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30 October 2012

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Ms. Mary So
Clerk to LegCo AJLS Panel
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms. So,

Special Meeting of the LegCo Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services to be held on Tuesday, 30 October 2012 at 4:30 p.m.

We refer to today's Special Meeting of the AJLS Panel to discuss the 2012-2013 Judicial Service Pay Adjustment.

The Law Society supports the need to maintain an independent Judiciary of the highest quality in Hong Kong and in this regard, welcomes in principle the determination of the judicial remuneration by the independent Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service.

We noted that the Judiciary has undertaken several recruitment exercises in the past year to deal with the judicial manpower position. However, whilst we have raised concern on the increase in average waiting times for civil cases in the High Court over the years when the last AJLS Panel discussed the judicial service pay adjustment in October 2011, we regret to see an even greater general increase in the average court waiting times over the past year. According to the Judiciary's 2011 Annual Report, the average waiting time for the cases in the Civil Fixture List to proceed from 'application' to 'fix date to hearing' has increased from 179 days in 2009 to 215 days in 2010 and further increased to 231 days in 2011. For cases in the Civil Running List, the average waiting time from 'the setting down of a case' to 'hearing' has increased from 55 days in 2009 to 60 days in 2010 and further increased to 83 days in 2011.

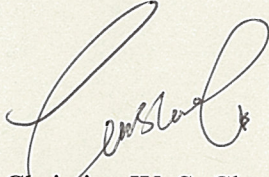
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The Law Society of Hong Kong

We understand more Judges and Judicial Officers are due to retire in the coming 2 years and would urge the Judiciary and the AJLS Panel to keep the judicial manpower situation and the court waiting times under review.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine W. S. Chu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christine W. S. Chu
Deputy Secretary General