

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1265/99-00
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref: CB1/PL/TI/1

Panel on Trade and Industry

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 15 February 2000, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon CHAN Kam-lam (Chairman)
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon NG Leung-sing
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon MA Fung-kwok
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon HUI Cheung-ching
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon Bernard CHAN
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong
- Member attending** : Hon CHOY So-yuk (Non-Panel Member)
- Members absent** : Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
Prof Hon NG Ching-fai
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, JP
- Public officers attending** : **For Item IV**

Miss CHEUNG Siu-hing
Deputy Secretary for Trade and Industry (2)

Mr Philip CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary for Trade and Industry (D)

Mr Vincent Y K POON
Assistant Commissioner of Customs & Excise
(Control and Intellectual Property)

For Item V

Miss CHEUNG Siu-hing
Deputy Secretary for Trade and Industry (2)

Mr Bobby CHENG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Trade and Industry (B)

Miss Agnes WONG
Assistant Director-General of Industry (Infrastructure Support)

For Item VI

Miss Yvonne CHOI
Acting Secretary for Trade and Industry

Miss Annie TANG
Deputy Secretary for Trade and Industry (Special Duties)

Mr David TONG
Assistant Commissioner of Customs & Excise (Border and Drugs)

Miss Eliza LEE
Assistant Director-General of Trade (Systems)

Mr TAM Yiu-keung
Assistant Secretary for Trade and Industry (Special Duties)

**Attendance by
invitation**

: For Item IV

Optical Disc Manufacturing and Technologies Association Limited

Mr Andy KWOK
Vice-President

International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (Hong Kong
Group) Limited

Mr Ricky FUNG Tim-chee
Chief Executive Officer

Mr Sean MOK Kwong-fai
Deputy Director, Asian Regional Office

Business Software Alliance

Mr Tom ROBERTSON
Chairman, Asia Committee

Motion Picture Association

Mr Sam HO
Assistant Director, Anti-Piracy Operations

Motion Picture Industry Association

Mr TSUNG Wan-chi
Chief Executive

Interactive Digital Software Association

Legal Advisor
Ms Angie AU-YONG

Movie Producers and Distributors Association of Hong Kong Limited

Mr Tony SHU
Committee Member/Executive Secretary

Clerk in attendance : Mrs Mary TANG
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)6

Staff in attendance : Assistant Legal Advisor 2
Miss Anita HO

Ms Rosalind MA
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)6

I. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting
(LC Paper No. CB(1)948/99-00)

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2000 were confirmed.

II. Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)923/99-00 - Follow-up to visit to Tseung Kwan O Industrial Estate on 1 June 1999

LC Paper No. CB(1)949/99-00 - Report on the progress of operation of the Special Finance Scheme for Small and Medium Enterprises (as at 3 February 2000))

2. Members noted the information papers issued since last meeting.

III. Date of the next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper Nos. CB(1)955/99-00(01) and (02) - Lists of outstanding items for discussion and follow-up actions)

3. Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday, 6 March 2000, at 2:30 pm. Members agreed to discuss the “Registration of Copyright Licensing Bodies Regulation”. Moreover, the Chairman advised that as the Administration wished to introduce an Omnibus Bill to facilitate air cargo transshipment into the Legislative Council for First Reading as soon as possible, special arrangement had been made to include the item on the agenda of this meeting. The item on “Review of the Rice Control Scheme” originally scheduled was thus deferred to the next meeting. While expressing no objection to this arrangement, Mr Fred LI opined that improvement could be made with regard to the handling of such matters. The Chairman also agreed that when similar arrangements were to be made in future, the member who had put forward the discussion item would be consulted first. Members agreed to discuss the item on “Review of the Rice Control Scheme” at the meeting held on 6 March 2000.

4. Mrs Selina CHOW pointed out that the submissions received from the deputations regarding the item on “Prevention of copyright piracy” to be discussed at the meeting covered a wide range of issues and there might not be enough time to address each one of them at the meeting. It would be preferable for members to decide and confine the scope of discussion to be held. Members agreed to focus the discussion on the difficulties encountered by the optical disc manufacturers and the views of the copyright-based industries. Relevant topics that could not be dealt with at the meeting would be discussed on other occasions, if necessary.

