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BY FAX & BY HAND

12 February 2004

Mrs Patricia Chu, BBS
Chairperson
Equal Opportunities Commission
Unit 2002, 20/F, Office Tower
Convention Plaza, 1 Harbour Road
Wan Chai, Hong Kong
(Fax: 2802 0030)

Dear Mrs Chu,

As you are surely aware, there is considerable interest in the recent events concerning the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). In fact, following a press conference held by Mr Patrick Yu in October last year regarding the termination of his employment contract by the EOC, the Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs held three special meetings to discuss the issues relating to the appointment and termination of the employment of Mr Yu as Director(Operations) by the EOC, and the subsequent resignation of Mr Michael Wong from the office of the Chairperson of the EOC.

The recent events had, to a certain extent, adversely affected the confidence of the public in the EOC. There is an urgent need to restore the credibility of the EOC.

I understand that the EOC has taken steps to set up a review committee which includes three independent members (i.e., persons who are not EOC members) to conduct a review of the policy and procedures relating to human resources management in the EOC. The EOC has also considered setting up a review committee comprising independent members to look into the issues concerning the appointment and termination of Mr Yu. I fully support such a move. It is however imperative that this review is seen by the public as independent and fair. The appointment of a review committee by the EOC itself would not fully meet public expectations.

Taking into account the latest developments, I consider that it would be more appropriate for the Administration to nominate two independent members to sit on this EOC review committee in order to enhance the credibility and transparency of the proposed investigation. These two members would be persons who are highly regarded in the community.

I trust that you would bring my request to the attention of the EOC as soon as practicable. If such a review committee is formed, the Home Affairs Bureau, as the policy bureau for the EOC, would wish to receive a copy of the report of its findings and recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

(Patrick C P Ho)
Secretary for Home Affairs