

LC Paper No. CB(2) 314/04-05

Ref : CB2/H/5/04

House Committee of the Legislative Council

Minutes of the 8th meeting held in the Legislative Council Chamber at 2:30 pm on Friday, 26 November 2004

Members present :

Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, GBS, JP (Chairman) Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP (Deputy Chairman) Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, S.B.St.J., JP Hon LEE Cheuk-yan Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBS, JP Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP Hon Margaret NG Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-yee, GBS, JP Hon James TO Kun-sun Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP Hon CHAN Kam-lam, JP Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, SBS, JP Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung Hon SIN Chung-kai, JP Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS Hon WONG Yung-kan, JP Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP Dr Hon YEUNG Sum Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP Hon CHOY So-yuk Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP

Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, JP Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP Hon Vincent FANG Kang, JP Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH Hon LEE Wing-tat Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, BBS, JP Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP Hon Albert Jinghan CHENG Hon KWONG Chi-kin Hon TAM Heung-man

Members absent :

Hon Albert HO Chun-yan Hon Bernard CHAN, JP Hon MA Lik, JP Hon CHIM Pui-chung

Clerk in attendance :

Mrs Justina LAM

Clerk to the House Committee

Staff in attendance :

Mr Ricky C C FUNG, JP Mr Jimmy MA, JP Ms Pauline NG Secretary General Legal Adviser Assistant Secretary General 1

Mr Ray CHAN Mr LEE Yu-sung	Assistant Secretary General 3 Senior Assistant Legal Adviser 1
Mr Arthur CHEUNG	Senior Assistant Legal Adviser 2
Mrs Vivian KAM	Principal Council Secretary (Complaints)
Miss Kathleen LAU	Chief Public Information Officer
Mrs Constance LI	Chief Council Secretary (2)5
Mrs Betty LEUNG	Chief Council Secretary (3)1
Miss Anita HO	Assistant Legal Adviser 2
Miss Lolita SHEK	Senior Council Secretary (2)7

Action

I. Confirmation of the minutes of the 7th meeting held on 19 November 2004

(LC Paper No. CB(2) 269/04-05)

The minutes were confirmed.

II. Matters arising

Report by the Chairman on her meeting with the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS)

Provision of discussion papers by the Administration for Panel meetings

2. <u>The Chairman</u> said that she had informed CS of the result of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat's survey on the extent to which the Administration had adhered to the agreed deadlines. The situation had been less than satisfactory, and Members had requested that the deadlines be strictly adhered to. Members had made it clear that the Chairmen of Panels might decide to take an item off the agenda, if the paper for the item was not received by the deadline.

3. <u>The Chairman</u> added that CS had said that some bureaux had pointed out that sometimes the agreed deadlines were not adhered to because they wished to include the very latest development of an issue in the paper. He had emphasised to his colleagues that it was important to adhere to the deadlines, and the very latest development of an issue could be reported verbally at the meeting. CS had further said that the Administration would try its best to adhere to the deadlines in future. 4. <u>Mr WONG Kwok-hing</u> said that the Administration had failed to provide one of the papers for the meeting of the Panel on Transport held in the morning by the agreed deadline.

5. <u>The Chairman</u> said that according to the agreed arrangement, it was for the Panel Chairman concerned to decide whether the relevant item should be removed from the agenda, if the Administration's papers were not provided by the agreed deadline.

6. <u>Mr WONG Kwok-hing</u> suggested that Panel Chairmen should be reminded that they could remove the relevant item from the agenda, if the Administration's papers were not received by the deadline.

7. <u>Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung</u> said that if the Administration failed to observe the agreed deadlines, the Panel Chairman concerned should remove the relevant item from the agenda. However, if the Chairman decided not to remove the item, he should explain his decision to the Panel.

8. In response to Ms Emily LAU and Ms Margaret NG, <u>Assistant Secretary</u> <u>General 2</u> (ASG2) explained that it was part of the arrangements for the provision of papers that Panel Chairmen could decide whether the relevant item should be removed from the agenda, if the Administration's papers were not received by the deadline. <u>ASG2</u> added that the arrangements had been endorsed by the House Committee.

9. <u>Ms Margaret NG</u> said that Panel Chairmen should take account of the Panel's view when exercising his authority to remove an item from the agenda of a meeting.

