## 立法會 Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2135/07-08 (These minutes have been seen by the Administration)

Ref: CB2/PL/HA

#### **Panel on Home Affairs**

### Minutes of meeting held on Friday, 11 January 2008, at 9:30 am in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

**Members** : Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP (Chairman)

**present** Hon Albert HO Chun-yan (Deputy Chairman)

Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP

Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP

Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP

Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP

Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, SBS, JP Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung

Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS

Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP

Hon TAM Heung-man

Member attending

: Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

**Members** : Hon James TO Kun-sun

**absent** Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP

Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP

Public Officers attending

Item III

Home Affairs Bureau

Ms Esther LEUNG

Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3)

Miss Polly KWOK

Principal Assistant Secretary (Culture)2

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr Tom MING

Chief Curator (Museum of History)

Item IV

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau

Mr Arthur HO

Deputy Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (1)

Mr Stanley NG

Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (5)A

Security Bureau

Ms Manda CHAN Wing-man

Principal Assistant Secretary for Security (A)

Mr Alan LO Ying-ki

Principal Assistant Secretary for Security (C)

Mrs Apollonia LIU LEE Ho-kei

Principal Assistant Secretary for Security (E)

Item V

Home Affairs Department

Mrs Betty CHU

Assistant Director (Administration)

Ms Patricia LO

Chief Executive Officer (Administration) 2

## Attendance by invitation

<u>Item III</u>

Hong Kong Maritime Museum

Mr C. C. TUNG Chairman of Trust

Hon Justice William WAUNG Member of Board of Director

Dr Stephen Davies Museum Director

Ms Catalina CHOR

**Executive Manager and Curator** 

Clerk in attendance

: Miss Flora TAI

Chief Council Secretary (2)2

Staff in attendance

Ms Joanne MAK

Senior Council Secretary (2)2

Ms Anna CHEUNG Legislative Assistant (2)2

#### Action

### I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

Members noted that the Administration had provided a paper on the "Sports Centre in Area 28A, Fanling/Sheung Shui" [LC Paper No. CB(2)732/07-08(01)] for members' information.

## II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)746/07-08]

2. <u>Members</u> agreed to further discuss "Strengthening the software and

humanware in culture and the arts" with deputations and the Administration at the next regular meeting scheduled for Friday, 15 February 2008, at 10:45 am.

3. The Deputy Chairman expressed concern that, with the restructuring of the policy bureaux responsible for human rights policy, the human rights education working group under the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education had been disbanded recently and the funding support for human rights education had also been reduced. Referring to his question on human rights education raised at the Council meeting held on 9 January 2008, the Deputy Chairman proposed that the Panel should discuss the Administration's work on the promotion of human rights education and civic education. The Chairman suggested that, as the Panel had scheduled to discuss promotion of national education at its regular meeting on 14 March 2008, the opportunity could be taken to discuss the issue as well. The Deputy Chairman agreed and he added that representatives of all relevant bureaux should be invited to join the discussion.

Clerk

## III. Future development of private museums - Hong Kong Maritime Museum

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)746/07-08 (01) and CB(2)737/07-08(01)]

- 4. With the aid of Powerpoint, the <u>Museum Director</u> of Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM) gave an introduction on HKMM and its proposal to relocate the museum to the Central Pier 8 (Pier No. 8) from 2010 onwards and other requests as detailed in the submission made to the Panel [LC Paper No. CB(2)737/07-08(01)].
- 5. <u>Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3)</u> (DSHA(3)) briefed members on the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)746/07-08 (01)] on the current situation of private museums in Hong Kong and the Administration's initial views on the HKMM's proposal which included the following major requests -
  - (a) to make use of the public viewing decks and the upper deck at Pier No. 8 to set up the museum, with ancillary shop and café provided;
  - (b) to be granted a lease for at least 50 years at no or nominal rent; and
  - (c) to be given a matching grant of \$52 million from the Administration.

<u>Chief Curator (Museum of History)</u> (CC(M of H)) further briefed members on Hong Kong's maritime history as a major port city.