IV. Prevention of copyright piracy

Meeting with deputations

(i) Optical Disc Manufacturing and Technologies Association Limited (ODMTA)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)955/99-00(03))

5. Mr Andy KWOK, Vice-President of ODMTA, briefed members on the submission of the Association. He said that optical disc manufacturers encountered great difficulties

in operating their business. In the absence of a systematic copyright verification mechanism at present, manufacturers were unable to solve all the problems relating to copyright verification despite their willingness to devote time and human resources for the purpose. In line with the Hong Kong Government's plan to develop high technology industries, assistance should be rendered to the optical disc manufacturing industry to foster its growth. He asked members to consider the 11 complaints and requests as set out in their submission, particularly on the following two items:

- (a) establishing expeditiously the Registry of Copyright Licensing Bodies as proposed in the Copyright Ordinance, whose functions were similar to those of the central authentication centre for copyright verification advocated by ODMTA, so as to facilitate an early confirmation and verification of the ownership of copyright works, thereby reducing the chances of copyright infringement; and
 - (b) exempting “recordable compact discs (RCDs)” from the requirement of marking with the manufacturer’s Source Identification Code (SID). As RCDs might be used by other people to record infringing works, if the enforcement officers traced the information provided in the code and prosecuted the manufacturer, he might, apart from being liable to the offence he did not commit, also suffer losses in terms of money and reputation.
- (ii) International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (Hong Kong Group) Limited (IFPI(HK))
(LC Paper No. CB(1)955/99-99(04))

6. Mr Sean MOK Kwong-fai, Deputy Director of IFPI(HK), advised that in the light of the difficulties in copyright verification as expressed by the optical disc manufacturers in their opposition to the passage of the Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 1) Order 1999, the copyright-based industries had been actively exploring ways to offer assistance. Some guidelines on copyright verification for the optical disc manufacturers’ reference were set out in the joint submission provided to the Panel. In addition, the copyright-based industries fully supported the Government in combating copyright piracy activities, particularly the proposed closure order along the lines of the Crimes Ordinance to be imposed on the premises used for conducting piracy activities. He hoped that the Government would consult the industries concerned on the proposal as soon as possible. In view of the rapid development in technology, the issue of copyright piracy on the Internet should also be addressed without delay. He urged the Government to explore appropriate legislative control as well as enforcement arrangements against such activities.

- (iii) Business Software Alliance (BSA)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)955/99-00(04))

7. Mr Tom ROBERTSON, Chairman of Asia Committee, BSA, advised that in recent years, the Administration’s efforts in combating copyright piracy had proved to be effective. However, there was still room for improvement in the prosecution of end-user

corporate intellectual property rights (IPR) offenders using infringing copies of computer software to produce goods or provide services. He put forward the following two points for the Administration's consideration:

- (a) after the Legislative Council had passed the Intellectual Property (Miscellaneous) Bill 2000, which BSA fully supported, the Customs and Excise Department (CED) should step up enforcement actions accordingly; and
- (b) the Administration should enhance public education, especially in alerting the persons-in-charge of the companies about the use of infringing copies of computer software. The Government should call on the public and request the bidders of government projects to use legitimate copies of computer software. Those who failed to produce relevant proof in this regard should be disqualified.

- (iv) Motion Picture Association (MPA)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)955/99-00(04))

8. Mr Sam HO, Assistant Director of Anti-Piracy Operations, MPA, advised that the Association gave their full support to the Government in combating copyright piracy activities. He also pointed out that upon the enactment of the Copyright Ordinance and the Prevention of Copyright Piracy Ordinance, copyright piracy activities had gradually subsided and Hong Kong had since been able to remove its disgraceful label as the "pirates' paradise". In view of the success achieved by the above ordinances, a number of Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand and Malaysia had made reference to the Hong Kong ordinances in drafting their copyright legislation. He remarked that Hong Kong had been upholding the legal principle of "benefit of the doubt", he therefore believed that the lawful optical disc manufacturers would not be made scapegoats under the legislation. He also informed members that the move of MPA's Asia-Pacific Regional Office to Hong Kong from Singapore in August 1999 had shown the Association's support and confidence in Hong Kong. With the co-operation and joint efforts of the Government, the copyright-based industries and the optical disc manufacturers, he hoped that Hong Kong, in developing high technology, could also be renowned for its protection of intellectual property rights.

