

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1)2150/07-08  
(These minutes have been seen by  
the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/ITB/1

**Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 14 April 2008, at 2:30 pm**  
**in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon Albert Jinghan CHENG, JP (Chairman)  
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBM, GBS, JP  
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP  
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS  
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP  
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
- Members absent** : Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, SBS, JP  
Hon Bernard CHAN, GBS, JP  
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
- Public officers attending** : Agenda Item IV  
  
Mr Alan SIU, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic  
Development (Communications and Technology)  
  
Mr Y K HA  
Deputy Director-General of Telecommunications

Agenda Item V

Mr Alan SIU, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic  
Development (Communications and Technology)

Mr Kevin CHOI  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Commerce and  
Economic Development (Communications and  
Technology)A

Ms Maisie CHENG, JP  
Commissioner for Television and Entertainment  
Licensing

Agenda Item VI

Mr Jeremy GODFREY  
Government Chief Information Officer  
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

Mr Stephen MAK, JP  
Deputy Government Chief Information Officer  
(Operation)  
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

**Attendance by invitation** : Agenda Item V

Hong Kong Film Development Council

Mr Wellington FUNG  
Secretary-General

**Clerk in attendance** : Ms YUE Tin-po  
Chief Council Secretary (1)3

**Staff in attendance** : Ms Annette LAM  
Senior Council Secretary (1)3

Mr Simon CHEUNG  
Council Secretary (1)1

Ms May LEUNG  
Legislative Assistant (1)6

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Action

**I. Confirmation of minutes of meeting**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1082/07-08 -- Minutes of meeting held on 29 January 2008)

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2008 were confirmed.

**II. Information paper issued since last meeting**

2. Members noted that no paper had been issued since the last meeting held on 10 March 2008.

**III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1200/07-08(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)1200/07-08(02) -- List of follow-up actions)

3. Members noted that the next regular meeting would be held on 13 May 2008 at 4:30 pm to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration:

- (a) Progress update on the E-Government Programme; and
- (b) Progress update on the implementation of the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Ordinance (Cap. 593).

*(Post-meeting note: At the request of the Administration and with the concurrence of the Panel Chairman, an additional item "Outcome of the public consultation on the proposed creation of the Unified Carrier Licence" was included in the agenda for the 13 May 2008 meeting. Members were informed of the revised agenda vide LC paper No. CB(1)1309/07-08 issued on 21 April 2008.)*

List of outstanding items for discussion

4. Ms Emily LAU requested and the Chairman agreed that the item "Public consultation on public service broadcasting including issues related to the future of RTHK and the opening up of radio/TV channels for use by the community" should be reinstated in the list of outstanding items for future discussion by the Panel.

**IV. Follow-up actions on the issues relating to Internet disruptions caused by earthquake damage to undersea cables**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1200/07-08(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(1)1200/07-08(04) -- Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

Briefing by the Administration

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Director-General of Telecommunications (DDG of T) briefed members on measures for enhancing the preparedness of Hong Kong for telecommunications contingencies as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)1200/07-08(03)).

Discussion

*Enhanced network outage reporting mechanism and the issuance of public alert*

6. The Chairman opined that the Administration had failed to address members' concern regarding which parties should be held responsible for the long disruptions in Internet and external telecommunications services during the earthquake in the Luzon Strait on 26 and 27 December 2006 (the 2006 Incident) and the delay in notifying the public of the outage and keeping them informed of developments. He noted that the earthquake began at around 8:26 pm on 26 December 2006 but the statement made by the Office of Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) informing the public of the 2006 Incident was not issued until as late as 6:16 pm on 27 December 2006. OFTA's slow reaction had aggravated the network congestion as members of the public, without being alerted in a timely manner, kept sending messages, thus competing for the limited services and worsening the congestion problem.

7. DDG of T responded that before the Incident, service providers were not required to report any outage of submarine cable systems or Internet access services. In the light of the 2006 Incident and following discussions with the cable-based External fixed telecommunications Network Services (EFTNS) and Internet services providers (ISPs), OFTA had issued a new set of guidelines (Guidelines for Fixed and Mobile Network Operators for reporting Network Outage) on 28 February 2007 requiring the concerned operators to report to OFTA within two hours from the confirmation of the incident or within 4 hours from the happening of the incident in the event of outage of the major submarine cable systems. On the outage of the public telephone network, operators concerned were required to report within one hour after the reporting criteria were met. OFTA would assess the significance of impact on the territory and determine whether public alert to be issued by OFTA was warranted.

8. Mr SIN Chung-kai suggested that mock trials should be conducted to test the effectiveness of the contingency plan and the reporting mechanism in order to strengthen communications and coordination among different parties in the event of an emergency. DDG of T replied that the emergency measures and the enhanced reporting mechanism had been put to test during the nine earthquakes recorded in 2007. In particular, the earthquake near Taiwan in September 2007 in which three cables were damaged had proven that the contingency plan and the enhanced reporting mechanism were generally effective in maintaining Hong Kong's external telecommunications services during such emergency incidents. The concerned operators were able to duly comply with the new set of guidelines by reporting the network outage within the prescribed timeframe. As there was no major disruption to the normal operation, no public alert for those occasions was issued by OFTA.

9. On the new guidelines issued following the 2006 Incident, Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that any set of guidelines, however comprehensive, could not cover all possible scenarios. The real test of crisis management was whether OFTA was capable of making a quick and accurate assessment of the likely impact of an emergency and notifying the public accordingly in a timely manner, even when the information on hand was partial and limited. Citing the 2006 Incident, Mr CHAN said that at times the Administration had the tendency to withhold public announcement until it had "full information" on hand. The delay in making a public alert not only deprived the public of their right to know but would often aggravate the situation. He suggested that to ensure timely dissemination of information to the public, the public alert mechanism should specify clearly the authority/person in command and to be ultimately held responsible, the timeframe within which a public alert had to be issued, and the nature of information to be released to the public such as the scale of the outage, the extent of the damage, and seriousness of the impact, etc.

10. Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (communications and Technology) (DSCED(CT)) responded that the enhanced reporting mechanism had clearly specified the information to be provided by the operator when reporting an outage as well as the timeframe for reporting. Under the public alert mechanism, the Director-General of Telecommunications (DG of T) would assess the significance of the impact on the territory to determine whether a public alert was warranted. If DG of T considered that an outage had severely affected or had the potential of severely affecting the public telecommunications services, the public would be alerted through public warning messages on TV and radio within one hour or so after receipt of the report submitted by the operator between 0900 and 1700 on a weekday. After such a warning was issued, OFTA would keep the public informed of the latest status of the incident and the progress of service recovery until normal operation had resumed. He reiterated that the earthquake near Taiwan in September 2007 had demonstrated that the enhanced reporting mechanism was in order and had functioned smoothly during emergencies, and that the service operators had strengthened their emergency measures in the light of the 2006 Incident.

11. Ms Emily LAU enquired whether the earthquake near Taiwan in September 2007 was of a scale similar to the 2006 Incident and how quickly services were resumed to normal in the 2007 earthquake. DDG of T advised that according to his understanding, earthquakes measuring 7 on the Richter scale were recorded in 2006 and 2007 respectively. While 5.5 cables were damaged in the 2006 Incident, 3 cables were damaged in the 2007 earthquake near Taiwan where normal operation of telecommunications services was to some extent affected. DDG of T said that by re-routing the communications traffic through contingency routes, service restoration was so quick that end-users were not even aware of the disruption.

12. On making a timely notification to the public in the event of disruption to public telecommunications services, Mr SIN Chung-kai noted that while OFTA had made pledges for outage reports received from operator(s) during office hours between 0900 and 1700 on a weekday, no pledge had been made for outages happening during the remaining 16 hours and for public holidays. In response, DSCED(CT) said that more time would be needed to confirm details and arrange for making public announcements for outage reports outside office hours. He nevertheless assured that OFTA would seek to deliver the same pledge of alerting the public within one hour or so after receipt of the report as far as practicable.

*Enhancing telecommunications and Internet infrastructure*

13. Mr Albert CHAN was concerned about the heavy reliance on submarine cable systems for telecommunications and enquired whether the Administration had explored other alternatives such as the use of satellite network to establish a more resilient and reliable telecommunication and Internet infrastructure. DSCED(CT) said that during the 2006 Incident, telecommunications operators had taken action to resort to satellites and overland cables passing through the Mainland and Europe to re-route the traffic. The operators concerned had also taken various initiatives to enhance their capacity after the 2006 Incident. As a result, the total activated capacity of external facilities had increased by almost 90% from 698 Gbps in December 2006 to 1 323 GBps in December 2007 while the capacity of submarine cable and land cable over the mainland of China had increased by 99.7% and 70.2% respectively. The additional overland cable capacity would facilitate diversion of traffic overland in the event of any major disruption to the submarine cable systems. He assured members that the Administration would continue to explore all alternatives to enhance capacity of external facilities.

14. Ms Emily LAU noted that a number of Asia-Pacific economies had proposed new submarine cable systems with route diversity to bypass the earthquake zone in the Luzon Strait to improve the reliability of the regional submarine cable infrastructure. She enquired about the Government's role and participation, if any, in the regional effort. DDG of T advised that the Hong Kong Government had no financial involvement in the project which was purely a business activity. Nevertheless, the OFTA would provide assistance to the

consortium, such as granting the relevant permit and conducting environmental impact assessment.

15. Ms Emily LAU noted that 14 telecommunications companies in the Asia-pacific region, including one telecommunications operator in Hong Kong, had signed a memorandum of agreement for cooperation to pool all resources in future cable failures. She was concerned whether one participant from Hong Kong was considered sufficient. In response, DDG of T highlighted that the signatory from Hong Kong was the largest EFTNS operator in Hong Kong, and that all the other jurisdictions too had one operator each participating in the voluntary cooperation initiative.

16. In response to Ms Emily LAU's concern on whether service operators would pass on the extra cost incurred for various enhancement initiatives to end-users, DDG of T said that while the level of service fees would depend on the quality and scope of service rendered, given the keen market competition, he was not aware of any substantial fee increase by service operators.

*Assistance to small and medium enterprises*

17. Ms Emily LAU enquired about the assistance rendered to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) impacted by the 2006 Incident and measures taken by the Administration to assist SMEs to better cope with similar emergency in future. DSCED(CT) advised that the "Information Security Guide for small Businesses" issued through the Government's one-stop information security portal had been revised in September 2007 to include a new section on disaster recovery and business continuity planning for SMEs' reference in planning for adverse conditions in future. SMEs had also been advised on how to improve communication links with their business partners and service agreement terms to be entered with ISPs so as to better manage business continuity during adverse events in future. ISPs were requested to provide SMEs with backup and diversity services. He assured members that the Administration would endeavour to contain the extent of the damage and facilitate a speedy recovery of normal services in the event of any network disruption to minimize the adverse impact on SMEs through the implementation of various initiatives and improvement measures, including the new guidelines on network outage reporting, the on-going development of the Hong Kong telecommunications infrastructure to strengthen the infrastructure's reliability and resilience, promoting business continuity for SMEs and inter-government cooperation.

**V. Progress update on the implementation of Film Development Fund**  
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1200/07-08(05) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

18. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing (CTEL) of the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA) updated members on the progress of the implementation of the Film Development Fund (FDF) following the injection of \$300 million into the FDF as approved by the Finance Committee (FC) on 6 July 2007 as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)1200/07-08(05)).

Discussion

*Industry's concern about the application procedures and vetting mechanism*

19. Mr Ronny TONG considered the progress of implementing FDF unsatisfactory as only two applications totaling \$5.2 million had been approved since October 2007. He said that a number of film professionals and industry players had complained to him about the cumbersome application procedures and the highly complex Production Finance Agreement (the Agreement). He asked whether the Administration would consider revising the application and vetting procedures as well as the eligibility and assessment criteria.

20. CTEL explained that apart from working closely with the Department of Justice and the Film Development Council (FDC), the Agreement which set out detailed terms and conditions for funding support was drawn up in consultation with the industry following many rounds of discussion. Reference had been made to the experience of the operation of similar government funds overseas as well as the international standard of film production. Provisions encouraging small-to-medium film makers to adopt better management and accounting measures in line with the international best practices were incorporated in the Agreement with a view to bringing the local industry in line with international practices, which would enhance the industry's chance of securing commercial financing in the long run. CTEL said that providing funding support of up to \$3 million or 30% of the film production cost through the FDF was an investment venture for the Government and a new funding source and experience for the industry. While appreciating that the industry players might need time to get used to the application procedures, it was important to seek to strike a balance between the proper use of public fund and allowing an appropriate degree of flexibility for the industry to produce films in line with market practices. She assured members that the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA) would continue to monitor the implementation of the FDF and maintain close liaison with the industry to seek their views. The application procedures would be suitably amended if deemed necessary. In this connection, the Chairman supported that a vetting mechanism should be in place for processing FDF funding applications, and



said that it was not unreasonable to require applicants to fulfill normal application procedures such as filling in an application form and submitting a business plan, budget and a full movie script, etc.

*Industry's concern about the assessment and eligibility criteria*

21. On assessment criteria, Mr Ronny TONG said that the industry had raised concern about the undue emphasis on the commercial consideration of whether the production would generate profits. Citing the famous director, Ann HUI, as an example, Mr TONG said that not all films produced by talented film directors were profitable. Pointing out that the objective of the FDF was to provide funding support for small-to-medium budget film production to assist in the sustainable development of the local film industry and to facilitate the nurturing of talents in film production and distribution, Mr TONG was concerned that pure commercial consideration would thwart the development of potential talents. In this connection, Mr Albert CHAN doubted whether the Administration had the expertise to determine the commercial viability of a film production.

22. In response, CTEL stressed that the purpose of the FDF was to provide a favourable environment conducive to the long-term and healthy development of the Hong Kong film industry and to enhance initiatives to nurture talents. She explained that apart from criteria such as the number of local talents employed and whether the proposed film production would reach the standard for commercial theatrical release, the assessment in relation to commercial viability was mainly focused on whether the proposed production could secure third-party financing of 50% of the production budget and the reasonableness of the proposed budget etc. Principal Assistant Secretary (Communications and Technology (A)) (PAS(CT)A) added that the requirements for the film project to be commercially viable should not be interpreted as requiring the film to make a fortune. As approved by the FC, the Government's contribution was capped at 30% of the production budget, while the remaining 70% was expected to be funded by private investors. As such, it was prudent for the film project to have secured third party financing of 50% of production budget. Another objective assessment was whether the film was for mass appeal rather than for niche market, as the latter was already provided for under a separate fund operated by the Arts Development Council. PAS(CT)A further pointed out that assessment of commercial viability was made by FDC, the Fund Vetting Committee (FVC), and the Panel of Examiners which was made up of experienced film professionals. DSCED(CT) added that the Administration should not be perceived as an investor making profit out of the film sponsorship. It was the Government's intention that by taking the lead in providing financial support for small-to-medium budget films and other film-related projects, and by encouraging funding applicants to adopt international best practices, for example requiring a full movie script, the funding scheme would be successful in the long run in enhancing the standard of the local movie industry and boosting private investors' confidence in local film production.

*Industry's participation in the vetting and approval of applications*

23. In response to Mr Ronny TONG's call for a higher degree of industry involvement in the vetting and approval of funding applications, CTEL highlighted that experienced film professionals were indeed involved in the assessment process. She said that while CTEL, as the controlling officer of the FDF, would decide whether the applications would be approved, CTEL, in making such decision, would take into consideration the recommendation of FVC which was assisted by the Panel of Examiners comprising film professionals with experience in film production, sales and distribution. For each eligible application, six Examiners would be drawn from the Panel to comment on the commercial viability and reasonableness of the proposed budget and provide the necessary technical input which would serve as useful reference for applicants, the majority of whom were new entrants to the market. As at end March 2008, a total of 32 film professionals had served on the Panel of Examiners and continued effort would be made to enlarge the Panel membership.

*Declaration of interests and appeal mechanism*

24. Ms Emily LAU enquired the measures to safeguard against possible conflict of interests in the vetting of funding applications and asked whether an appeal mechanism was in place to review unsuccessful applications. CTEL advised that to avoid any perceived or real conflict of interests, the FDC had, on the basis of the guidelines issued by the Home Affairs Bureau, set up a mechanism for declaration of interests for members of the FDC, FVC and the Panel of Examiners. Detailed procedures and guidelines for selection of Examiners to assess an application were also drawn up. Moreover, a register on members' profile, including their professional and business interests, was maintained by the FDC Secretariat and was open to the public. Ms Emily LAU suggested that the register and the relevant information should be posted on the relevant website for public reference.

25. On appeal mechanism, CTEL advised that for unapproved cases, the applicant concerned would be informed of the reasons, and the views and suggestions of the Panel of Examiners. The applicant could revise their proposal and provide supplementary information as appropriate if they so wish and resubmit the application. Applicant could also reapply at any time after withdrawal of application.

