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Panel on Transport  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
(Attn: Ms Doris LO)

30 March 2017

(Fax No.: 2978 7569)

Dear Ms LO,

### **Panel on Transport**

#### **Letter from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki On the provision of hire car services using mobile applications**

Thank you for your letter on 13 March. I am authorised to respond as follows.

The Government is open-minded in respect of the application of different types of technologies, including the use of Internet or mobile applications for calling hire cars. However, the hire car services adopting new technologies or platforms must be in compliance with the relevant law and regulations to protect the interest and safety of passengers. As the Government pointed out on many occasions, the provision of any passenger services must be lawful. If passenger services are not regulated, they can be freely expanded. This may in effect encourage illegal passenger services. As a result, the planning of public transport system would be disrupted, thereby affecting the foundation of the public transport services used by over 90% of the commuters as well as their efficient, reliable and long-term healthy development.

Currently, all hire car services must be issued with hire car permits and comply with relevant legal requirements and issuing conditions of hire car permits. In response to the community's views on hire car services and market demand for hire car services, the Transport Department has implemented new measures to facilitate new market entrants on 1 February 2017. These measures include the launch of "pre-application assessment" and giving special consideration on individual merits to applicants for Private Service (Limousine) Hire Car Permits who are unable to produce the required hiring records or future service contracts.

In response to public's demand for personalised and point-to point public transport services of higher quality and fare, the Government is studying whether to introduce franchised taxis (formerly referred to as "premium taxis"). The details are at LC Paper No. CB(4)666/16-17(05). As there was not sufficient time in the LegCo Panel of Transport's meeting on 17 March this year to discuss the agenda item on premium taxi, we understand that the Secretariat is arranging discussion of the item for the April meeting. The franchised taxi proposal will introduce arrangements of online or mobile hailing applications, and has the feature of the online car-hailing model.

Yours sincerely,

( Miss Michelle CHOI )  
for Secretary for Transport and Housing