

**Speaking Note for the Secretary for Trade and Industry
at LegCo's Special Finance Committee Meeting
to be held from 9 am to 10:30 am on Thursday, 23 March 2000**

Mr. Chairman,

One of the major tasks of the Trade and Industry Bureau (TIB) in the next few months is to take forward the proposals announced by the Financial Secretary (FS) in his Budget Speech to restructure Government agencies with responsibilities for commerce and industry. The objective of the restructuring arrangements is to establish the most suitable institutional framework to advance Government initiatives for promoting innovation and technology, attracting foreign investment and rendering support to the commercial and industrial sectors.

On promoting innovation and technology, we will appoint a standing Council of Advisors on Innovation and Technology to furnish advice to the Government. We will also set up an inter-bureau committee chaired by FS as well as an Innovation and Technology Commission within TIB to co-ordinate Government policies and implement Government programmes in this field.

On the promotion of foreign investment, a steering committee chaired by FS will be set up to oversee overall policy development and implementation; a dedicated agency named "Invest Hong Kong" will also be set up under TIB to execute specific promotion programmes. Moreover, an advisory forum will be put in place to hear views from the private sector.

As regards support to commerce and industry, the role played by TIB will be strengthened. It will become the advocate for industry and commerce within the Government. The Business and Services Promotion Unit currently under FS's Office will be integrated into TIB and the English title of TIB will be renamed as "Commerce and Industry Bureau".

Besides, the Trade Department (TD) will expand its functions by taking over the existing functions of the Industry Department (ID) in

respect of general support for the industrial sector and small and medium-sized enterprises. It will be renamed Trade and Industry Department whereas ID will be abolished. We will also set up a Trade and Industry Advisory Board to advise the Government on trade and industry matters.

Another major area of the Bureau's work for the coming year will be to continue to strengthen and expand our liaison with the Mainland in commerce and trade matters. TIB will actively pursue the work of the Mainland and HKSAR Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (Joint Commission) which was set up between the Central Government and the HKSAR last year. The Working Group on Trade under the Joint Commission will hold its second meeting in Hong Kong from March 28 to 30.

Given the significant benefits to be brought about by the accession of China to the World Trade Organisation, we will maintain close contacts with the Central Government and the local business sector so as to help our businessmen grasp the new business opportunities in the Mainland. Also, we will vigorously lobby the US Congress for support of the legislation that proposes to give China Permanent Normal Trade Relations status, thus ending the uncertainty created by the annual Normal Trade Relations debate in the US.

We will keep up our efforts to protect intellectual property in the coming year. As regards legislation, we propose to ban the bringing of video recording equipment into public places of entertainment which are used for staging performances or showing copyright works. We will also clarify relevant legislation so as to help strengthen prosecution of corporate copyright infringements. The concerned bill has been introduced into the Legislative Council. In addition, the Bills Committee of the Legislative Council is now examining the Trade Marks Bill and I hope that its work will be completed as soon as possible.

As regards law enforcement, remarkable achievement had been made by the Customs and Excise Department (C & ED) last year. However, we will not slacken our efforts. Vigorous actions will be taken to combat any illegal transshipment and copyright infringement. For

instance, a Special Task Force comprising 185 officers was set up in the C & ED last year to bring copyright piracy offenders to justice. Recently, the C & ED and the Trade Department have set up a joint task force to combat illegal transshipment of textiles.

Thank you.

Trade and Industry Bureau
March 2000