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12 March 2019

Ms Shirley Chan
Clerk to Panel on Economic Development
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Chan,

Panel on Economic Development

**Motion passed under agenda item V on
“Proposed injection into the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund”
at the meeting on 28 January 2019**

Thank you for your letter of 29 January 2019. Regarding a motion which was passed at the meeting of the Panel on Economic Development (“ED Panel”) on 28 January 2019, our response is set out below.

Maritime and Aviation Internship Scheme

The Maritime and Aviation Internship Scheme (“MAIS”) provides internship opportunities for students to encourage them to pursue careers in the maritime and aviation industries after graduation. Through the tripartite collaboration among the Government, industries and academic institutions, the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund (“MATF”) will

cover up to 75% of the intern’s monthly honorarium or \$6,000, whichever is lower, for an internship period of up to three months. Although the reimbursement ceiling or reimbursement ratio under MAIS had not been adjusted since its launch in 2014, the number of maritime and aviation companies participating in the Scheme and the number of internship places offered were generally on an increasing trend. The relevant figures are shown in the table below –

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of internship places	248	316	350	489	521
Number of participating companies	30	49	47	70	62

As of end-December 2018, over 1 900 students have participated in the Scheme and worked as interns in some 90 companies in the two industries, reflecting that the Scheme is supported by both the participating companies and students.

Every year, we report to the Manpower Development Committee (“MDC”) of the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board and the Tripartite Taskforce on Manpower Training (Aviation) (“Tripartite Taskforce”) on the implementation of the MAIS and conduct review for the Scheme. At the 2018 review exercise, the MDC and the Tripartite Taskforce agreed to adjust the reimbursement ceiling from \$6,000 to \$7,000, i.e. increase by 17%, per intern per month (with the reimbursement ratio remains unchanged), having regard to the inflation rates for the past few years¹. The enhanced rate of reimbursement ceiling will be adopted for the 2019 round of the Scheme. We will continue to closely monitor the operation of MAIS and devise and introduce enhanced measures where appropriate with a view to encouraging more companies of the two sectors and students to participate the Scheme.

¹ Cumulative inflation of the period from 2014 to 2018 is about 14.5%.

Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme

The Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme (“SGTIS”) was launched in 2004 and came under MATF since April 2014. The Scheme offers a monthly subsidy of \$6,000 to deck cadets and engineer cadets on ocean-going vessels (“OGVs”) for a maximum period of 18 months and 12 months respectively.

To alleviate the economic burden of the cadets while preparing for professional examinations upon their return from sea-going training, the MDC agreed to introduce a special monthly financial subsidy to these cadets. The special subsidy consists of two parts, including a monthly subsidy of \$3,000 during the period while the cadets are preparing for the professional examinations ashore after their completion of cadetship for up to six months; and a monthly subsidy of \$6,000 during the period when they return to OGVs after having acquired the professional qualification of Deck Officer Class 3/Marine Engineer Officer Class 3 Certificate of Competency but are yet to be promoted to officer rank for a maximum of six months (whichever is shorter). The new arrangement has been launched in January 2019.

As the above enhanced measures have just been launched in January, we need some time to monitor their operation and assess the effectiveness of the whole scheme. We will conduct a review for SGTIS one year after the implementation of enhanced measures and will take into account the views of the ED Panel in the review in order to encourage more young people to join and pursue the seafaring career.

Promotion Initiatives

Noting that it is important to reach out to general public in particular the younger generations for promoting and enhancing the image of the maritime and aviation industries, part of the MATF was set aside to support industry associations to organise promotional and outreaching programmes to raise the awareness of the maritime and aviation sectors among young people and members of the general public. If there is funding injection to MATF, we will continue to closely communicate and

collaborate with the respective industry organisations to arrange more various promotional activities and events to publicise the aviation and maritime industries.

The views of ED Panel is duly noted. We will consult the concerned industries and work together with the relevant stakeholders with a view to enhancing the respective initiatives under MATF to benefit more students and in-service practitioners.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LAW Lap-keung', written in a cursive style.

(LAW Lap-keung)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing