



立法會
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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12 March 2020

Miss Emma LAU, JP
Judiciary Administrator
Judiciary
G/F, High Court Building
38 Queensway, Hong Kong

Dear Miss LAU,

Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services

General adjournment of court hearings

Thank you for your replies dated 24 and 27 February 2020 to my letter to you on 21 February 2020, in which I have highlighted the concerns expressed by members of the Panel as well as legal practitioners over the possible impacts of the general adjournment of court hearings.

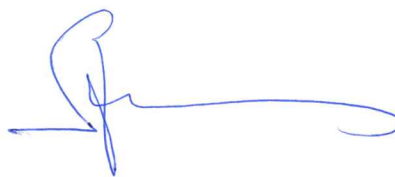
The efforts made so far by the Judiciary to alleviate the impacts of the general adjournment of court hearings on the operation of the judicial system as well as to the access to justice by the general public are well noted. Nevertheless, on behalf of the Panel, I as Chairman of the Panel would like to urge you to consider adopting further measures to speed up the normalization of court services when court proceedings are resumed and registries/offices of the courts are reopened.

From time to time, members of the Panel have raised concerns about the long-standing problem of shortage in judicial manpower and proposed measures to deal with it. To alleviate the impact of the aftermath of the general adjournment period ("GAP"), therefore, I would urge the Judiciary to consider temporary measures to relieve the shortage in judicial manpower, including the appointment of more part-time Deputy Judges, to prepare for the heavy workload once the court is re-opened after GAP.

Furthermore, it is noted in your replies that owing to legal and practical considerations, certain non-conventional modes for handling court business during GAP, e.g. hearings by video conferencing, as proposed by some stakeholders are not feasible at the moment. Notwithstanding, I would like to urge the Judiciary to explore whether there is any room for e-means to handle portion of the business which do not require legislative amendments, and to keep an open mind to the possible use of other non-conventional modes for handling court business during GAP.

You may wish to contact the Clerk to Panel, Mr Lemuel WOO (email: yfwoo@legco.gov.hk), for follow-up to this matter.

Yours sincerely,



(Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun)
Chairman

c.c. Members of Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services