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中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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28 February 2013

The Hon. Alan Leong, SC
Chairman, Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
[Fax: 2869 6794]

Dear *Alan*,

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Meeting on 8 January 2013**

**The business environment of public market stalls,
Including rental adjustment mechanism and air-conditioning charges**

Thank you for your letter of 11 January 2013 to the Secretary for Food and Health conveying the views of the Panel on the above subject. The Secretary has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The Administration, through the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), has been making continuous efforts to enhance the operating environment of the public markets under the management of FEHD. Implementation of such various measures has been outlined in paragraph 24 of the Panel Paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)415/12-13(03)).

At the Panel meeting held on 8 January 2013, Members and deputations attending the meeting offered views and advice on ways to improve the operating environment of the public markets. Members requested the Administration to conduct a comprehensive review covering the policy, positioning, functions and usage of public markets.

In response to the request of the Panel, the Food and Health Bureau plans to examine the policy, positioning and functions of the public markets in the updated circumstances. Representatives from the Food and Health Bureau plan to visit a range of markets next month to obtain the most updated picture of these markets to assist us in our examination. We will also set up an inter-departmental and multi-disciplinary task force with participants from FEHD and other relevant departments (such as the Architectural Services Department, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, and the Efficiency Unit) to help identify areas warranting improvement in public markets. The task force would put forward concrete proposals for improving public markets on a priority basis, including measures to upgrade relevant facilities and to strengthen promotional activities. Necessary resources would have to be bid through the established channels for the purpose. In the course of the above, we may engage experts from different fields, some of whom may be from the private sector, to offer inputs from different perspectives. We believe that, with the above multi-disciplinary task force in place and the engagement of experts, it may not be necessary for the time being to organize a separate discussion forum as suggested by the Panel to tap expert advice. We may re-visit this idea in due course. The Food and Health Bureau will keep the Panel informed of progress, with a view to submitting a report to the Panel in the second half of this year.

Yours sincerely,



(Marion LAI)

Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

c.c. Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene