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2 August 2017

Clerk to the Legislative Council
(Attn: Ms. Alice LEUNG)
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms. Leung,

Special House Committee Meeting on 3 August 2017
Letter from Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung

I refer to your letter to the Director of Administration dated 27 July 2017 enclosing the letter from Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung, requesting the Government to provide a written reply on the co-location arrangement of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (“XRL”). Our reply is as follows.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“HKSAR”) has all along stated in public that it is the common goal of the HKSAR and the Mainland to implement co-location arrangement at the West Kowloon Station upon the commissioning of the

Hong Kong Section of the XRL, with a view to maximising the transport, social and economic benefits of the XRL. The relevant arrangement involves complicated constitutional, legal and operational issues, including the need to ensure that the arrangement complies with the principle of “one country, two systems” and must not contravene the Basic Law; that it must be operationally feasible and efficient; and that it must be effective in controlling security risks and avoiding security loopholes. The HKSAR Government and the relevant Mainland authorities have thus conducted thorough studies and discussions in great depth.

The HKSAR Government and the relevant Mainland authorities reached a consensus on the framework of the Co-operation Arrangement around this July. Following the endorsement of the Chief Executive in Council in taking forward the proposed “Three-step Process” on 25 July 2017, the HKSAR Government made an announcement in the same afternoon so as to give an account to the community and initiate public discussion as early as possible. Although the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) is in recess, the Chief Secretary for Administration took the initiative to write to the Chairman of LegCo House Committee on the same day, stating that the Secretary for Justice, the Secretary for Transport and Housing and the Secretary for Security would stand ready to attend a special House Committee meeting to explain the proposal and answer Members’ queries. This fully demonstrates that the HKSAR Government attaches great importance to the LegCo. Upon arrangement of the LegCo Secretariat, the special House Committee meeting will be held on 3 August 2017. In addition, a joint meeting among the Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services, the Panel on Security and the Panel on Transport will also be held on 8 August 2017.

As a matter of fact, the HKSAR Government has been paying attention to the different comments and concerns of the LegCo and society during the course of negotiation with the Mainland side. Major ideas on clearance procedures for the XRL explored by both sides, as well

as the contents of the co-location arrangement and relevant considerations in reaching the arrangement, have been set out in the discussion paper submitted by the HKSAR Government to the LegCo on 25 July 2017.

In the days ahead, the HKSAR Government will prudently consider the views offered by the LegCo and different facets of society in forging ahead the implementation work of the co-location arrangement. According to the work plan for the “Three-step Process”, we hope to reach a Co-operation Arrangement with the Mainland side and seek the decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (“NPCSC”) in approving and endorsing the Co-operation Arrangement by the end of this year. The HKSAR Government will subsequently introduce the local legislative proposal into the LegCo in accordance with the Co-operation Arrangement and the NPCSC’s Decision with a view to securing its passage within the legislative session of 2017-18. This would align with the target commissioning date of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL in the third quarter of 2018, thereby benefitting the general public of Hong Kong at the earliest juncture.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ronald Cheng', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(Ronald CHENG)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c. Secretary for Justice
 Secretary for Security
 Director of Administration