10. <u>Mr Tommy CHEUNG</u> said that there might not be sufficient time for the Panel Chairman to consult the Panel. It would be more practical for the Chairman to ask the Administration's representatives to explain the paper in detail at the meeting, given that they had already turned up for the meeting. <u>Mr CHEUNG</u> added that alternatively, the Panel could decide to defer discussion of the item to a future meeting.

11. <u>Mr Martin LEE</u> said that since it was the Administration's fault not to adhere to the agreed deadline, the Panel could decide not to discuss the relevant item at the meeting, even though the Administration's representatives had already turned up for discussion of the item. <u>Mr LEE</u> further said that Panel Chairmen should consult the respective Panels, before deciding whether the relevant item should be removed from the agenda.

12. <u>Mr Martin LEE</u> added that Members had previously complained about the late provision of papers for Bills Committee meetings held towards the end of a legislative session. <u>Mr LEE</u> suggested that members could decide not to discuss these papers if scrutiny of the bills concerned was not that urgent. This would teach the Administration a lesson that it should observe the agreed deadlines.

13. <u>Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung</u> said that it was Members' role to monitor the work of the Government, and the Government had the responsibility to provide discussion papers by the agreed deadlines. It was absurd that Panel Chairmen had to undermine the effectiveness of Members' monitoring role by deleting the relevant item from the agenda, because the Government failed to provide papers by the deadline.

14. <u>Mr James TIEN</u> said that in previous terms, there were also occasions on which the Administration had failed to provide papers by the agreed deadlines, because the subject matter was very complicated or the Administration wanted to include the latest developments. <u>Mr TIEN</u> considered that Panel Chairmen should be given the flexibility to decide whether the relevant item should be removed from the agenda, having regard to the circumstances of each case. If members did not have sufficient time to study the paper, discussion of the item could be deferred to a future meeting.

15. <u>Ms LI Fung-ying</u> said that it was not practical for the Panel Chairman to consult the Panel before a meeting whether an item should be deleted from the agenda, because the Administration failed to provide papers by the agreed deadline. <u>Ms LI</u> suggested that the Panel Chairman should consult the Panel at the meeting whether members would like to discuss or defer the relevant item.

16. <u>Mr Ronny TONG</u> said that Panel Chairmen should not remove the relevant item from the agenda without consulting the Panel. <u>Mr TONG</u> considered that the Panel Chairman concerned should invite the Panel to consider at the meeting whether the relevant item should be discussed or deleted from the agenda, and a short debate on the matter should be allowed at the meeting.

17. <u>Miss CHOY So-yuk</u> said that it was not easy to find time slots for Panel meetings. Moreover, if the Administration's paper for an item was late, there would not be sufficient time to replace the item with another one. <u>Miss CHOY</u> considered that the Panel Chairman should consult the Panel at the meeting whether the item should be discussed or removed from the agenda.

18. <u>Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung</u> reiterated that the Panel Chairman did not need to consult the Panel on the removal of the relevant item from the agenda, if the Administration's paper was not provided by the agreed deadline. However,

should the Chairman wish to exercise his discretion to leave the relevant item on the agenda, despite the Administration's fault not to provide the paper by the agreed deadline, the Chairman should consult the Panel.

19. <u>The Chairman</u> said that Members had put forward two proposals on how Panel Chairmen should deal with an agenda item for which the Administration's paper was not provided according to the agreed deadlines –

- (a) the Chairman could decide to remove the item from the agenda, and if he wished to exercise his discretion to retain the item on the agenda, he should consult the Panel; or
- (b) the Panel should be consulted, if the Chairman wished to remove the item from the agenda. If the Chairman decided to leave the item on the agenda, the Panel Chairman should consult the Panel at the meeting whether the item should be discussed or removed, and allow time for a short discussion on the matter.

20. <u>The Chairman</u> put the two proposals in paragraph 19 above to vote. The result was that four Members voted in favour of the proposal in paragraph 19(a), and 23 Members voted in favour of the proposal in paragraph 19(b). <u>The Chairman</u> said that the arrangement described in paragraph 19(b) above would be adopted.

21. <u>Ms Margaret NG</u> requested that the above decision should be conveyed to all Members in writing.

22. <u>Ms Emily LAU</u> requested that the Administration should again be reminded to observe the agreed deadlines; otherwise, Panels would have to waste time at meetings to discuss whether or not to delete agenda items, because the papers had arrived late. <u>The Chairman</u> said that she would remind CS again that the Administration should strictly adhere to the agreed deadlines for the provision of papers.

