The Year 2000 Problem

公元二零零零年問題

主席：

今天是最後一個公開聆訊，有關審計署署長第30號報告書第9章，關於公元二零零零年問題，應邀出席的證人包括資訊科技及廣播局局長鄺其志先生、署理資訊科技及廣播局首席助理局長何小萍小姐、庫務局局長俞宗怡女士、資訊科技署署長劉錦洪先生、資訊科技署助理署長(技術服務)彭志達先生、機電工程署署長傅立新先生、機電工程署營運服務經理黎仕海先生、機電工程署高級電子工程師(特別職務)李子傑先生、電訊管理局總監王錫基先生。

首先我代表委員會向各位證人久候一事致歉。在開始聆訊之前，我想提醒議員，因第30號報告書從完成到現在已有一段時間，我在會前也曾與鄺局長討論，鄺局長表示在這裏不需要作詳細補充，自資訊科技及廣播局成立後，立法會也隨即成立了資訊科技及廣播事務委員會，所有跟進的事項，局方近期也曾提供了詳細的報告，相信秘書處會給予大家作為參考資料，這些資料審計署署長也同樣有機會看到，如果大家關心跟進工作的細節，請不要在這裏要求資料，請詢問一些作為結論性和與建議有關的問題。委員會現在展開聆訊，先請朱幼麟議員。

Mr David CHU:

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I am glad to say that there are so many Government officials present, I hope this is indicative of the importance the Government places on this Year 2000 'bug' problem. I think this problem deserves our full attention, because it can potentially disrupt the normal workings of this entire community, and many analyses were done by the professionals world-wide in the past three/five years about this problem, and the general consensus is that significant disruption will occur globally and nobody has any idea about the exact extent, but some of the predictions - as a matter of fact, several books were written on this subject - some predictions go so far as to predict a major global recession, bigger than the 1930 recession because of this 'bug'. So, I mean, we are facing something which is quite new, and there is a great deal of uncertainty involved.

I agree with the Audit Commission's idea that we should have a whole, take a 'whole of Government' approach. As a matter of fact, I will go even one step further, that we have to take a community approach, because of the interdependency between the Government and the private sector. So, I think we should take an entire community approach to this problem. For example, if the Government's Immigration computer crashes, this will affect the passengers coming in, which, in turn, will affect airline scheduling, which, in turn, will affect our tourism. So, there is a clear link between the Government and the private sector. If the air cargo computer crashes, and we all know the consequence of that; so, and also in addition to the banking system, you know, even if a few banks have computer problems, this can have a domino effect on other banks, because the

banks keeps balances with each other, and this can even affect oversea banks.   So, the inter-relatedness and also the inter-dependency is so extensive that a minor problem can develop into a fairly major one.   Therefore, it really deserves our full attention.   So, my question actually is quite simple.   I want to find out clearly who in the Government is in charge of our defence, our defence against this Year 2000 'bug'.   My second question is what ammunitions or is he equipped properly with enough resources to lead this defence?   And my third question is if we fail, who is ultimately responsible?   Is this the Secretary, or the Chief Executive, or whoever it is?   But I think we should make it absolutely clear.   The reason I am asking these three questions is because I read this Report quite carefully, and, if I may take one minute to mention a few things.   The function of ITBB, Information Technology Broadcasting Bureau.   They will take a lead role in co-ordinating the Government's approach.   In another part of the Report, it mentioned ITBB's role will be a pivotal role in managing the 'whole of Government' Y2K problem.   Now, pivotal role in managing, co-ordinating and, in another section of the Report, it mentioned that ITBB has a clear mandate to manage the 'whole of Government's' Y2K problem, and, regarding the private sector, it mentioned that the ITBB has the responsibility - I am so glad to see the word 'responsibility' - but it continues on to say that it has the responsibility of disseminating information.   It's not major responsibility.   So, clearly, the ITBB's role is not well understood and not well defined, and I think it's very important for us to know who's in charge, who's responsible.

Chairman:

Right.   Thank you.   After hearing Mr CHU, it looks like you're saying 'international problem'; not only a problem, it sounds like a war with ammunition.

Mr KWONG Ki-chi, Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (SITB):

Well, I don't know whether I should just address the three questions, or also some of the comments of Mr CHU.

Chairman:

Yes.   You address it.   I think Mr CHU is really looking more on the, the major role, responsibility, to a reference of your particular post.

SITB:

So, in short, the first question, who is in charge of the programme, then I would say that for the 'whole of Government' approach and the community approach, I am in charge.   I have got a Steering Committee with representatives from the relevant Policy Bureaux, as well as Government Departments, which oversees the progress in rectification

of all mission critical services provided by the Government and provided by non-Government organisations funded or regulated by Government.   So, that Steering Committee, in fact, meets regularly to look at up-to-now quarterly progress reports, through the relevant Policy Bureaux, of progress in rectification work.   So, if you look at it it as a sort of hierarchy, then, for example, the Secretary for Health and Welfare has responsibility for overseeing the progress in Y2K rectification in the health and welfare sector.   She reports the progress to us, and we will discuss whether or not the progress is adequate, whether or not some additional work should be done and so on, and the same applies to the other Policy Bureaux.   So, that leads to the second, second question you asked.   Are we equipped with enough resources?   With this sort of approach and, given the support that we have had so far from Finance Committee, we have obtained funding approval for the necessary rectification work for Government Departments, as well as organisations funded by the Government, but obviously organisations which are entirely privately funded like, for example, with the power companies, they are responsible for the funding of the Y2K rectification problem.

Your third question is rather more difficult to answer because you ask 'what if we fail'.   What do we mean by 'what if we fail'?   It could be localised.   So, for example, even after all the testing and so on, it could happen that a particular equipment might fail, because or not because of Y2K issues precisely at midnight on the 31st of December 1999, and it would be very difficult to say if that should happen to one piece of equipment, the one who is having overall charge at the top should be responsible.   So, the answer to the question really is are we taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the problem is rectified as much as practicable, because, at the end of the day, when we look at, for example, the computer systems and the embedded equipment and devices operated whether by public organisations or private companies, we have to prioritise the rectification work.   We are focusing on mission critical systems and equipment which provide essential services.   I can illustrate with an example.   The video recording machine in many people's homes are programmable, so that they can record programmes several days in advance.   They have an embedded chip.   What if that failed?   If you ask me, I couldn't care less.   It's not providing an essential service.   So, so your third question 'If we fail?', you have to define what is failure.

Mr David CHU:

A major disruption.

Chairman:

Mr CHU, actually I would prefer Members not to pursue the third question too much.   I have been very generous.   Since the question has been posed, I would allow the Secretary to respond.   It's hypothetical in nature, but I'm sure that, if a problem do arise,

it's the job of the Legislature and, for example, PAC. I will find out, and I don't think any responsible official can hide anywhere, but I think it's unfair to ask a very general questions this way, but allow the general question to be asked to illustrate, but I prefer Member not to pursue it. Okay?

Mr David CHU:

I just have a very short follow-up?

Chairman:

Sure.

Mr David CHU:

I have a great deal of confidence in the Secretary and also the ITBB. My short follow up question is would your Bureau certify all the critical areas, or critical mission areas of the Government, as well as the private sector, such as the banks, the air cargo terminals and so forth. Would your Bureau undertake the responsibility to sign off that this system is okay, because, if you don't do that, who is going to do it?

SITB:

We do, so that, for example individual banks, the Chief Executive Officer will have to sign off their progress in response to the regulator's requirements. The same applies to Government departments. Heads of departments are required to sign off the progress reports for submission to the Policy Bureau which, in turn, submit their reports to us. So, this signing off arrangement has to go down to the Executive level, because it is only at the Executive level would it be responsible for the Head of that Agency to say categorically that a particular progress has been made in a particular system.

Chairman:

I am grateful that Mr CHU allow me to follow this up. I think it's a question I want to ask, too. I think a listed company and regulated industry in the private sector, not only the Executive will have to sign, they would need to be independently vetted and certified by professional accountants in particular, and other professionals. Is there similar arrangement in the Government? There are internal audit suggestions, but it is not an independent certification. Could you follow this up? Is there any consideration to do this?

The Year 2000 Problem

公元二零零零年問題

SITB:

Well, in the case of government departments, for example, the professional departments will work together with the departments concerned on the rectification programme.   So, ITSD will work with departments on computer systems, EMSD will work with departments on embedded systems.   And I think that sort of arrangement does provide an independent and impartial input into the assessment of the progress.

主席：

這問題或者我們稍後再跟進。我想請吳亮星議員先提出問題。吳亮星議員。

吳亮星議員：

多謝主席。在中文版第38頁119段中提到金融管理局的第二次調查，截至97年12月31日為止認可機構推行二千年問題計劃的進度，結果發現部分推行二千年問題工程的進度未如理想，有10%認可機構的進度較預期緩慢。請問其緩慢進度及情況如何？現時是否已追回進度？若否，政府還可提供甚麼方法以解決此問題呢？

主席：

金融管理局沒有官員列席，或者請鄺局長回應這方面的問題。

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

主席。關於銀行界和金融界修正公元二千年數位問題的進度，早在兩、三天前的財經事務委員會中，已有詳細的匯報。

主席：

或者我們翻查資料，這是資料性的文件，不要跟進了。

吳亮星議員：

當時我也有參加，他們只簡單表示基本上沒有問題，因此，我想知道你作為綜合的部門，你最後的評價為何？

主席：

獨立評價。

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

我們接受金融管理局提供的資料。

主席：

好，梁劉柔芬議員，請你跟進。

梁劉柔芬議員：

主席。在第26頁，審計署署長根據收集的問題結果作出分析，指出政府部門對二千年這問題似乎未能好好掌握。在70段中，資訊科技署署長收到司法機構政務長1998年3月31日致資訊科技署署長的便箋表示："接到1997年12月24日審計署署長的便箋後，我開始明白到這個問題的深遠影響。"請問局長就整體來看，現在政府部門是否對掌握這問題仍有很大的擔憂呢？

主席：

局長。已差不多一年後。

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

主席。目前在電腦修正工作方面已進行超過80%，就第70段來說，在1996年12月，資訊科技署已經知會各部門，我們會舉行研討會以提高各部門對二千年數位問題的認知，在97年5月亦有通告給所有部門，關於盡快優先處理二千年數位的問題，包括在有需要時，可申請資源等等。因此，如果在98年3月，我不是指司法機構政務長，而是司法機構內有一位同事有上述評論，在我們來看感到很失望。因為作為主管電腦方面的人員，我們已有兩次通告也未能知悉二千年這個問題，實令人失望。但我希望現在的情況不是這樣。

主席：

梁劉柔芬議員。

梁劉柔芬議員：

主席。我想跟進一個小問題。在第41頁。

The Year 2000 Problem

公元二零零零年問題

主席：

    好。

梁劉柔芬議員：

    在第41頁(g)部「應變計劃」，剛才局長也提到有某些部門仍未掌握到這問題，請問你們在制訂應變計劃方面會採取甚麼行動呢？因為'D' day一到，可能會很大影響。

主席：

    尤其行動慢了的部門，你很失望。

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

    主席。我不是因為慢而失望，而是主管人員對這般重要的問題完全沒有留意而失望。我們現時進度的目標是，在明年6月把所有政府部門內必須服務的重要系統作出修正。由明年1月開始，我們會參考他們提交的進度報告，如果進度令人有疑惑時，我們會追問和看看是否需要進行應變計劃。

主席：

    資源的申請、協調的工作等，我們對服務水準有信心，我個人很支持對不醒覺的部門有一個嚴規的態度。但在權力方面，部門如果未達到你的要求，又沒有應變計劃，你除了在財務委員會表示失望外，在政府內部，還可以作出甚麼方法使他們達到目標呢？我相信這是很重要的，當然政府帳目委員會會跟進有關部門的情況，但若沒有這機會，政府內部會怎樣處理呢？鄺局長。

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

    主席。本局成立以後，在97年5月有一個由政務司司長主持的部門首長會議，我把問題的嚴重性告知所有部門首長，之後更加入需由部門首長簽署的進度報告。這項工作除由資訊科技及廣播局統籌外，行政首長、政務司司長和財政司司長也十分支持，我們應當在訂出的限期內辦妥，如果部門真有問題，我們會與部門首長商討如何追回進度等問題，他們會很樂意與我們合作。

主席：

　　　　或在政府內部以外，請局長考慮會否在資訊科技及廣播事務委員會內把有問題、或跟不上進度的部門或有關情況加入報告中呢？

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

　　　　我們可以考慮。

主席：

　　　　劉江華議員。

劉江華議員：

　　　　主席，剛才局長對其中一個部門的主管作出評價。

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

　　　　不是部門主管。

劉江華議員：

　　　　其中一個主管。

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

　　　　是負責寫該文件的人士。

劉江華議員：

　　　　在附錄B內，有10個部門在交回問卷時表示不會受二千年問題的影響，但我們認為應該會有影響，如民航處、經濟局、效率促進組、工商局等，為何他們完全不受影響呢？事後有找出原因嗎？為何他們會作出這評價？可以完全不受影響呢？

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

　　　　主席。我現在不能回應為何他們不受影響。如果他們的設備已經滿足了公元二千年數位的要求，是不一定受影響，因為在設備上已妥善處理便不受影響。當然我

們需要翻查個別部門的情況,及現在的進度。

劉江華議員:

這是局長從一個很正面的角度來說,但亦不能排除個別錯誤或不知的情況。

資訊科技及廣播局局長:

這個我不能排除。

劉江華議員:

請你把有關資料給我們。我知道在政府內有些負責電腦的人員,專業水平可能未達到要求。是否有這樣的情況?

資訊科技及廣播局局長:

我不感覺有這情況。

劉江華議員:

現在這方面的人員,其專業水平是否足夠應付這方面的問題呢?

主席:

鄺局長。

資訊科技及廣播局局長:

主席,部門使用電腦方面各有不同,我們當然要視乎部門同事在電腦方面有多深的認識才提供訓練,處理公元二千年數位問題的修正,我們會由資訊科技署內專門的同事或招聘在資訊科技界的專業公司作修正工作。

主席:

我看完報告後,感覺到審計署署長提出了很多有意義和很有用的建議及方法,尤其是對部門發出問卷調查,確有提醒及協助他們對這問題的關注,因為這是管理的問題,並不是技術的問題。我們不能要求局長在電腦、科技方面有專業的水準,我覺得這方法很有新意和有用。請問資訊科技署與部門聯絡有關進度報告時,有否以間接或幫助的形式,協助他們不單了解本身問題?如朱幼麟議員所提,他們未必會考慮還牽涉其他

部門或外界對他們的影響。你認為這些方法是否有用？你們有否進行呢？

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

　　我與主席的看法一樣，我們很多謝審計署進行這份調查報告，一方面提供資料，對本局成立後推行修正工作有很大幫助。對於他們建議我們可以同時收集某些資料，我們在進度報告中已有實行。此外，在提醒部門方面，除了我們自行的工作外，審計署進行調查期間所作的工作確提高部門對這方面的認知和優先處理。

主席：

　　審計署所用的方法和技巧是否值得考慮呢？

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

　　我們在要求進度報告的資料上已經有實行，現時資訊科技署，機電工程署和電訊管理局的同事，在處理電腦或有關機電的設備的進度方面亦有實行。

主席：

　　請劉江華議員放心，就算部門本身的專業水平不高，但也有其他方法補救。李華明議員。

李華明議員：

　　主席。我關心一些與大眾有關的機構，不一定是政府部門，例如醫管局、地鐵，甚至是兩個市政局，你們的目標是99年年中能處理妥當，對這些機構在應付這問題上是否有特別關心，甚至提供協助？

主席：

　　資訊科技及廣播局局長。

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

　　主席。最新的報告我們在早一、兩天前已完成，預計星期一在立法會資訊科技及廣播事務委員會內提交。因為委員會當時表示，如果沒有特別問題，可能不作討論。

The Year 2000 Problem

公元二零零零年問題

主席：

我會要求秘書處提供給各位參考，梁劉柔芬議員。

梁劉柔芬議員：

主席。審計署署長報告書第56頁202段提到調查機構的一些意見，這是民間機構的意見。在尾段指出，「我們亦關注到公用事業機構提供的服務……我們非常希望這些服務不會受到二千年問題影響，並希望有公開的途徑可以得知他們解決二千年問題的進展」，附錄D第(g)段亦指出政府應該制訂適當法例。請問局長對這兩點的看法如何？因為從這方面可以令他們有積極的合作態度，與他們共同把問題解決。這不單可以帶給公眾信心，還提高警覺性，讓全港也關注這問題。

主席：

鄺局長。

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

本局成立後，進行了很多這方面的宣傳工作，包括電台、電視、報章和研討會，下星期二又與香港生產力促進局合辦了研討會，主要邀請中、小型公司，和公共服務公司的負責人，請他們講解在處理公元二千年數位問題的進度。我們在政府的網頁內，其中有一個報告講述提供必須服務的機構或政府以外機構的進度，這主要是針對朱幼麟議員提及有很多報導可能引起不必要的恐懼，我們也覺得有需要提高工作進度的透明度，讓市民及有興趣知道這方面消息的本地或外地機構，也能了解我們的進度情況。

主席：

梁劉柔芬議員。

梁劉柔芬議員：

主席。我有兩個意見，第一，研討會上可否避免用一些太專有的名詞。第二，可否高調處理，使多些傳媒報導，提醒大家？

The Year 2000 Problem

公元二零零零年問題

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

主席。在宣傳時我們稱之為"千年蟲"問題，並不是以"公元二千年數位"問題作標題，有關"千年蟲"或"公元二千年數位"問題，其實很多報章也有跟進報導，現在有很多人關注資訊科技，報章有科技篇、科技版，有關資料全在其中，倘若沒有興趣的人士，看到科技版可能把它擱在一邊，但我們已盡量作出更多宣傳。

主席：

大家也差不多提問完畢，我們也會考慮向局長提出建議，在跟進工作比較小的私人企業方面。當然局長已增加了這方面的工作，如果我們覺得某些地方有需要特別跟進的話，再以書信方式與局長聯絡。

資訊科技及廣播局局長：

好的。主席。我們在立法會資訊科技及廣播事務委員會所提交最新一項的資料內提到，大家可以參考由生產力促進局在9月進行的調查，結果顯示私人機構對於二千年數位問題的認知、進度資料。

主席：

局長。我希望將來能與你再討論關於善後的工作，不單監察、進度和應變等問題，我希望局長會考慮及留意在應變後可能會出現一些善後的問題，好像機場出現法律、訴訟等問題。如果大家沒有其他意見，今天的公開聆訊結束。

The Year 2000 Problem

公元二零零零年問題