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CB(1)1038/04-05(02)  
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HONG KONG

本局編號 OUR REF.: SBCR 6/1486/94 Pt. 37

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25 February 2005

Ms Sandra Mak  
Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group  
Unit 601, 6/F  
Admiralty Centre I  
18 Harcourt Road  
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Mak,

### **Emergency services provided by Government Flying Service**

Thank you for your letter of 18 February, seeking our clarification of a report in the Oriental Daily News dated 16 February regarding emergency services provided by the Government Flying Service.

You question the accuracy of a press report quoting the Security Bureau that there had been previous cases where Government helicopters with injured passengers had had to wait for private helicopters to clear out from the landing pad. I would like to confirm that the report is factually accurate. In 1999, the Administration made available the then Central Heliport, which had two landing/take-off pads, for use by private helicopter operators, under the conditions that the Government's operations should have priority use at all times and that the number of commercial flights was subject to restrictions. Despite these conditions, there were incidents in which Government helicopters tasked to deliver emergency services were unable to land or take-off due to the need to wait for private operators to clear from the heliport.

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You suggest that "there are other helipads available to GFS more conveniently located for medical treatment than that earmarked at the Golden Bauhinia Square". I am afraid this is not the case. At present, there are only three helipads that can be used for casualty evacuation. Of the three, two are on the Island side: the temporary helipad at the former Wan Chai Public Cargo Works Area and the rooftop helipad at Pamela Youde Netherson Eastern Hospital (PYNEH). The rooftop helipad at PYNEH can only be used in good weather conditions for flight safety reasons, and for the most urgent situations so as to minimize disturbance to nearby residents. The helipad at the former Wan Chai Public Cargo Works Area is only temporary, and when it is closed to make way for other developments, a reprovisioned helipad next to the HKCEC is necessary.

I note that your Working Group has mentioned Siu Sai Wan Helipad in your presentation materials to the Legislative Council Panel on Economic Services and Panel on Planning, Lands and Works at their joint meeting on 31 January. This helipad was allocated to Government Flying Service for short-term use only, and has been no longer available for helicopter landing since September 2003.

I hope that the above is useful.

Yours sincerely,

p.p. 

( Miss Cheung Siu Hing )  
for Secretary for Security

c.c. Panel on Economic Services  
Panel on Planning, Lands and Works  
Islands District Council  
SEDL  
SHPL