III. Business arising from previous Council meetings

Legal Service Division report on subsidiary legislation gazetted on <u>19 November 2004 and tabled in Council on 24 November 2004</u> (LC Paper No. LS 18/04-05)

23. <u>The Legal Adviser</u> said that eight items of subsidiary legislation were gazetted on 19 November 2004 and tabled in Council on 24 November 2004. <u>The Legal Adviser</u> added that no difficulties in relation to the legal and drafting aspects of any of the subsidiary legislation had been identified.

24. Regarding the Trade Descriptions (Country of Manufacture) (Textile Made-up Articles) Order and Trade Descriptions (Place of Manufacture) (Textile Made-up Articles) Order, <u>Mrs Sophie LEUNG</u> said that the relevant trades had discussed and accepted the proposed arrangements described in these Orders.

25. <u>The Legal Adviser</u> also advised that, subject to Members' decision on whether to set up a Bills Committee to study the Trade Descriptions (Amendment) Bill 2004, the Administration had indicated that it would propose to amend that Bill at Committee Stage to amend references to "country of manufacture" to "place of manufacture" in the Order to bring these reference in line with the proposal in the Bill to amend the reference to "country" in section 2(2)(b)(ii) of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (Cap. 362) to "place".

26. <u>Members</u> did not raise any queries on the eight items of subsidiary legislation.

27. <u>The Chairman</u> reminded Members that the deadline for amending these items of subsidiary legislation was 15 December 2004, or 12 January 2005 if extended by resolution.

IV. Further report by the Legal Service Division on the Trade Descriptions (Amendment) Bill 2004

(LC Paper No. LS 19/04-05)

[Previous papers: LC Paper No. LS 10/04-05 issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 201/04-05 dated 11 November 2004; and extract from the minutes of the House Committee meeting on 12 November 2004 (LC Paper No. CB(2) 277/04-05(01)]

28. <u>The Legal Adviser</u> said that the Legal Service Division had provided a further report on whether the Administration would amend the reference to "country of origin/manufacture" to "place of origin/manufacture" in other Ordinances as well as in the Trade Descriptions (Country of Manufacture) (Piece-Knitted Garments) Order made under section 2(2)(b)(ii) of Cap. 362.

29. <u>The Legal Adviser</u> further said that according to the Administration, the relevant bureaux considered that the reference to "country of origin" in other ordinances was not relevant to the origin marking of goods governed by Cap. 362. However, if it was necessary to make amendments in future, they would be made through separate exercises.

30. <u>The Legal Adviser</u> added that to ensure consistency between section 2(2)(b)(ii) of the Ordinance, as amended by the Bill, and all subsidiary

legislation made under that section, the Administration would move Committee Stage amendments (CSAs) to the Bill to amend the reference to "country" and "place" in the Trade Descriptions (Country of Manufacture) (Piece-Knitted Garments) Order and the Trade Descriptions (Country of Manufacture) (Textile Made-up Articles) Order.

31. <u>The Legal Adviser</u> informed Members that the Legal Service Division had scrutinised the draft CSAs, and no difficulties in relation to the legal and drafting aspects had been identified. The Bill was ready for resumption of Second Reading debate.

32. said the of Mr Ronny TONG that reference "country to origin/manufacture" should be amended to "country place of or origin/manufacture, where appropriate", as many products were described as manufactured in a country instead of in a place. Mr TONG considered that there might be problems in the drafting of the Bill and proposed that a Bills Committee be formed to study the Bill.

33. <u>Mrs Sophie LEUNG</u> said that Hong Kong had fought successfully to retain the status of "place of origin" for its textile exports after the return of sovereignty in 1997, and it was necessary to make amendments in the relevant legislation before the implementation of CEPA II and the World Trade Organization Agreement on Textiles and Clothing. The trade was very concerned that the Bill should be enacted without delay.

34. <u>Mrs Selina CHOW</u> said that as the concern raised by Mr Ronny TONG was mainly related to the drafting of the Bill, the Legal Service Division could follow up Mr TONG's concern with the Administration.

35. <u>Ms Margaret NG</u> said that if there were problems with the drafting of a bill, a Bills Committee should be formed. <u>Ms NG</u> added that the Bills Committee should work expeditiously and complete scrutiny of the bill within one or two meetings.

36. <u>Mr SIN Chung-kai and Dr YEUNG Sum</u> expressed support for the setting up of a Bills committee to study the Bill.

37. <u>Mrs Sophie LEUNG</u> said that the trade was extremely concerned about the timely enactment of the Bill so that the necessary shipping forms could be printed and ready for use upon implementation of CEPA II. To expedite scrutiny of the Bill, <u>Mrs LEUNG</u> suggested that the Legal Service Division should immediately discuss with the Administration the drafting of the Bill, while the LegCo Secretariat invited membership and arranged for the first meeting of the Bills Committee. 38. <u>The Chairman</u> proposed that a Bills Committee be formed. <u>Members</u> agreed. The following Members agreed to join: Ms Margaret NG, Mrs Sophie LEUNG, Mr SIN Chung-kai, Mr Andrew LEUNG, Mr WONG Ting-kwong and Mr Ronny TONG.

V. Further business for the Council meeting on 1 December 2004

(a) <u>Questions</u>

(LC Paper No. CB(3) 179/04-05)

39. <u>The Chairman</u> said that Mr LAU Wong-fat had changed his oral question to written question.

40. <u>Mr Martin LEE</u> said that Mr LAU's question on the review of the functions and composition of District Councils was an important subject, and Members belonging to the Democratic Party (DP) would like to raise supplementary questions. However, they would not be able to do so now that Mr LAU had changed his oral question to a written question. It was also not possible to allocate the slot to another Member to raise a new oral question, in place of Mr LAU's question. <u>Mr LEE</u> suggested that the House Committee should discuss the arrangement for raising oral questions at Council meetings.

41. <u>The Chairman</u> requested the LegCo Secretariat to prepare a paper for discussion by Members at a future meeting.

(b) <u>Members' motion</u>

Proposed resolution to be moved by Hon CHOY So-yuk under section 34(4) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance relating to:

- (i) Waste Disposal (Designated Waste Disposal Facility) (Amendment) Regulation 2004, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 165 of 2004; and
- Waste Disposal (Charges for Disposal of Construction Waste) Regulation, published in the Gazette as Legal Notice No. 166 of 2004

(Wording of the proposed resolution issued vide LC Paper No. CB(3) 181/04-05 dated 23 November 2004.)

42. <u>The Chairman</u> said that Miss CHOY So-yuk, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Waste Disposal (Designated Waste Disposal Facility)

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(Amendment) Regulation 2004 and Waste Disposal (Charges for Disposal of Construction Waste) Regulation, had given notice to move a motion at the Council meeting on 1 December 2004 to extend the scrutiny period of the two Regulations to 5 January 2005.

VI. Business for the Council meeting on 8 December 2004

(a) <u>Questions</u>

(LC Paper No. CB(3) 180/04-05)

43. <u>The Chairman</u> said that 20 questions (six oral and 14 written) had been scheduled for the Council meeting on 8 December 2004.

(b) <u>Bills - First Reading and moving of Second Reading</u>

44. <u>The Chairman</u> said that no notice had been received yet.

(c) <u>Government motion</u>

45. <u>The Chairman</u> said that no notice had been received yet.

(d) <u>Members' motions</u>

- (i) Motion on "Medical reform" (Wording of the motion issued vide LC Paper No. CB(3) 185/04-05 dated 24 November 2004.)
- (ii) Motion on "Reviewing the basis for charging the trade effluent surcharge and its appeal mechanism" (Wording of the motion issued vide LC Paper No. CB(3) 184/04-05 dated 24 November 2004.)

46. <u>The Chairman</u> said that the above motions would be moved by Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Mr Tommy CHEUNG respectively, and the wording of the motions had been issued to Members.

47. <u>The Chairman</u> reminded Members that the deadline for giving notice of amendments, if any, to the motions was Wednesday, 1 December 2004.

VII. Position on Bills Committees/subcommittees

(LC Paper No. CB(2) 274/04-05)

48. <u>The Chairman</u> said that there were six Bills Committees, including the Bills Committee on Trade Descriptions (Amendment) Bill 2004 formed under agenda item IV above, and five subcommittees in action.

49. <u>Miss CHOY So-yuk</u>, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Waste Disposal (Designated Waste Disposal Facility) (Amendment) Regulation 2004 and Waste Disposal (Charges for Disposal of Construction Waste) Regulation, said that in order to allow more time for scrutiny of the two Regulations which involved complicated issues, she would move a motion to extend the scrutiny period of the two Regulations to 5 January 2005.

