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28 November 2017

Clerk to the Panel on Constitutional Affairs
(Attn: Ms Joanne MAK)
The Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Joanne,

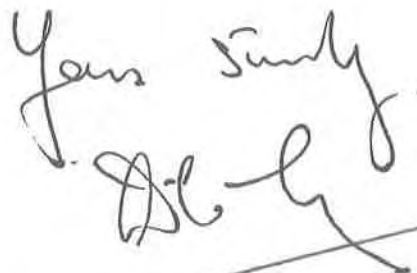
**Panel on Constitutional Affairs
Places of Worship for Ethnic Minorities**

At its meeting on 16 October 2017, the Panel on Constitutional Affairs called for the Government to provide response to the request made by Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye concerning statistics on places of worship for ethnic minorities with respect to Agenda Item III on “Briefing on the Chief Executive’s 2017 Policy Address”.

The HKSAR Government is committed to promoting equal opportunities for different ethnic groups by fostering the culture and values of inclusiveness and mutual respect, and helping ethnic minorities integrate into society by encouraging the community to respect their needs. The Basic Law, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance and other local legislation give wide protection to the rights and freedom of all Hong Kong people, including freedom of religious belief. Ethnic minorities living in Hong Kong also enjoy such constitutional and legal protection.

Religion policy and matters fall under the purview of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB). According to HAB, under the prevailing policy, the Government may give policy support to religious groups’ applications for government land for the purpose of building religious facilities, and concessionary rates may be adopted in calculating the land premium of the floor

areas occupied by such facilities. In compiling the *Hong Kong Yearbook*, the Information Services Department has collected information on various religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism. According to the chapter on "Religion and Custom" of the *Hong Kong Yearbook 2016*, there are over 400 Buddhist temples; more than 300 Taoist abbeys and temples; at least 1,500 Christian congregations; 40 churches, 31 chapels and 26 halls for Roman Catholic; five Islamic mosques; three Jewish synagogues; one Hindu temple and one Sikh temple in Hong Kong. The Government does not maintain statistics on places of worship in Hong Kong and is therefore unable to provide more detailed figures.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Yours Sincerely" followed by a stylized signature.

(D. C. CHEUNG)

for Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs