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17 May 2016

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

Dear Mr Sin,

**Issues relating to the operational and handover arrangements
of Asia Television Limited on expiry
of its domestic free television programme service licence**

At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting held on 16 February 2016, Members requested the Government to provide further information regarding the operational and handover arrangements of Asia Television Limited (ATV) on expiry of its domestic free television programme service (free TV) licence, as follows –

- (a) the increase in establishment in Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) between 1 April 2013 and 1 April 2016 to prepare for the taking over of ATV's analogue TV service following the expiry of ATV's free TV licence;

- (b) any special skills or experience required by RTHK when recruiting technical and professional personnel;
- (c) the criteria and considerations behind the estimation of resources required to enable RTHK to take over ATV's analogue TV service; and
- (d) whether resources were provided for RTHK to absorb some of ATV's staff, including news reporting, editorial and production personnel.

2. Our responses to Members' enquiries are as follows –

- (a)&(c) on 1 April 2015, the Chief Executive in Council decided not to renew the free TV licence of ATV, and ATV's free TV licence expired on 2 April 2016. To mitigate the impact arising from a reduction of analogue free TV programme choices, RTHK has been providing a stop-gap analogue TV service by simulcasting the programmes of RTHK TV 31 and China Central Television – 9 Documentary at the two analogue TV channels vacated by ATV after 1 April 2016.

After consideration of the hardware and software possessed by RTHK, and detailed analysis from the perspectives of cost effectiveness, risk management and seamless transition, RTHK considered that the most prudent way was to procure the analogue TV transmission service from the market. RTHK had awarded a contract to a third party service provider, which is providing analogue TV transmission service to RTHK after the expiry of the free TV licence of ATV on 2 April 2016. The estimated expenditure involved in the provision of stop-gap analogue TV service in 2016-17 is approximately \$59.4 million, which covers the fees of the service provider, the expenditure for the installation of related broadcasting equipment, and other relevant expenses.

Given that the related transmission service is provided by the third party service provider, RTHK has not increased any manpower for such purpose.

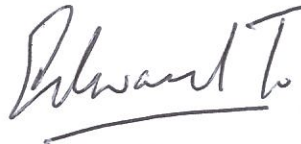
- (b) in recruiting technical and professional personnel, RTHK will set entry requirements on the basis of operational needs of the posts and with reference to the requirements of similar posts in other government departments.

In general, candidates for civil service vacancies should have relevant qualifications / academic qualifications and / or work experience. For example, candidates who apply for the civil service post of telecommunications engineer should possess the recognised professional qualifications (i.e. corporate membership of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers or equivalent) and one year's work experience in broadcasting. In addition, the length of relevant work experience required for certain posts will depend on the academic qualifications of the candidates. For example, any person who has passed the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSEE) or who holds a bachelor's degree in a relevant subject may apply for the civil service post of assistant programme officer responsible for set design, but the relevant work experience required may vary. Candidates who have passed the HKDSEE should have six years' relevant work experience, while candidates who hold a bachelor's degree in a relevant subject need not have any relevant work experience.

- (d) as a government department, RTHK recruits staff according to its actual operational needs, and the recruitment process has to be conducted in accordance with the established procedures. To better assist the staff of ATV, RTHK has already provided information on job vacancies in RTHK to the Labour Department for consolidated handling and dissemination. If ATV's staff members are interested in joining RTHK, they can apply

for such vacancies in accordance with relevant procedures. In general, candidates with relevant work experience and knowledge of the industry related to the job vacancies will have a natural competitive edge in the recruitment exercises.

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