#### Discussion

#### Development of private museums in Hong Kong

- DSHA(3) said that the Administration had yet to put in place a standard mechanism for supporting the operation of private museums, which should normally include a system of selection, accreditation and regulation, funding arrangements as well as performance monitoring and evaluation for museums. DSHA(3) said that the Administration saw the need to formulate, in the longer term, a proper framework and mechanism for supporting the development of private museums in Hong Kong. The framework should comprise selection criteria based on cultural and historical significance and other considerations, an accreditation system, funding models, and performance monitoring and evaluation. DSHA(3) said that the Administration would make reference to overseas experiences when formulating such a framework and would consult stakeholders including the Panel when a solid proposal on this framework was In the absence of such a mechanism, the drawn up in due course. Administration would have to consider any request from individual private museums including HKMM on a case-by-case basis.
- 7. The Deputy Chairman was of the view that the Administration should expedite the development of a standard mechanism for supporting private museums in order to enhance support for these museums and to facilitate preservation of cultural heritage in Hong Kong. Referring to Annex A to the Administration's paper, Professor Patrick LAU asked whether the various long-established private museums, such as the University Museum and Art Gallery of the University of Hong Kong, the Art Museum of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Tung Wah Museum had received any government support. DSHA(3) said that, while there had been regular collaboration between museums under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and other local museums, the Administration had not provided financial support to these private museums which had been operating on a self-financing basis.
- 8. <u>The Chairman</u> said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) was of the view that the Administration should provide support to facilitate the development of private museums in Hong Kong. She urged the Administration to expedite action in this regard.
- 9. <u>DSHA(3)</u> said that the Administration would need some more time, say, at least six months, to develop a standard mechanism for supporting private museums in Hong Kong because extensive consultation with the relevant parties would be required. <u>The Chairman</u> said that, as members in general were concerned about this issue, the Administration should make a progress report to the Panel before July 2008.

Admin

#### HKMM's proposal

10. Members in general supported the HKMM's request for the

Administration's support for its continued development and requested the Administration to consider actively the HKMM's proposal. Mr WONG Tingkwong said that he had been impressed by the rich collections of HKMM during the Panel's visit made to HKMM earlier. The Deputy Chairman and Dr Fernando CHEUNG also expressed appreciation of the efforts made and commitment shown by the management of HKMM in providing such a successful maritime museum. The Deputy Chairman considered that, being an important port city, Hong Kong should have a maritime museum of a large scale with attractive exhibits. He agreed that HKMM should be located at the waterfront with some of its exhibits featured on vessels. He suggested that the Administration should discuss with HKMM its future location and take into account their views.

- 11. The Chairman said that DAB was supportive of the HKMM's proposal to relocate to a site at the waterfront for its continued development and expansion. Miss CHAN Yuen-han also expressed support for relocation of HKMM to Pier 8 on a long-term basis. Referring to paragraph 12 of the Administration's paper, the Chairman asked how the Administration would handle the tendering exercise concerning the three commercial areas involved in the HKMM's proposal.
- 12. <u>DSHA(3)</u> replied that the HKMM's proposal included three commercial areas in respect of which the Administration had invited tender for tenancies. She said that the Administration had been informed by HKMM that it would submit a proposal just before the closing of the tenders in late September 2007. The tender validity period would expire on 23 March 2008. <u>DSHA(3)</u> further said that the Administration would consider in detail the HKMM's request for support and it would also discuss further with HKMM. Should the Administration decide to accept the HKMM's proposal of relocating to Pier No. 8, the Administration would have to notify those who had submitted tenders of the decision as early as practicable. In response to the Chairman's question as to when the Administration could make a decision, <u>DSHA(3)</u> said that the Administration was still studying the matter which involved issues such as planning consideration of the use of the site. She said that relevant technical departments were studying matters concerned, and the Administration would discuss with HKMM as soon as possible.
- 13. The Chairman of HKMM Trust said that the board of HKMM had been trying for many years to identify permanent premises for the museum. He pointed out that, if the Administration did not support the HKMM's proposal, the management of HKMM might have to consider closure of the museum in 2011 and preparation work for the closure would commence in 2010. The Chairman requested the Administration to take note of members' support for the continued development of HKMM and take active steps to consider the HKMM's proposal.

Admin

14. <u>DSHA(3)</u> said that the Administration aimed to report, in two to three months' time, on the progress in respect of considering the HKMM's proposal. <u>The Chairman</u> requested the Administration to provide a paper reporting the outcome of its discussion with HKMM to the Panel before the end of March 2008. <u>The Deputy Chairman</u> suggested that, if the Administration failed to reach an agreement with HKMM, the Panel should further discuss the issue at a meeting.

Establishment of a statutory Museums Board for all existing LCSD museums

- 15. <u>Miss CHAN Yuen-han</u> expressed dissatisfaction with the slow progress made by the Administration in following up on the development of the existing museums in Hong Kong after the abolition of the former Municipal Councils. She considered that the Administration's lack of action to follow up recommendations made by the Committee on Museums (CoM) had hindered the development of private museums which generally faced the problem of limited resources.
- 16. <u>DSHA(3)</u> clarified that that the recommendation made by CoM of setting up a statutory Museums Board was related to the future mode of governance of the existing 17 public museums under LCSD. CoM had recommended in 2007 that a statutory Museums Board should be set up in three years' time as far as practicable to take over the operation and management of public museums. <u>DSHA(3)</u> said that the Administration considered that it would likely take at least five years to complete the entire transformation process given the complicated issues involved. The Administration was planning to set up an advisory body on museums in 2008 to prepare for the establishment of the statutory Museums Board. She added that the development of a framework for supporting the development of private museums and the implementation of the CoM's recommendation would be carried out in parallel.
- 17. <u>Miss CHAN Yuen-han</u> expressed concern about the impact of any proposed changes to the mode of governance on serving museum staff. She suggested that the Panel should follow up on the matter and invite representatives of relevant staff organisations and stakeholders to join the discussion when the issue was discussed.
- 18. <u>DSHA(3)</u> responded that the Administration would pay particular attention to the concerns of the serving museum staff towards the proposed changes to the existing governance framework of public museums. She assured members that the Administration would actively consult all staff concerned on any proposed changes in governance. <u>The Chairman</u> requested the Administration to provide further information on the progress of work regarding the establishment of a statutory Museums Board and the consultation with museum staff on the proposed changes before July 2008.

Admin

19. In response to Miss CHAN's request, <u>CC(M of H)</u> agreed to provide information on the number of staff working in the existing 17 LCSD museums after the meeting.

[*Post-meeting note*: the supplementary information provided by the Administration was issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1012/07-08.]

IV. Report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) on its follow-up to the Concluding Observations of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) on HKSAR's second periodic report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)369/07-08 (01) and CB(2)746/07-08(02)]

#### The Administration's follow-up to the Concluding Observations of UNHRC

- 20. <u>Deputy Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (1)</u> (DSCMA(1)) briefed members on the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)369/07-08 (01)] reporting on HKSAR's follow-up and response to the United Nations Human Rights Committee's (UNHRC's) recommendations in paragraphs 9, 13, 15, 18 of the concluding observations adopted by the Committee on 30 March 2006 after consideration of the second periodic report of HKSAR.
- 21. Some members including Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr Albert CHAN, Ms Emily LAU and Ms Audrey EU criticised the Administration for failing to give a detailed response to the relevant recommendations in its paper. They considered that the Administration was not sincere and lacked commitment in implementing UNHRC's recommendations or in responding to their concerns. These members were of the view that it was unacceptable that the Administration kept ignoring completely the serious concerns especially those on the police complaints mechanism and the implementation of universal suffrage which had been repeatedly raised by UNHRC for a number of years.