- (v) Motion Picture Industry Association (MPIA)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)955/99-00(04))

9. Mr TSUNG Wan-chi, Chief Executive of MPIA, said that in recent years, the problem of piracy had put the Hong Kong movie industry in a difficult position. Fortunately, with the legislative and enforcement efforts of the Hong Kong Government, there were signs that piracy activities had been kept under control. However, the growing popularity of the Internet had given rise to on-line piracy activities. He urged the Administration to acknowledge the problem and explore ways to monitor and combat such piracy activities. Moreover, as regards the difficulties in copyright verification as expressed by the optical disc manufacturers, he said that MPIA would do its best to render assistance. MPIA had obtained funds from the Film Development Fund to develop high

technology and establish a database for copyright of movies. He believed that the database could provide optical disc manufacturers with suitable assistance in copyright verification for films produced/distributed locally.

(vi) Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA)

10. Ms Angie AU-YONG, Legal Advisor of IDSA, expressed the Association's support for the Government's proposal in formulating legislative measures to allow a sampling of suspected infringing goods to be conclusive evidence in a criminal case as the its implementation could save time on unnecessary checking. Furthermore, IDSA was also concerned about the issue of Internet piracy. At present, many computer game softwares had already been downloaded illegally from the Internet by unlawful elements. The Administration should legislate expeditiously against such infringement activities.

(vii) Movie Producers and Distributors Association of Hong Kong Limited (MPDA(HK))
(LC Paper No. CB(1)955/99-00(05))

11. Mr Tony CHU, Committee Member/Executive Secretary of MPDA(HK), advised that the Association was in support of the Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 1) Order 1999, which had just been passed on 12 January 2000. He also stated the following views:

- (a) MDPA(HK) supported the proposal contained in the Intellectual Property (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2000 to prohibit the unauthorized possession of video recording equipment in a place of public entertainment;
- (b) the Administration should, in clarifying the relevant legislation for the prosecution of end-user corporate IPR offenders, clearly define the meaning of a company;
- (c) MDPA(HK) urged the Government to establish a copyright registration system and an intellectual property rights database; and
- (d) MDPA(HK) urged the Government to examine ways to monitor and combat copyright piracy activities on the Internet.

Discussion with Members

Difficulties encountered by optical disc manufacturers in copyright verification

12. Mrs Selina CHOW advised that the issue of "prevention of copyright piracy" had a very wide scope. She was more concerned about how the lawful optical disc manufacturers could be protected from unnecessary disturbances or being innocently involved in piracy activities when the copyright legislation was enforced. She asked Mr KWOK about the ways to assist optical disc manufacturers in overcoming the difficulties in copyright verification in addition to the establishment of a central authentication centre

for copyright verification. Besides, she was also concerned about whether the existing arrangement for inspecting optical disc factories was reasonable, as well as the proposed arrangement in relation to the optical disc manufacturers' request for exempting RCDs from the marking of SIDs.

13. In response, Mr Andy KWOK pointed out that for the smooth operation of the optical disc manufacturing industry, ODMTA was drafting a code of practice for the industry, specifying the steps and actions its members might take in respect of the production orders whose copyright could not be verified. On the arrangement for the customs officers to inspect the optical disc factories, Mr KWOK advised that the customs officers often inspected the factories outside office hours, asking for the original copy of copyright authorizations and causing much nuisance to the optical disc manufacturers. ODMTA urged the authorities concerned to take proper enforcement actions and exercise their discretion taking into consideration individual circumstances while discharging their duties. As regards the exemption of RCDs from marking of SIDs, he reiterated that RCDs were blank discs manufactured for buyers to record the contents they needed, which might include extra information such as brand names and titles. In this connection, if a SID was marked on the discs, the manufacturer concerned might be wrongly victimized for piracy activities conducted by the people who used the discs. Mr SIN Chung-kai and Mr MA Fung-kwok opined that the Administration should follow up the request for exemption and explore ways to prevent innocent optical disc manufacturers from being involved in piracy activities.