*Promoting Hong Kong films in the Mainland market*

26. Mr Ronny TONG said that a number of industry players had relayed to him their concern about the difficulty in obtaining the approval of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) of the Mainland for the release, distribution and shooting of Hong Kong films in the Mainland following the film "Lust Caution". He noted that many action films and even film such as "Good Papa" featuring fatherly love were banned by the Mainland authorities,

dealing a heavy blow to the Hong Kong film industry. He urged the Administration to proactively liaise with SARFT to ascertain the problem and asked what specific measures/initiatives had been and would be taken by the Administration to assist the local film industry in securing access to the huge Mainland market, thereby increasing employment opportunities in the local film industry.

Admin

27. In this regard, Mr SIN Chung-kai commented that having regard to the different systems and ideologies of the Mainland and Hong Kong, there was not much that the Government could do to change the censorship guidelines and regulations of the Mainland. Mr Ronny TONG clarified that he had no intention to either challenge "One country two systems" or expect the Mainland authority to change its ideology. He considered it incumbent upon the Administration to convey the industry's concern to the Mainland authority and to assist the industry to understand the requirements of the Mainland authority and promote Hong Kong films in the vast Mainland market. At Mr TONG's request, the Administration undertook to provide written information on the matter and account for the measures/initiatives that had been and would be taken to reduce market barriers and facilitate Hong Kong film industry's entry to the Mainland market.

28. CTEL and PAS(CT)A assured that the TELA and the Administration were mindful of the industry's concern over the vetting process by the Mainland authorities for films produced by Hong Kong and co-produced by Hong Kong and the Mainland. The Administration would follow up the matter with the relevant Mainland authorities. PAS(CT)A added that the Administration had all along maintained close liaison with SARFT, and a number of initiatives had been made to facilitate the local film industry's access to the Mainland market under the three phases of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement. DSCED(CT) further said that the high-level FDC comprising members from the film industry was tasked to advise the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development on the policy, strategy and institutional arrangements for the promotion and development of the film industry. The Administration would work closely with the FDC to put in place measures to provide a favourable environment conducive to the long-term and healthy development of the local film industry and to promote Hong Kong films locally, overseas as well as in the Mainland.

*(Post-meeting note: The information provided by the Administration had been circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1660/07-08(01) on 26 May 2008.)*

### *Effectiveness of the Film Development Fund*

29. Ms Emily LAU noted that with a shrinking film market and dwindling number of local productions, in particular small-to-medium budget films, the film industry was facing a very tough time, plagued with talent drought and piracy of film products. She doubted whether the new expanded FDF could help revitalize the declining film industry, given that only two film projects were approved so far.

In this connection, Mr SIN Chung-kai said that he was not optimistic that the FDF could help to turn around the decline in film industry. He suggested that emphasis should rather be put on the nurturing of film talents and the training of new entrants in various aspects of film production and distribution work. Mr Albert CHAN expressed a similar view that the funding scheme should focus more on nurturing of talents and training of film professionals, and on providing a favourable environment and opportunities for new entrants for their debut breakthrough.

30. In response, CTEL pointed out that the expanded FDF only started to invite applications in October 2007 and up to March 2008, six applications had been received of which two had already been approved. With about 50-60 local films produced each year and taking into account the lead time for script writing, the initial response was considered satisfactory. She highlighted that while the funding assistance might not in the short term substantially increase the number of film productions or generate a larger volume of film production activities, it would nonetheless provide the opportunity for new entrants in taking up movie directorship, thereby fulfilling the long-term objective of nurturing film talents. It was hoped that the Government's injection of \$300 million into the FDF could achieve a leverage effect of spurring commercial companies to invest in the film industry. Moreover, commercial companies' confidence in investing in film production would be enhanced with the introduction of provisions which encouraged small-to-medium film makers to adopt better management and accounting measures in line with the international best practices, including for example, the requirement for insurance coverage for film workers, the preparation of audited reports and regular reports on progress of film production. She assured members that the Administration would monitor closely the progress of the FDF and conduct a review in consultation with the film industry two years after implementation to assess the effectiveness of the expanded FDF.

