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30 May 2000

The Honourable TUNG Chee-hwa
The Chief Executive of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Of the People's Republic of China
Chief Executive's Office
Hong Kong

Bills Committee on Urban Renewal Authority Bill

The Legislative Council has formed a Bills Committee to examine the Urban Renewal Authority Bill. Members of the Bills Committee are as keen as the Administration on resolving the problem of urban decay through the enactment of this new piece of legislation. We acknowledge the urgency and the importance of the Bill for the purpose of expediting the pace of urban renewal. We however consider it of no less importance that certain issues must be addressed properly before lending support to the Bill. Ensuring proper rehousing of residents displaced by the implementation of redevelopment projects is one of our greatest concerns.

Members of Bills Committees are deeply concerned about the terms of the preliminary agreement reached by the Administration with the Housing Authority (HA). Although HA agrees to provide an annual quota of up to 1,000 public housing units to the future Urban Renewal Authority (URA) for rehousing tenants affected by the resumption of land for redevelopment projects, affected tenants have to fulfil the established eligibility criteria laid down by HA before they could be offered public rental housing. Such an arrangement takes away entirely the flexibility which needs to be exercised by URA in rehousing affected tenants on compassionate grounds. We have urged the Administration to discuss with HA and seek its consent to allocate a certain percentage of the annual quota for such purpose at the discretion of URA but the result of discussion is disappointing.

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At the meeting on 29 May 2000 members of the Bills Committee unanimously requested that you would kindly discuss with HA to secure its consent to allocate 20% of the annual quota for rehousing affected tenants on compassionate grounds at the discretion of URA. You may wish to note that the same arrangement has been agreed by the Housing Society.

The Bills Committee intends to wrap up deliberations on the Bill before the end of next week. We look forward to your early and favourable reply.

(Edward HO Sing-tin)
Chairman of the Bills Committee
on Urban Renewal Authority Bill

c.c. Secretary for Planning and Lands
(Attn: Mr Stephen FISHER)