Admin

14. Responding through the Chairman on Mr Andy KWOK's concern about the arrangement of factory inspection, the Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Control and Intellectual Property) (AC/CED(C&IP)) said that when the customs officers conducted inspections outside office hours, they would only inspect the plants in which production was still in progress. As such, the question of disturbing the off duty persons-in-charge did not exist; nor would it constitute unnecessary nuisance. Although inconvenience might be caused when the customs officers required the persons-in-charge to produce the original copy of copyright authorizations on the spot, such a move was necessary for the purpose of enforcement. If the persons-in-charge concerned failed to produce the original copy of the document immediately and there were no alternatives, the customs officers had the right to confiscate the suspected infringing discs first pending detailed investigation.

15. Responding to Mr CHEUNG Man-kyong's question on the corresponding measures to be taken against the optical disc manufacturers for non-compliance with ODMTA's code of practice, Mr Andy KWOK advised that as ODMTA was a voluntary organization, its code of practice was not legally binding. ODMTA therefore had been asking the Administration to provide a code of practice for optical disc manufacturers, setting out the basic steps in verifying the authenticity of authorization documents. Regrettably, the Administration still did not undertake to provide such a code of practice to date.

16. Mr SIN Chung-kai suggested that ODMTA might consider, cancelling a manufacturer's membership as a punishment should he/she fail to follow the code of practice. Mrs Selina CHOW remarked that without the Government's participation and

recognition, the formulation of the code of practice could hardly be supported by the industry. As the code was not recognized by the Government, the manufacturers might think that they would not be provided with adequate protection even if they had followed it. She therefore would like the Administration to respond to this request.

17. The Deputy Secretary for Trade and Industry (2) (DS/TI(2)) stressed that it was ultimately the responsibility of the parties concerned to ensure that their transactions were in compliance with the laws. The onus in this case was therefore on the optical disc manufacturers to exercise due diligence and verify the authorizations before accepting orders and producing the discs. If they had any doubts on the legitimacy of the production orders concerned, they should verify with the copyright owners or the respective copyright organization. Regarding the request for the provision of a code of practice, the industry could refer to paragraph 8 of the information paper provided by the Administration, which had set out some prudent procedural safeguards. Moreover, the submission of the Hong Kong Copyright Alliance (HKCA) had also set out the steps to be taken in greater details for reference. She pointed out that people engaging in business activities had the responsibility to take proper steps to safeguard their own interest and the legitimacy of the transactions. Even if the Administration would provide possible steps to be taken, these would be for reference purpose only. There was no legal basis to these steps and they would not be legally binding.

Admin 18. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide a written response to the views and requests of ODMTA given in its submission.

The operation of the optical disc manufacturing industry

19. While agreeing that the optical disc manufacturing industry had its role to play in the economy of Hong Kong, Mr MA Fung-kwok opined that some 600 registered production lines producing 20 000 discs daily were on the high side. He asked Mr Andy KWOK to provide the respective figures of optical discs manufactured for export and for sale in the local market for reference. In addition, he expressed concerns over the operation of the optical disc manufacturing industry. He would like Mr KWOK to explain to members the general procedures for ODMTA members to conduct business transactions, such as the procedures for receiving orders, methods of delivery and payment, and whether the information of the opposite party to a transaction would be verified.

20. Mr Andy KWOK advised that the manufacturers had submitted the respective figures of the manufactured discs for export and for local sale to the Customs and Excise Department (CED) in September and October 1999. As such, CED should be able to provide the relevant figures. With regard to the operation of the industry, a manufacturer would normally verify its trading partner's basic information such as its business registration, company address and telephone number if the other party to a transaction was neither a familiar nor well-known company. However, according to his understanding, these procedures were not followed by each and every manufacturer. The code of practice being drafted by ODMTA also aimed at encouraging the industry to follow prudent verification procedures.

Internet piracy

21. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong was concerned that the growing popularity of the Internet would aggravate the problems of piracy and infringement activities such as on-line sale of infringing products and the illegal downloading of software. He enquired about the legislative and enforcement measures of the Administration in dealing with the problem. DS/TI(2) responded that under the Copyright Ordinance, enforcement officers could take actions against piracy and infringement activities conducted through the Internet. The laws protecting intellectual property rights in Hong Kong were quite advanced but enforcement measures had to be further explored and developed to keep in line with legislation. CED was also responsible for the enforcement against piracy and infringement activities on the Internet. The Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau of CED had set up a task force in November last year to explore means to combat piracy and infringement activities on the Internet. Furthermore, the Trade and Industry Bureau also held regular meetings with the industry to solicit their views on combating piracy and infringement activities. Since on-line activities straddled national boundaries, the control of these activities warranted international co-operation. She informed members that relevant departments, including the Police, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Department of Justice and the Security Bureau, would set up their own task forces to examine the issue. She advised that the Administration would take a proactive and forward-looking approach in dealing with the issue. Given the complexity of the issue, it would take time to find a solution. AC/CED(C&IP) added that the Administration was actively preparing for enforcement actions against on-line piracy and infringement activities. The task force set up by CED would pay an overseas visit to USA to explore means to solve the problem.

22. Mr SIN Chung-kai suggested that the progress of the study conducted by the Administration in this regard should be followed up at a Panel meeting in April or May. Members agreed to request the Administration to provide further information on the prevention and control of Internet piracy and infringement activities for members' reference and further discussion at Panel meetings.

Admin

The sale of pirated products at optical disc retail outlets

23. Referring to paragraph 14 of the submission of HKCA, which stated that more than half of the optical disc retail outlets were selling both authentic and pirated products, Mrs Selina CHOW expressed concern about the situation and enquired whether HKCA had reported this to CED and whether the Association had considered refusing to supply these outlets with authentic optical discs for sale as a punishment.

24. Mr Ricky FUNG Tim-chee, Chief Executive Officer of IFPI (HK) advised that CED had already been notified of the situation. The outlets concerned were not authorized sales agents. Some of these outlets were operated in a small scale and might have mistaken pirated products as parallel imports. Mr Sam HO supplemented that most of the pirated digital optical discs found were of movie videos. Majority of the persons-in-charge of these outlets just pretended to be innocent in an attempt to make a profit by deception.

Admin 25. Members were concerned about the sale of pirated optical discs and urged the Administration to provide information on the progress of enforcement actions against piracy activities and the statistics in relation to actions against piracy activities. In view of the wide scope of discussion on prevention of copyright piracy, members agreed to consider arranging another meeting to discuss the matter pending the provision of necessary information by the Administration.

V. Consultancy Study on Business Park
(LC Paper No. CB(1)955/99-00(07))

26. DS/TI(2) briefed members on the contents of the paper. She advised that the consultants commissioned by the Administration had completed the Stage One Study on the setting up of a business park in Hong Kong in July 1999. The consultancy report had been analyzed and considered by the Steering Committee on the Business Park Consultancy (the Steering Committee). The consultants, having carried out a market demand analysis and assessed the viability of a business park, proposed certain strategic and short term recommendations. The report recommended kick-starting the development of the business park and proceeding with the Stage Two Study to examine the detailed development and operation of the Business Park.

27. The Steering Committee had considered the recommendations and agreed that there was a market demand for more flexible forms of industrial infrastructure. However, it opined that the Hong Kong Industrial Estates Corporation, with its expanded ambit, might largely meet the demand for business park-type activities. Moreover, the demand for more flexible forms of industrial infrastructure might also be met by improving existing land infrastructure and modification of planning standards. The "Business Zone" concept being considered by the Planning Department was a case in point. The Steering Committee considered that, where necessary, modification of planning guidelines should be able to create a conducive environment for private sector investment in the development of a business park. The Steering Committee therefore concluded that a clear case for a business park had not been established and the Stage Two Study need not commence.

28. Having discussed the findings and recommendations of the study and the Steering Committee's views, the Services Promotion Strategy Group opined that the setting up of the Business Park was not justified. The Administration had accepted the views of the Steering Committee. However, it still agreed to adopt a flexible approach in providing industrial land and infrastructure facilities as well as taking appropriate measures to ensure that such market demands would be satisfied.

