
Administration Wing of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office

In the past year, we have been working on 38 pledges, of which :

- we have completed 15;
- we are on schedule with 14;
- two are under review;
- we are taking active measures to speed up the progress on one which is behind schedule; and
- we are pressing ahead with six on-going commitments.

The following sets out the detailed report for each main programme area.

Granting Legal Aid

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. To set up an internal audit team within Legal Aid Department (LAD) in 1998-1999 to audit the means-testing of legal aid applications. To strengthen and restructure the Application and Processing Division with a view to expediting the processing time for legal aid applications. To launch LAD's second Performance Pledge before the end of 1997.	An internal audit team was set up in May 1998. The Application and Processing Division was strengthened and restructured to provide "one-stop service" in December 1997. The processing time for legal aid applications has been significantly reduced. The second Performance Pledge was launched in November 1997.
1997	2. To begin consultation on the preliminary findings and recommendations of the Legal Aid Policy Review before the end of 1997.	Consultation began in mid-December 1997, and completed in end March 1998. Recommendations are being finalised.

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| 1997 | 3. | To provide additional staffing resources for the Duty Lawyer Scheme in order to further improve the service. To extend the Legal Advice Scheme by opening one additional centre at the Islands District Office and one extra session at the Wanchai District Office. | Additional resources for the Duty Lawyer Scheme have been made available with effect from 1 April 1998. One additional centre has been opened at the Islands District Office and one extra session has been arranged at the Wanchai District Office. |
| 1996 | 4. | To prepare for the increasing use of Chinese in courts by training law clerks and legal aid counsel in 1997-1998. | Training continues to be provided to law clerks and legal aid counsel. |

Action in Progress : On Schedule

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| 1997 | 5. | To set up an internal audit team in the LAD in 1998-1999 to audit the assignment system. To set up a working group in the second half of 1997 to study the best way of monitoring assigned out cases, including progress monitoring and cost control. To consult the independent Legal Aid Service Council (LASC) on this matter. | An internal audit team was set up in May 1998. A working group set up in November 1997 has proposed a package of measures to improve the monitoring system. The LASC will be consulted soon. |
| 1995 | 6. | To ask the independent LASC to examine the feasibility and desirability of the option of separating the LAD from the Government. | A consultancy has been commissioned to assist the LASC on the study. The Council is now considering the findings and recommendations put forward by the consultants. |

Good progress has been made with the following commitment in the past year. We will continue to work on it on an on-going basis.

Year

Pledge

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| 1995 | 7. | To continue to improve the quality and accessibility of legal aid services to the public while achieving maximum cost-effectiveness in conjunction with the independent LASC. |
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Providing an Independent and Impartial Administrative Redress System

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. To seek to further improve the operations of the Administrative Appeals Board and the Municipal Services Appeals Boards to ensure that appeals to the Boards will be handled efficiently. To consider appointing an additional Deputy Chairman to the Administrative Appeals Board to conduct hearings.	A second Deputy Chairman to the Administrative Appeals Board and a second Vice-chairman to the Municipal Services Appeals Boards were appointed on 10 March 1998. The additional resources have helped ensure that the two Boards operate and handle appeals efficiently.
Action in Progress : On Schedule		
1997	2. To keep under review the possibility of further extending the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to other major statutory bodies.	Action is in hand to process the extension of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to a number of major statutory bodies.

Working with the Legislature

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action in Progress : On Schedule		
1997	1. To continue to provide support to the Legislature to enable them to work effectively, including discussing with the Legislature about further improving the channels of communication and liaison between the executive and the legislature and how to process matters through the Legislature more efficiently; and seeking ways of meeting the Legislature's long-term accommodation need to bring all legislative facilities under one roof.	<p>We have maintained effective communication with the Legislature and will continue to improve communication between the executive and the legislature.</p> <p>We will continue to consult the Legislature on various issues of concern with a view to providing the necessary support to enable them to work effectively.</p> <p>We have consulted the Provisional Legislative Council (PLC) on the proposed design of the new annex of the Legislative Council Building in March 1998. We will revise the design taking into account input from the PLC and submit it to the Legislative Council for consideration.</p>

Government Records Service

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action in Progress : On Schedule		
1997	1. To launch a Public Education and Publicity Programme in 1998 to promote the public awareness of, and interest in, the local historical heritage.	<p>Since April 1998, a total of 17 seminars and visits have been organised, attracting some 550 participants representing different interests and sectors in the community.</p> <p>An exhibition on historical photographs was held between 4 and 12 July 1998 attracting 5 000 members of the public.</p>

1997	2.	To start in 1998 the third and final phase of the implementation of the Records Management Strategy, which aims to further consolidate the development of proper records management systems on a service-wide scale.	Implementation work began in June 1998 and is progressing on schedule. We have concluded the first two of the 15 departmental records management reviews; finalised the drafting of three records management manuals; and secured additional leased accommodation for the setting up of a new records centre.
1997	3.	To dedicate additional resources to the training of government staff in records management in 1998.	A dedicated training team has been set up and a new target-oriented, credit-based training programme is being developed. We will also produce a new video for training purposes.

Helping Business

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>	
<i>Action Completed</i>			
1997	1.	To extend the one-stop Business Licence Information Centre service to the Internet.	Service was extended to the Internet on 30 March 1998.
1997	2.	To complete a pilot project on allowing Authorised Persons to carry out utilities connections and construct run-ins.	The pilot project was completed in August 1998 and a comprehensive evaluation exercise conducted. The procedures are being improved prior to territory-wide implementation.
1997	3.	To conduct a study on establishing a Cost of Compliance Assessment Framework.	The consultancy study was completed in July 1998. The institutional issues pertaining to implementation of the Framework are being addressed.