#### <u>Investigation of complaints against the Police</u>

- 22. Referring to paragraph 4 of the paper, <u>Dr Fernando CHEUNG</u> questioned the independence of the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) given that CAPO was responsible to a Deputy Commissioner for Police and its investigations were conducted by police officers.
- 23. <u>Principal Assistant Secretary for Security (A)</u> (PAS for S(A)) responded that the existing police complaints system, which was introduced in 1977, had operated for about 30 years. She said that the Administration had introduced the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) Bill into the Legislative Council (LegCo) in July 2007 and the Bill was currently under scrutiny by the

relevant bills committee. <u>PAS for S(A)</u> stressed that CAPO was an independent unit of the Police Force, operating separately from other formations of the Police Force. There were effective checks and balances to ensure that complaints were handled and investigated with fairness and impartiality. Moreover, CAPO's handling of complaints was closely monitored by IPCC, which was an independent civilian body comprising non-official members from a wide spectrum of the community. <u>PAS for S(A)</u> further said that IPCC would examine all investigation reports submitted by CAPO which was required to address any query raised by IPCC and would re-investigate the case if IPCC so requested.

- 24. <u>Dr Fernando CHEUNG</u> pointed out that IPCC was only an advisory body which had no concrete powers to ensure proper and effective investigation of complaints or effective implementation of its recommendations. For example, even if IPCC disagreed to any conclusion made by CAPO regarding a complaint case, CAPO could still maintain its conclusion without having to make any changes to it. <u>Dr CHEUNG</u> added that the IPCC Secretariat was not independent.
- 25. <u>PAS for S(A)</u> responded that the IPCC Bill introduced, if enacted, would convert IPCC into a statutory body and would further enhance the transparency and credibility of the police complaints systems. The Administration remained of the view that the existing two-tier police complaints system under which the investigation of complaints against police officers conducted by the Police was monitored and reviewed by IPCC had been operating effectively and should continue.
- 26. <u>Dr Fernando CHEUNG</u>, however, pointed out that IPCC was not given the powers under the IPCC Bill to overrule conclusions made by CAPO after its investigation of a complaint case. He considered that the conversion of IPCC into a statutory body served no meaningful purpose if there was no independent organisation to conduct investigation into complaints against police officers.
- 27. Referring to the relevant recommendation made by UNHRC in paragraph 2(a) of the Administration's paper, Ms Emily LAU requested the Administration to confirm whether her understanding was correct that the IPCC Bill as currently introduced did not seek to implement UNHRC's recommendation that "the HKSAR should ensure that the investigation of complaints against the plice is carried out by an independent body, the decisions of which are binding on relevant authorities". PAS for S(A) replied that Ms LAU's understanding was correct.
- 28. <u>Mr Albert CHAN</u> said that, while he recognised many police officers' good performances, there was a need to enhance the police complaints system as he had received many complaints from members of the public about abuses of power by the Police. <u>Mr James TIEN</u>, however, took the view that the

public in general had not expressed serious concern about the police complaints system and the good performance of the Police was highly recognised by the public. Nonetheless, given that the Administration advocated to move with the times, the Administration might need to consider reviewing the setup of CAPO by making reference to the Operation Review Committee under the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). He said that non-official members, including Hon SIN Chung-kai, were appointed to the Operation Review Committee to oversee all ICAC investigations. He suggested that, if appointment of more non-official members to the monitoring committee of the investigations conducted by CAPO did not constitute a breach of the Basic Law, the Administration should consider adopting such a measure.

29. <u>PAS for S(A)</u> responded that CAPO's handling of complaints was closely monitored by IPCC, which comprised 18 non-official members from a wide spectrum of the community. To move with the times, various new measures had been introduced over the years to the police complaints system to ensure that there were effective checks and balances and complaints were handled fairly and impartially. She further gave an account of such new measures.

# Prevention and prosecution against intimidation and harassment of legislators and media personnel

- 30. <u>Ms Emily LAU</u> said that there were a few incidents relating to intimidation and harassment against LegCo Members, during one of which two LegCo Members were surrounded by a crowd during the 2007 District Council Election and prevented from proceeding for as long as 45 minutes, and yet the Police did not intervene. She said that the Police also did not seem to have handled seriously the recent incidents of LegCo Members receiving defamatory letters with razor blades enclosed.
- 31. Principal Assistant Secretary for Security (E) responded that the Police attached great importance to these incidents and adopted a proactive approach in their investigation. She stressed that the Police conducted careful and thorough investigation into all such cases of complaints and reports. The Police also hoped that relevant parties could provide more information on the cases where possible to facilitate their investigations.

### Right of abode (ROA)

- 32. <u>Ms Emily LAU</u> considered that the Administration should exercise discretion to allow the remaining ROA claimants who did not succeed in their appeals to the Court of Final Appeal to stay in Hong Kong, as their number was relatively small now and their wishes for family reunion should be respected.
- 33. <u>Principal Assistant Secretary for Security (C)</u> responded that the Administration was fully committed to the rule of law in dealing with the ROA

issue. The Administration had also taken into full account its international obligations and local laws in handling the ROA issue. He said that the Administration fully understood the wishes for family reunion. However, such wishes were not an absolute right, and governments worldwide required people who wished to join their families to submit, applications for processing in accordance with local laws and policies.

#### Universal suffrage for election to LegCo

- 34. Ms Emily LAU sought the Administration's response to the UNHRC's recommendation set out in paragraph 2(d) of the Administration's paper. DSCMA(1) explained that when ICCPR was applied to Hong Kong in 1976, a reservation was made by the United Kingdom government not to apply Article 25(b) to Hong Kong. In accordance with the notification given by the Central People's Government to the UNs Secretary-General in 1997 and Article 39 of the Basic Law, this reservation continued to apply to HKSAR after its establishment.
- 35. Ms Audrey EU said that UNHRC had already pointed out for three times that once an elected LegCo was established, its election had to conform to Article 25 of ICCPR and such reservation would not be applicable. This view had been upheld by the court in its judgement and supported by the Hong Kong Bar Association.
- 36. Referring to paragraphs 14 to 16 of the Administration's paper, the Deputy Chairman asked whether the Administration implied that, as far as constitutional development was concerned, the Administration would only need to abide by interpretation of the Basic Law by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC), and it would no longer need to take account of Article 25(b) of ICCPR. He also expressed strong dissatisfaction with the conclusion made by the Administration in paragraph 16 of its paper that the exercise of the power of interpretation of the Basic Law by NPCSC "has not, and could not have, in any way affected the independence of the Judiciary, the rule of law, or Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy." He said that, while he did not question the constitutional status of the NPCSC's decisions, it was unacceptable for the Administration to make such a conclusion which, in his view, was factually untrue. He considered that the NPCSC's decisions overrode any judgment of the courts and any decision of the HKSAR Government.
- 37. <u>DSCMA(1)</u> pointed out that in accordance with the provisions of the Basic Law, HKSAR was authorised to exercise a high degree of autonomy and enjoy executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication. He also pointed out that Article 158(1) of the Basic Law provided that the power of interpretation of the Basic Law should be vested in NPCSC. He said that the Administration did not see any conflicts arising from these constitutional arrangements.

- 38. <u>DSCMA(1)</u> further said that the Administration was working towards securing consensus for implementing universal suffrage for the Chief Executive (CE) and LegCo. He pointed out that the Administration was fully committed to achieving the ultimate aim of universal suffrage. <u>Ms Emily LAU</u>, however, said that UNHRC could hardly accept that an electoral system with functional constituencies was in line with any universal suffrage model. <u>DSCMA(1)</u> clarified that the Administration had not formed any view on the ultimate models for implementing universal suffrage for CE and LegCo and on how the existing functional constituencies should be dealt with when universal suffrage was attained. He added that the Green Paper on Constitutional Development had set out various options on the way forward, including how to deal with the existing functional constituencies, to seek public comments.
- 39. <u>Ms Emily LAU</u> reiterated that election by universal suffrage had to comply with the principles of universal and equal suffrage. <u>Ms Audrey EU</u> added that another principle of universal suffrage was that an election by universal suffrage should be one free from any unreasonable constraints on the eligibility of a candidate. However, under the system of functional constituencies, there were many of these unreasonable constraints.
- 40. <u>DSCMA(1)</u> explained that the recommendation made by UNHRC as set out in paragraph 2(d) of the Administration's paper was that the Administration should take "all necessary measures" to implement universal suffrage for LegCo. He reiterated that the Administration was taking measures to implement such work. None of the options set out in the Green Paper on Constitutional Development included preserving the current arrangements of returning Members from functional constituencies in the long term.
- 41. Ms Audrey EU reiterated her disagreement with the Administration's position that the reservation made against Article 25(b) of ICCPR continued to apply. She suggested that the legal adviser to the Panel should be requested to advise on possible course of action which could be taken by LegCo over the Administration's inaction to comply with such provision of ICCPR. Ms Emily LAU suggested that the legal adviser could study the procedural arrangements relating to the implementation of Article 73(9) of the Basic Law on impeachment of CE. The Deputy Chairman, however, expressed the view that the Administration's blatant contravention of the requirements of ICCPR and non-compliance with UNHRC's recommendations was a political issue, not a legal one. The Chairman instructed the Clerk to relay the suggestions of Ms EU and Ms LAU to the legal adviser for action.

Clerk

# V. Review of charging for estate beneficiaries support services [LC Paper No. CB(2)746/07-08(03)]

Administration's briefing

42. <u>Assistant Director (Administration)</u> (AD(A)) of the Home Affairs Department (HAD) briefed members on the Administration's paper on the proposal to continue to provide, free of charge, support services for estate beneficiaries that HAD had taken over in April 2007 [LC Paper No.CB(2)746/07-08(03)].

#### Discussion

- 43. <u>Members</u> welcomed the Administration's proposal as they noted that the majority of the applicants involved in cases handled by Estate Beneficiaries Support Unit (EBSU) were beneficiaries of a small estate made up of money not exceeding \$50,000 in value. They shared the Administration's view that it was not appropriate to impose additional financial burden on these applicants who were likely to have limited financial means. Moreover, they noted that the revenue foregone as a result of the proposal would be a relatively small amount only.
- 44. Referring to paragraph 8 of the Administration's paper, Mr James TIEN said that he had received complaints about the long waiting time required for issuing a Certificate for Necessity of Inspection of Bank Deposit Box which took six to twelve months after receipt of an application. He was concerned that the delay could cause undue hardship to the applicants.
- 45. <u>AD(A)</u> responded that the normal time for issuing a Certificate for Necessity of Inspection of Bank Deposit Box was two weeks, subject to applicants' being able to provide all the required supporting documents.
- 46. Referring to Annex to the Administration's paper, <u>Mr James TIEN</u> asked about the average waiting time for bank deposit box inspection service in the 1 593 cases received from April to November 2007. <u>AD(A)</u> replied that the average waiting time was 46 days from the date of application.
- 47. The Deputy Chairman asked whether EBSU had set any performance pledges to ensure efficient and prompt service delivery. AD(A) responded that HAD had taken over from the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) the delivery of the various support services for estate beneficiaries with effect from 1 April 2007 and since then, HAD had provided the support services within almost the same timeframe as that adopted by IRD except for bank deposit box inspection service which had taken a longer time due to the staffing constraint of EBSU. AD(A) said that EBSU would review its service from time to time. It had recently introduced measures to improve the waiting time for inspection service, e.g. deploying one more inspection team to conduct more inspections on a day. She also informed members that the Administration was planning to review the timeframe for the provision of services one year after HAD's takeover of the support services for estate beneficiaries from IRD, and to arrange to issue performance pledges for the services provided by the EBSU for information of

the public. <u>The Deputy Chairman</u> said that he hoped that EBSU would be able to continue to provide the various support services within the same timeframe as that of IRD. He requested the Administration to provide the performance pledges when available.

[*Post-meeting note*: a leaflet on Performance Pledges of EBSU was issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1475/07-08.]

- 48. The Chairman asked that whether any assistance could be offered in the situation that the family members of a deceased person who had died suddenly without a will were unable to withdraw money from the bank account of the deceased person to meet urgent burial expenses. AD(A) responded that the family members could apply for issue of the Certificate for Necessity of Release of Money, which could be issued within one hour, to meet burial expenses of the deceased person.
- 49. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, <u>AD(A)</u> said that applications for the various support services for estate beneficiaries together with the necessary supporting documents had to be made to EBSU located in Wan Chai while applicants could make enquiries at and obtain the relevant application forms from the District Offices.
- 50. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:05 pm.

Council Business Division 2
<u>Legislative Council Secretariat</u>
2 June 2008