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By email

29 March 2016

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

Dear Mr. Sin,

**Request to discuss the issue concerning alleged encroachment into
local FM radio spectrum by Mainland radio stations**

I refer to your letter of 10 March 2016. After consultation with the Office of the Communications Authority (“OFCA”), our responses to the issue mentioned in the letter from Hon Claudia MO are as follows.

Given that radio transmitting stations are located at high hills in order to provide coverage over wide geographical area while Hong Kong is in close proximity to Guangdong Province, the overspill of radio broadcasting signals across the border between the two places is unavoidable. Currently, broadcasting signals from Mainland can be received in Hong Kong, while broadcasting signals from Hong Kong can also be received in Mainland areas adjacent to Hong Kong. The

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situation has been the same for a period of time. Pursuant to the spectrum allocation of the International Telecommunication Union (“ITU”), the use of frequencies in the FM frequency band has to be shared between Hong Kong and its neighbouring regions. As such, there is no issue of one party occupying the frequency of the other.

In the course of shared use of frequencies, neighbouring regions have to coordinate with one another on the use of the relevant frequencies to avoid mutual interference. Accordingly, in as early as 1992, Hong Kong and Guangdong Province signed a Frequency Coordination Agreement (“the Agreement”) which covered the telecommunications and broadcasting services for frequencies below 1GHz, with the aim of minimising mutual interference in radio services to both sides.

In light of the rapid development of communications technologies and the increasing demand for radio services, both sides signed in 2000 a new Agreement covering the use of the radio frequency in the frequency band from 30 MHz to 40 GHz by communications and broadcasting services. The new Agreement includes the procedures for mutual notification of technical parameters of transmitting stations and handling of interference cases, with the aims of mutually protecting the existing radio services from interference and establishing a mechanism to facilitate the handling of any interference that might arise later. The former Office of the Telecommunications Authority issued a press release on 6 November 2000 announcing the signing of the new Agreement (at Annex). As the Agreement contains internal information about the use of radio frequencies at the neighbouring regions of Guangdong Province, it is not appropriate to disclose the content of the Agreement. The OFCA also holds regular meetings with the Mainland authorities to keep abreast of the development on the use of radio frequencies on both sides and will make coordination arrangements where necessary.

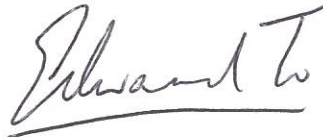
The use of radio frequencies in Hong Kong and the Mainland has been coordinated, and radio signals spilled over from the Mainland would not lead to the contravention of the Agreement. The overspill of radio signals, in general, does not affect the public in the reception of FM radio signals from the Hong Kong sound broadcasters and thus have not caused any interference to the FM radio services in Hong Kong. OFCA will also continue to conduct regular measurements of radio signals at various locations in Hong Kong. If radio signals from Guangdong are found to cause interference to the broadcasting or communications services in Hong Kong, OFCA will notify the Guangdong authorities to make appropriate adjustments as soon as possible.

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Regarding the radiated power and geographical coverage, a consultant commissioned by the Government in 1980s recommended using a total of 49 FM frequencies at seven hilltop locations, with radiated power from 100W to 3 000W, in order to provide seven FM programme channels. Having regard to the mountainous terrain in Hong Kong, the consultant made its recommendation on the radiated power. The consultant considered that the aforesaid proposal would enable effective territory-wide radio coverage. Higher power is used in some FM transmitting stations in Guangdong Province as per its own FM network arrangements and its coverage requirement. As long as the communications and broadcasting services of Hong Kong are not affected, this does not contravene the coordination requirements in the Agreement.

We would be grateful if the Secretariat could pass the above information to members of the Panel for reference.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Edward TO', written in black ink.

(Edward TO)

for Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

Encl.

c.c. Director-General of Communications



Frequency Coordination Agreement between the HKSARG and Guangdong Province

Mr Anthony S K Wong, the Director-General of Telecommunications, and Mr Liu Lihua, Director-General of the Radio Regulatory Department of the Ministry of Information Industry, signed a Frequency Coordination Agreement between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government and Guangdong Province in Shenzhen today (November 6). The Agreement will ensure that radio frequencies in the HKSAR and Guangdong could be used efficiently with minimum mutual interference. It will also facilitate the development of telecommunications services on both sides.

The first Frequency Coordination Agreement between Hong Kong and Guangdong was signed in 1992. It covered land mobile, fixed and broadcasting services for frequencies below 1GHz. The Agreement laid down the procedures and standards for the coordination of the use of frequencies to avoid mutual harmful interference. Although the 1992 Agreement expired on 30 June 1997, both sides have agreed to extend the validity period of the Agreement to beyond 1 July 1997 to give more time to work on a new frequency coordination agreement.

The new Frequency Coordination Agreement signed today in Shenzhen covers the procedures and standards for coordinating terrestrial radiocommunication services including land mobile, fixed, maritime and broadcasting services in the frequency band from 30 MHz to 40 GHz. The Agreement also includes new procedures for handling cases of radio interference and a mechanism for both parties to meet annually to revise the content of the Agreement in light of changes in technologies and demand of the telecommunications industry.

END/Monday, November 6, 2000

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