of RTHK according to surveys conducted by RTHK and the distribution of such ratings among the three DTT channels (RTHK TV 31, 32 and 33)

Given that RTHK DTT service is still in the trial stage, the network coverage is at present only able to reach about 80% of the Hong Kong population. Many households cannot yet receive RTHK DTT channels as the technical set-up for reception of RTHK DTT signals is not ready at some of the

buildings and properties. The conventional audience rating is thus not considered an effective measurement to assess RTHK DTT service. However, RTHK has been trying its best effort to collect feedbacks and responses from the public. According to a survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong Public Opinion Programme in January 2016, about 55% of the interviewees could receive RTHK DTT channels; 41% had watched RTHK programmes and among which 88% of them said that they would like to watch RTHK programmes again. We do not have individual data on RTHK TV 31, 32 and 33.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward To". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

(Edward To)

for Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

c.c. Director of Broadcasting