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28 February 2008

URGENT By FAX

Clerk
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn : Ms Serena Chu)

Dear Ms Chu,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the
Hong Kong Tourism Board
Report No. 49, Chapter 5**

Thank you for your letter of 21 February 2007.

The Commissioner for Tourism (CT) was first appointed as a member of the Hong Kong Tourism Board (the Board) on 1 April 2001 by the Financial Secretary (FS), under delegated authority from the Chief Executive (CE) under Section 9 of the Hong Kong Tourism Board Ordinance, Cap. 302 (the Ordinance). Since 1 April 2002, CT has been Deputy Chairman of the Board, appointed by FS under delegated authority from CE, under section 9(5) of the Ordinance. There is no list documenting the duties of CT as the Government representative sitting on the Board.

In common with other members of the Board, CT's duties and role are to pursue the Board's objects as set out in section 4 of the Ordinance. In her role as Deputy Chairman, CT is expected to act in the office of the Chairman if the office is vacant or if the Chairman is incapacitated by injury or illness, or is absent from Hong Kong, in accordance with section 9 of the Ordinance. CT has not been required to act in the office of Chairman since her appointment as Deputy Chairman.

In addition, CT serves as a link between the Board and the Administration in explaining Government's tourism and related policies, and supports the Board in its promotion of Hong Kong as a world class tourist destination by reference to such policies. CT also ensures that the views of the Board will be taken into account in developing these Government policies.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (SCED) is the Principal Official responsible for tourism. Under the Ordinance and in exercise of authority delegated by CE, SCED approves certain matters governing the Board, including –

- (a) the Board's appointment and determination of the remuneration and other terms of appointment of the Deputy Executive Director (section 8);
- (b) the Board's future financial commitments (section 14A); and
- (c) the Board's programme of activities and estimates of income and expenditure for the next financial year (section 17B).

The Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Commerce, Industry and Tourism) (PSCIT) is responsible for assisting SCED in formulating tourism policies. Under authority delegated to her by CE, she is responsible for appointing an auditor to audit the Board's statement of accounts in respect of each financial year (section 18 of the Ordinance). Also PSCIT is the Controlling Officer for subvention to the Board under the Public Finance Ordinance, Cap. 2.

In exercising these statutory powers, both SCED and PSCIT take into account CT's views, particularly with regard to the Board's budget proposals and its use of public moneys.

From time to time, CT seeks guidance from SCED and PSCIT on matters requiring a policy steer, and conveys such steer to the Board for its reference in shaping its strategies to achieve its objects. She also keeps SCED and PSCIT informed of any major Board matters as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Kinnie Wong)
for Commissioner for Tourism

cc Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
(Commerce, Industry and Tourism)
Executive Director, Hong Kong Tourism Board
Director of Audit