VIII. Council meeting time

(Paragraph 28 of the minutes of the 7th House Committee meeting on 19 November 2004)

50. <u>The Chairman</u> said that she had informed Members at the last meeting that the subject of Council meeting time would be discussed at this meeting. <u>The Chairman</u> invited Members' views on whether the present meeting time of Council meetings should continue or be changed.

51. <u>Dr YEUNG Sum</u> said that since the commencement of the current term, Council meetings often ended around 12:00 am or 1:00 am, although resumption of Second Reading debates on bills had yet to take place at Council meetings. <u>Dr YEUNG</u> further said that Members belonging to DP had discussed the matter and proposed that Council meetings should start at 11:00 am and continue without any break. <u>Dr YEUNG</u> explained that DP's proposal would enable regular meetings of Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) and Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) to be held on Wednesday mornings at 8:30 am. The arrangement would also avoid causing too much disruption to the meeting schedules of other committees.

52. <u>Mr LAU Kong-wah</u> said that Members belonging to the Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB) shared the concern about Council meetings ending around 12:00 am or 1:00 am. Members belonging to DAB proposed that Council meetings should start at 10:00 am and end around 10:00 pm without any break, and that any unfinished business should be dealt with on the following day. <u>Mr LAU</u> stressed that it was necessary to set an ending time for Council meetings on Wednesdays, as Members would be very tired after attending a meeting for 12 hours, and this would affect the efficiency of Council meetings.

53. <u>Mr Andrew LEUNG</u> said that Council meetings lasting for 12 hours without any break would be too tiring for Members. <u>Mr Martin LEE</u> said that individual Members could take short breaks by themselves.

54. <u>Mr LEE Cheuk-yan</u> said that the present meeting time of Council meetings should continue, i.e. Council meetings should start at 2:30 pm until midnight without any break, and if it was considered by the President that the business on the Agenda could not be finished by midnight, the meeting should be suspended by the President around 10:00 pm and resume on the following day.

55. <u>Mrs Selina CHOW</u> said that Members belonging to the Liberal Party also considered that the present meeting time of Council meetings should continue. If it was unlikely that the business on the Agenda could be finished around midnight, the President should decide around 10:00 pm that the Council meeting be suspended and resumed on the following day. <u>Mrs CHOW</u> added that as the current term had just commenced and new Members needed time to adapt, the House Committee could review the matter at a later stage, if necessary.

56. <u>The Secretary General</u> said that Council meetings would last even longer when debates on Second Reading of bills were to take place at future Council meetings.

57. <u>Mr Albert CHENG</u> proposed that Council meetings should start at 8:30 am and continue without any break until all business on the Agenda had been dealt with.

58. <u>Mr Ronny TONG</u> said that the present meeting time of Council meetings should continue, and that new Members would be able to adapt after some time. <u>Mr TONG</u> further said that he did not want to make it a rule that all Council meetings would start in the morning on Wednesdays. He considered that the President would be able to assess the duration of each Council meeting when approving the Agenda. <u>Mr TONG</u> added that the Council meeting time could be reviewed at a later stage, if necessary.

59. <u>Ms Margaret NG</u> said that it was the tradition that Council meetings started at 2:30 pm, and she did not see any problem with the present meeting time of Council meetings. <u>Ms NG</u> further said that when resumption of Second Reading debates on bills took place at future Council meetings, Members might shorten their speeches for motion debates. <u>Ms NG</u> considered that even if Council meetings were to start at 8:30 am, it was still likely that Council meetings would end late at night. <u>Ms NG</u> was of the view that the present arrangement of holding Council meetings at 2:30 pm on Wednesdays should continue, and if necessary, Council meetings could resume on the following day if there was unfinished business on the Agenda.

60. <u>Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung</u> proposed that Council meetings should start at 11:00 am and continue without any break until all business on the Agenda had been dealt with. He added that suspending a Council meeting and then resuming it on the following day would affect the committee meetings scheduled for the following day.

61. <u>Dr Joseph LEE</u> said that from the health point of view, he did not support holding meetings for 12 hours or more. He added that Council meetings should be held during day time.

62. <u>Dr KWOK Ka-ki</u> said that while he did not prefer long meetings, he was concerned that even if Council meetings were to start at 11:00 am, they would still end very late or had to resume on the following day. <u>Dr KWOK</u> supported that Council meetings should start at 2:30 pm, and that the President could decide whether to suspend the meeting around 10:00 pm and resume on the following day.