29. Members noted the contents of the paper and agreed with the Administration's views and decisions on the Consultancy Study on Business Park.

VI. An Omnibus Bill to Facilitate Air Cargo Transshipment in Hong Kong
(LC Paper No. CB(1)955/99-00(08))

30. The Acting Secretary for Trade and Industry (S/TI(Atg)) briefed members on the main purpose of an Omnibus Bill to Facilitate Air Cargo Transshipment in Hong Kong (the Omnibus Bill), which was to facilitate the development of air cargo transshipment industry in Hong Kong by removing the licensing requirements for less sensitive strategic commodities and to further develop Hong Kong into an international and regional air cargo hub. She advised that the passage of the Omnibus Bill would attract more air cargo and express service providers to invest in Hong Kong. The Administration had consulted the industry on the proposed Omnibus Bill and gained their support. The Deputy Secretary for Trade and Industry (Special Duties) supplemented that the Omnibus Bill sought to amend six ordinances and 14 regulations, the details of which were set out at Annex B of the information paper. She also asked members to take note of the Transshipment Cargo Exemption Scheme for Less Sensitive Strategic Commodities as set out at Annex A of the paper, which specified that exempted air carriers and their respective appointed agents had to register with the Trade Department and undertake to comply with the exemption conditions. Registered companies and agents had to assume legal liability if they failed to comply with these conditions.

31. The Assistant Commissioner (Border and Drugs), CED advised that the concept of an air cargo hub involved de-consolidation of different consignments of air transshipment cargo destined for different countries arriving on board an incoming flight, sorting them in the airport and then placing them on board connecting flights within a very tight time frame (generally within a 3-hour time span between 12:00 midnight and 3:00 am). This was a new trend for processing air cargo by air carriers and express cargo operators. The Government would be committed to maintaining stringent controls against illegal diversion or smuggling of air transshipment cargo into Hong Kong. At present, CED was equipped with adequate computer systems to analyse information on the contents of the cargoes before they arrived in Hong Kong and no cargo should be released for import or re-export without customs clearance. He called upon members to support the Omnibus Bill to facilitate the development of the air cargo transshipment industry.

32. Mrs Selina CHOW supported the Omnibus Bill, which aimed at simplifying licensing procedures, but she was concerned about the savings the proposal could achieve in terms of departmental staffing and other resources. She requested the Administration to provide relevant figures for reference. S/TI(Atg) responded that the actual figures of savings in resources were not available at this stage but she agreed that savings in terms of staffing or resources should be achieved through the proposed simplified licensing procedures. However, she pointed out that the parties which would benefit the most from the proposal were the cargo transshipment operators, air carriers and express cargo operators. At members' request, she undertook to provide more specific information on the savings in staffing and resources upon the introduction of the Omnibus Bill.

Admin

33. Mr SIN Chung-kai also supported the spirit of the Omnibus Bill to promote the air cargo transshipment industry. In the meantime, he requested that when introducing the Omnibus Bill, the Administration should provide information on the potential risk of this

proposal, as well as an assessment on various issues such as the circumstances under which abuse might take place. He asked whether the Administration had consulted other major trading partners, such as USA, on this proposal. S/TI(Atg) agreed to provide information on risk assessment and the measures to prevent the abuse of the exemption scheme when introducing the Omnibus Bill into the Legislative Council. As regards consultations with trading partners, she advised that the Administration, as an initial step, had informed the major trading partners of the HKSAR, all of whom had indicated their acceptance of this proposal.

34. Members accepted in principle the proposal as set out in the information paper and agreed that the Administration should introduce the bill into the Legislative Council as soon as possible.

VII. Any other business

Overseas Duty Visit

35. The Chairman asked members to consider whether it was necessary to arrange any overseas duty visits for members in the current legislative session. Should there be any proposals, members could contact the Clerk to Panel after the meeting. In view of the time required for making arrangements, the proposals should be put forward by the end of March 2000.

36. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:30 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
30 March 2000