



OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN BRIEF No.19

The Legislative Council normally meets in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Complex every Wednesday while in session. The proceedings of the meetings are recorded verbatim in the Official Record of Proceedings of the Legislative Council.

A TRUTHFUL RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The Official Record of Proceedings of the Legislative Council (known as “Official Record” in the Rules of Procedure and as “Journal” in the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap. 382)) is a verbatim record of the proceedings of the Legislative Council (“LegCo”), which gives a truthful report of the speeches made by all speakers on the agenda items at LegCo meetings. Therefore, all information in the verbatim record is accurate, fair and true. From such information, the public may know what happens at LegCo meetings, such as the policies of the Government at that time, the stance of LegCo Members on a particular issue, the views of various political parties on certain matters, etc. This information may also assist the public, media, legal sector, as well as the court, in determining the legislative intent of laws.

PRODUCTION AND PUBLICATION OF LEGCO JOURNAL

LegCo Journal, though not strictly verbatim, is substantially the verbatim report of the speeches made at LegCo meetings. Meeting participants may address the Council in Putonghua, Cantonese or English. As most meeting participants deliver their speeches in Cantonese, it is necessary for transcribers and editors to convert the speeches from colloquial Cantonese to written Chinese, involving the conversion of sentences and phrases to their equivalents, when producing LegCo Journal. During the process, transcribers and editors exercise prudence and caution to avoid distortion of the original meaning.

LegCo Journal records the speeches made at LegCo meetings in first-person narration, with repetitions and redundancies omitted and with obvious mistakes corrected, but which, on the other hand, leaves out nothing that adds to the meaning of the speech or illustrates the argument. To ensure the accuracy of the edited version of LegCo Journal, the Secretariat prepares a draft version for delivery to all participants of LegCo meetings (including Members and the Administration) for comment. In order to maintain the integrity of LegCo Journal, while meeting participants may propose amendments to the draft version, only minor changes that do not constitute alterations of meaning or substance will be accepted by the Clerk to LegCo and included in the confirmed version.

The Translation and Interpretation Division (“TID”) of the LegCo Secretariat is responsible for the production of LegCo Journal. At present, three versions are prepared during the production process: the draft and confirmed versions (floor versions of proceedings) and the translated version (Chinese and English versions of proceedings).

DIGITALIZATION OF LEGCO JOURNAL

To tie in with the global trend of pressing ahead with paperless operations, with effect from the Seventh LegCo, the Secretariat no longer publishes printed copies of LegCo Journal. Electronic copies of LegCo Journal are produced and published on the LegCo website, with the aid of a content management system specifically developed for the production of LegCo Journal.

Under the newly amended section 21 of the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap. 382), “any copy of the journals authenticated by the signature of the Clerk, is to be admitted as evidence of such journals in all courts and places without further proof”. The newly amended provision aims to provide flexibility in admitting copies of LegCo Journal as evidence in all courts to cater for the cessation of print production.

To fulfil the above statutory requirement, the Secretariat has arranged for the preparation of digitally-signed electronic copies of LegCo Journal, which are then stored offline by TID and the Archives to make sure that no unauthorized amendments can be made to the electronic copy of a record after being digitally signed by authorized staff and published on the website. Subsequent amendments to LegCo Journal can only be made by authorized staff on justifiable grounds, and all such amendments must be clearly and digitally documented.

Further Reference:

Legislative Council in Brief No. 3 - Let the Council Meeting Begin

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