*Funding support for the 27<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong Film Awards Presentation Ceremony*

31. The Chairman noted that the FDF had approved a sum of \$3,008,200 for the 27<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong Film Awards Presentation Ceremony (HKFA), an amount which according to his recollection as the founding Chairman of the event was much higher than the past Government sponsorship for the project. He asked the Administration to account for the amount approved. In this connection, he queried whether it was fair to the other licenced free and pay TV broadcasters that public money was used to indirectly subsidize the exclusive broadcast of the ceremony by the Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB), given that the HKFA was an important annual event in the entertainment field, and that the telecast of the ceremony received wide viewership and generated substantial advertising income for the broadcaster. As such, he called on the Administration to review the funding arrangements of the future HKFA, such as considering underwriting the whole production for broadcast by all licensed broadcasters.

32. Sharing a similar view, Mr Albert CHAN considered that it was neither fair nor just to use public money to sponsor a production programme broadcast

exclusively by a particular broadcaster. Considering the wide viewership and the advertising revenues that such a popular programme would attract, he doubted the alleged difficulty in securing private commercial sponsorship and enquired whether the OSCAR and similar award ceremony in other countries such as Taiwan were sponsored by the Government.

33. CTEL replied that in view of the difficulty in securing private sponsorship and the tight budget, FDF had been sponsoring the Hong Kong Film Awards Association Limited (HKFAA) in holding the annual HKFA since 1982 to promote the film industry and encourage the production of high quality films. She stressed that similar to any other applications, the application and the detailed budget put forward by HKFAA were carefully scrutinized by the FVC. She advised that the FDF sponsorship for the HKFA in the past few years was close to \$3 million each year. In view of inflation, the sponsorship this year was slightly increased to over \$3 million. She said that it was the Administration's intention that the annual event be increasingly funded by private sponsorship. As such, the FDC would liaise with the HKFAA to examine and review the funding arrangements for future HKFA ceremonies. The Chairman requested the Administration to note his concern in this regard.

*Other concern*

34. Ms Emily LAU noted that the salary of the film crew and director, especially new entrants, was as low as \$1,000 to \$2,000. She called on the Administration to look into the matter.

**VI. Issues relating to the English title of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1200/07-08(06) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(1)1200/07-08(07) -- Letter dated 27 March 2008 from the Panel Chairman)  
(Chinese version only)

Briefing by the Administration

The Chairman welcomed Mr Jeremy Godfrey, the newly appointed Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) who attended the Panel meeting for the first time. At the invitation of the Chairman, GCIO briefed members on the background on the selection of the English and Chinese titles for OGCIO and GCIO, the current international and industry practices for designating key IT personnel/head of IT in both the public and private sectors, and the cost and legal implications of changing the title of OGCIO and GCIO.

Discussion

36. The Chairman expressed his concern that unlike the Chinese titles, the existing English titles of OGCIO and GCIO did not clearly convey to the public the IT function, role and responsibilities of the office and the post holder. Moreover, the English post title of GCIO could easily be mixed up with the title of Chief Information Officer (CIO) in the Information Officer (IO) grade of the Information Services Department (ISD).

37. Mr SIN Chung-kai remarked that the existing English title of GCIO did align with prevalent modern international and industry practices for designating key IT personnel/head of IT in both the public and private sectors in many leading e-government countries. If changes were to be made to the title of OGCIO and GCIO, the Government would need to make corresponding changes to various statutory, contractual and official documents in which the titles were used. As such, he did not favour changing the existing English titles. Mr SIN suggested that if changes were required to avoid confusion with CIO of the ISD, consideration should be given to changing the rank title of the IO grade instead.

38. Ms Emily LAU wondered whether the title of GCIO and CIO of the ISD had led to problems and confusion that necessitated changing the titles. In any event, she supported Mr SIN Chung-kai's view that changes should not be made to the title of OGCIO and GCIO given that the existing English titles of OGCIO and GCIO were in full alignment with international practice and were therefore conducive to Hong Kong's interface with counterparts both locally and overseas, and having regard to the cost implications of changing the titles.

39. Noting members' views and the explanation given by the Administration, the Chairman said that he would not pursue the attempt to request the Government to change the existing English title of OGCIO and GCIO. Nevertheless, he instructed the Secretariat to refer the matter and convey members' views to the Civil Service Bureau and the relevant panel for consideration.

The  
Secretariat

**VII. Any other business**

40. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:15 pm.