Action in Progress : On Schedule

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| 1997 | 4. | To place more public forms onto the Internet. | 660 forms are now available on the Internet. |
| 1997 | 5. | To complete studies on lighting and ventilation regulations for buildings, licensing requirements for supermarkets, licensing requirements for lotteries, tombola, amusements with prizes and trade promotion competitions. | <p>The Buildings Department has reviewed the requirements of prescribed windows for bathrooms and introduced flexible measures.</p> <p>The Urban Services Department has completed a study on the extension of provisional licensing arrangements to all food premises. Action is in hand to introduce the new arrangement.</p> <p>The study on licensing requirements for lotteries, tombola, amusements with prizes and trade promotion competitions is underway and will be completed in early November 1998.</p> |

Action in Progress : Under Review

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| 1997 | 6. | To cultivate a pro-business culture and pro-business practices in the Industry Department. | The departmental business study of the Industry Department has been put on hold pending a review of one of the Department's key programmes. |
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Good progress has been made with the following commitments in the past year. We will continue to work on them on an on-going basis.

Year

Pledge

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| 1997 | 7. | To continue to strengthen the four main strands of the Helping Business Programme, i.e., cut red-tape and eliminate over-regulation, assess and reduce cost of compliance to the Government, to the business sector and the community, transfer public services to the private sector, and introduce improved/new services. |
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- 1997 8. To remove obstacles and constraints to business development. To give the private sector freedom to set its own direction, to explore and to seize opportunities. The Business and Services Promotion Unit to work closely with the private sector to cut red-tape, reduce cost of compliance and improve services.
- 1997 9. To monitor the requirements of the international business community and all factors that help make Hong Kong an attractive place for them.
- 1996 10. To transfer services to the private sector where appropriate market conditions prevail.

Services Promotion

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. To launch in 1998 a roving exhibition on services, which will tour all parts of the territory so that the public at large gain a better understanding of what the service economy means to them.	The roving exhibition was concluded in May 1998 after it had toured all 13 popular shopping centres chosen for the purpose.
1997	2. To broadcast a ten-minute film to promote Hong Kong as a global services and financial centre in 1998.	We have widely distributed the film overseas, including all Economic and Trade Offices, overseas offices of the Trade Development Council, Hong Kong Tourist Association and other prominent trade organisations.
1997	3. To work with the Hong Kong Coalition of Service Industries and the University of Hong Kong in organising a tri-partite forum in 1998 on Hong Kong's Servicing Economy.	The forum was held on 8 January 1998 with a total of 129 participants from academic, business and government circles.

- 1997 4. To support the Trade and Industry Bureau (TIB) in examining whether the Export Credit Insurance Corporation (ECIC) should provide coverage for long-term export credit.
- A review has concluded that while its Ordinance does not specify the credit period for which the ECIC can provide cover, it has been providing cover for short, medium and long term exports.
- To strengthen its support for service exports, ECIC has explored extensively insurance coverage in major service sectors and pursued an intensive promotional programme.
- 1997 5. To support the TIB in examining the case for a Credit Guarantee Corporation.
- The Industry Department launched a \$500 million pilot Credit Guarantee Scheme (CGS) on 3 June 1998 to help Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) involved in exports to obtain finance from lending institutions. Upon review, we have merged the CGS with a new Special Finance Scheme covering all SMEs.
- 1997 6. To support the TIB in monitoring the implementation of the Services Support Fund.
- The Industry Department, in consultation with the Vetting Committee of the Fund, conducted a review in January 1998 and has since implemented a number of changes to improve its operation.
- Action in Progress : On Schedule**
- 1997 7. To continue in 1998 to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the services promotion initiatives kick-started by the former Government Task Force on Services Promotion.
- In early 1998 we reviewed the reporting format and decided to group related initiatives into a series of themes for more focused report and discussion. So far we have put seven theme papers to the Services Promotion Strategy Group.

- 1997 8. To support the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) in commissioning a consultancy study on manpower and training requirements of specific service industries. The first consultancy study on manpower and training requirements of the travel and tourism industries will be completed soon. We are working with the EMB to commission another consultancy study targeting the information technology industry.
- 1997 9. To support the Government Economist in co-ordinating a government response to “The Hong Kong Economic Policy Studies”. The Government Economist has consolidated government responses in respect of six of the studies and is working on the other seven that have been published. The responses are available for access on the homepage of the Business and Services Promotion Unit.
- 1997 10. To support the Economic Services Bureau (ESB) in commissioning a consultancy study to consider the case for providing additional convention facilities. ESB commissioned a two-stage consultancy study in February 1998. Stage I of the study is nearing completion.
- 1997 11. To support the TIB in studying the idea of business parks for those service industries with special accommodation and other needs. The Industry Department started the consultancy study in September 1998.

Action in Progress : Under Review

- 1997 12. To support the TIB in considering the case for setting performance-related benchmarks for our overseas Investment Promotion Units and the local One Stop Unit. Upon review, we have decided to take this item forward under a broader initiative which will examine a number of key areas of the Inward Investment Promotion Programme.

Action in Progress : Behind Schedule

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| 1997 | 13. To establish in 1998 a mechanism to obtain key information on measures taken by other major economies to enhance competitiveness. | Consultation with parties concerned has taken slightly longer than expected. We have now commissioned a consultancy study which is scheduled for completion in the first half of 1999. |
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<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>
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| 1996 | 14. To promote the development of Hong Kong's service industries. |
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Others

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
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Action Completed

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| 1997 | 1. To group under one head responsibilities now divided between several bureaux in early 1998. This Bureau Secretary will lead and co-ordinate the work of all those throughout the Government organisations involved in information technology, the related areas of broadcasting and telecommunications. | The new Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau was set up in April 1998. |
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