

立法會
Legislative Council

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**Paper for the House Committee meeting
on 17 October 2003**

Committee on Rules of Procedure

**Proposed arrangements for the debate
on the next Policy Address**

Purpose

This paper informs the House Committee (HC) of the Administration's comments on the proposed arrangements for the debate on the next Policy Address (the Debate), and seeks HC's endorsement of the proposal that the HC chairman be invited to brief the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) on the proposed arrangements.

Background

2. On 16 May 2003, in endorsing the arrangements proposed by the Committee on Rules of Procedure (CRoP) for the Debate on the next Policy Address, HC also agreed that:

- (a) the total speaking time limit for designated public officers in each debate session should be -
 - (i) for one or two officers, each officer may speak for not less than 15 minutes, subject to the total speaking time limit of 45 minutes; and
 - (ii) for three or more officers, to be calculated on the basis of 15-minute speaking time limit for each officer; and
- (b) as in the 1997-98 and 1998-99 sessions, the Government's Progress Report and Policy Agenda should be published separately. The Progress Report should be released shortly (e.g. two days) before the

delivery of the Policy Address. CS should then hold a briefing to introduce the Progress Report on the day of its publication.

3. CRoP also inform HC that the Administration had not been consulted on the proposed speaking time limit for designated public officers, and that CRoP would further consult HC if the Administration had different views on this proposal.

The Administration's comments

4. In his letter of 20 May 2003, the Director of Administration provided the following comments:

(a) Total speaking time limit for designated public officers in each debate session (paragraph 2(a)(i) above)

While the Administration has no difficulty with the total speaking time limit of 45 minutes for one to two public officers, it is not necessary, or appropriate, for a minimum speaking time be imposed on individual public officers.

(b) Timeframe for the Administration to publish the Progress Report and the Policy Agenda in future, and the manner in which the Administration should introduce the Progress Report (paragraph 2(b) above)

The Administration will decide on the timing and format for presenting any Progress Report, taking into account each year's unique circumstances.

CRoP's views

5. CRoP considered the Administration's comments at its meeting on 6 October 2003, and reaffirmed that the proposal of allowing each public officer to speak for not less than 15 minutes, subject to the total speaking time limit of 45 minutes if there were only one or two officers speaking in a debate session, aimed at preventing the situation where a public officer did not have enough time to speak because the officer speaking ahead of him had used up most of the 45 minutes for that session. Under the proposal, where two officers are to speak, the officer speaking first should not speak for more than 30 minutes, leaving at least 15 minutes for the other officer. Subject to such a restriction, it would be up to the officers to determine their actual speaking time.

6. On the arrangements for the release of the Policy Address-related publications, CRoP considered that the timing and format, as decided by the Administration, for presenting such publications should not cause inconvenience to Members.

7. CROp proposes that, if HC endorses CROp's views in paragraphs 5 and 6 above, the HC chairman should brief CS on the proposed arrangements and clarify the outstanding issues.

Advice sought

8. Members are invited to endorse the proposal in paragraph 7 that the HC chairman should brief CS.

Legislative Council Secretariat

14 October 2003