香港資訊科技聯盟有限公司
HONG KONG IT ALLIANCE LIMITED

2 April, 2009

Clerk to Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
Legislative Council
Hong Kong SAR of the People's Republic of China
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong

<u>By Fax Only</u>
<2185 7845>

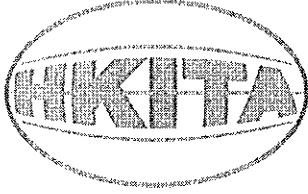c.c. Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP, Panel Chairman

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Written Submission on
Administration of Internet Domain Names in Hong Kong
For Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
7 April 2009 Meeting

Thank you for the letter on 18 March 2009 inviting for Hong Kong IT Alliance's views on the Administration of Internet Domain Names in Hong Kong.

After consolidating members' views and feedbacks within the organization, we agree that the establishment of the Consultative and Advisory Panel (CAP) and the new composition of the Director Board of Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited (HKIRC) are constructive to an efficient administration of Internet domain names.

It is understood that to ensure a timely strategic and operational decision for the management of HKIRC, reducing the number of directors on the Board is a right move, provided that the composition of the Board has a broad and balanced representation to have the Internet naming system, being a public resource, administered in the public interest. We have no objection to the Board of HKIRC having 4 directors appointed by the Government and 4 directors elected by the HKIRC members.

We also support the setting up of a CAP, comprising various groups of stakeholders, to advise the Board on major issues and to facilitate the interaction of the Board with the stakeholders. We understand that the Board of HKIRC will be required to consult the CAP on major issues and account for its decision if it decides not to follow the advice of the CAP. However, to allow for a better understanding among the public on its operation, it is advisable for HKIRC to provide further information on the definition and the types of major issues, and the interacting mechanism of the Board and the CAP. For example, we have no idea if the CAP will give advice only at the Board's request, or whether it may take initiative to advise on "major issues" as it considers appropriate. We trust relevant details

will increase transparency of the independent, non-profit making, membership-based company which is helpful for obtaining public support to HKIRC ultimately.

As HKIRC is a membership-based organization, the registration and representation of HKIRC Members as well as their level of engagement should be reviewed. In fact, there have been feedbacks indicating that it is cumbersome now to maintain the membership system at its current form. We have also received views regarding the election of directors, suggesting that all registered domain names, instead of registrants, should become a valid voter automatically. In other words, each registered domain name should count an eligible vote when electing a director. Under the current system, the interest of the domain name users are rendered unrepresented if they employ service providers to register and maintain the domain name and the web-site attached on its behalf. Taking into account some local SMEs would employ service providers registering domain names for them, it is believed that the proposed system may ensure all domain name users / subscribers be treated fairly and equitably in their respective membership classes.

After all, it is essential for a non-profit organization to be self-sustainable while at the same time being able to operate under proper corporate and operational governance for maximizing the benefits to Hong Kong community. Besides, the strategy of HKIRC is very much influential to the local economy comprising a huge number of SMEs. It is therefore important to ensure the business community is properly represented, whether at the Board level or in the CAP. The appointment of reputable and independent businessmen will help in this respect.

We hope this submission is helpful for your review on the administration of Internet domain names in Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully

Leo KAN
Chairman, IT Committee

LK/cm