63. <u>Dr YEUNG Sum</u> said that the current LegCo comprised more Members who did not belong to any political party; hence an increase in the number of Members speaking at Council meetings. <u>Dr YEUNG</u> considered that Members should deal with the problem which was also of concern to the President. <u>Dr YEUNG</u> added that advancing the starting time of Council meetings to 11:00 am could reduce the need of extending a Council meeting beyond midnight or to the following day.

64. <u>Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong</u> urged Members belonging to DAB to agree to DP's proposal of holding Council meetings at 11:00 am instead of 10:00 am, so that the time slot of 8:30 am to 10:45 am on Wednesdays could be used for PWSC or ESC meetings.

65. <u>Mr LAU Kong-wah</u> said that Members belonging to DAB were agreeable to DP's proposal of holding Council meetings at 11:00 am, so that the time slot of 8:30 am to 10:45 am could be used for committee meetings. <u>Ms LI Fung-ying, Ms Emily LAU and Miss CHAN Yuen-han</u> also expressed support for the proposal.

66. <u>Mr Jasper TSANG</u> asked whether meetings of PWSC and ESC could end before 10:30 am. <u>Miss CHAN Yuen-han</u> said that she was a member of PWSC. Based on her past experience, meetings of PWSC could normally finish its business within a two-hour time slot.

67. <u>Ms Emily LAU</u> said that Council meetings should end around 10:00 pm, as Members would be very tired by then, and that the public or the media would not be following the proceedings, if Council meetings were to extend beyond 10:00 pm.

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68. The Chairman said that Members had put forward four options, as follows – $% \left(\frac{1}{2}\right) =0$

- (a) option one : the present arrangements of holding Council meetings at 2:30 pm and without any break should continue. When in the President's opinion it was unlikely that the business on the Agenda of a Council meeting could be finished by about midnight on the day of the meeting, she would suspend the meeting around 10:00 pm and order that the meeting resume the following day at 2:30 pm for the continuation of business;
- (b) option two : Council meetings would start at 11:00 am and continue without any break. When in the President's opinion it was unlikely that the business on the Agenda of a Council meeting could be finished by about midnight on the day of the meeting, she would suspend the meeting around 10:00 pm and order that the meeting resume the following day at 2:30 pm for the continuation of business;
- (c) option three : Council meetings would start at 11:00 am and continue without any break until all business on the Agenda had been dealt with; and
- (d) option four : Council meetings would start at 8:30 am and continue until all business on the Agenda was finished.

69. <u>The Chairman</u> asked Members whether they preferred to vote on the above options at this meeting, or to indicate their preference in a questionnaire to be issued by the LegCo Secretariat after the meeting.

70. <u>Mr LAU Kong-wah, Mr Abraham SHEK, Mr Albert CHENG and Ms LI</u> <u>Fung-ying</u> said that a vote should be taken at the meeting.

71. <u>Mr Fred LI</u> proposed that any one option selected should be decided by a majority of the Members voting. <u>Members</u> agreed

72. <u>The Chairman</u> proposed that a vote be taken on the four options, and that each Member should cast his vote once. <u>Members</u> agreed.

73. <u>Mr Albert CHENG</u> withdrew his proposal (i.e. option four).

74. <u>The Chairman</u> put the three options (i.e. options one, two and three) to vote. <u>ASG2</u> said that 46 Members were present at the meeting when the vote was taken. The outcome of the vote was as follows –

option one : 15 votes option two : 30 votes option three : one vote

75. <u>The Chairman</u> said that option two had the majority support and she would convey the House Committee's recommendation to the President for her consideration. The recommendation would also be discussed with the Administration.

IX. Number of questions scheduled for and speaking time limits for motion debates at Council meetings

(Letter dated 23 November 2004 from Hon Albert Jinghan CHENG to the Chairman of the House Committee (LC Paper No. CB(2) 277/04-05(02))

76. <u>The Chairman</u> said that Mr Albert CHENG had just informed her that he wished to withdraw his letter dated 23 November 2004 for discussion at this meeting.

77. <u>Mr Albert CHENG</u> explained that as some Members had requested to further discuss his proposals with him, he decided to withdraw his letter for discussion at this meeting.

78. <u>Mr James TIEN</u> said that Members should have been informed at the start of the meeting that Mr CHENG had withdrawn his item. <u>The Chairman</u> responded that she did not have time to deal with the matter until now.

79. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 3:57 pm.

Council Business Division 2 Legislative Council Secretariat 1 December 2004