Reference is made to an announcement made by the Company dated 4 May 2005 and published on 5 May 2005 in respect of, among other things, the off-market share repurchase which constitutes a connected transaction.

The Company has applied to the Executive and the Stock Exchange for an extension of time for publication of the Circular so that the Circular can be despatched on 16 June 2005.

EXTENSION OF TIME FOR PUBLICATION OF THE CIRCULAR

Reference is made to an announcement made by the Company dated 4 May 2005 and published on 5 May 2005 in respect of, among other things, the off-market share repurchase which constitutes a connected transaction (the “Announcement”). Terms defined in the Announcement have the same meaning in this announcement.

It has taken longer than anticipated for the Company to finalise the circular to be dispatched to the Shareholders in relation to the Share Repurchase (the “Circular”). The Company requires additional time to include certain financial information in the Circular including the financial effects of the Share Repurchase.

Under the Takeovers and Mergers and Share Repurchases (the “Code”), the Company is required to dispatch the Circular to the Shareholders within 21 days of the date of the Announcement, being 25 May 2005. The Company has applied to the Executive for consent under the Code for an extension of time for the dispatch of the Circular to the Shareholders on or before 16 June 2005.

Under the Rules Governing the Listing of Securities on The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited, (the “Listing Rules”), the Company is required to dispatch the Circular to the Shareholders within 21 days after the publication of the Announcement, being 26 May 2005. The Company has applied to the Stock Exchange from strict compliance with Rule 14A.49 of the Listing Rules for an extension of time for the dispatch of the Circular to the Shareholders on or before 16 June 2005.

The directors of the Company jointly and severally accept full responsibility for the accuracy of information contained in this announcement and confirm, having made all reasonable inquiries, that to the best of their knowledge, opinions expressed in this announcement have been arrived at after due and careful consideration and there are no other facts not contained in this announcement, the omission of which would make any statement in this announcement misleading.
As at the date of this announcement, the Executive Directors are Mr Yang Yuanqing, Mr Stephen Maurice Ward, Jr and Ms Ma Xuezheng, the Non-executive Directors are Mr Liu Chuanzhi, Mr Zhu Linan, Mr James G Coulter, Mr Shan Weijian, Mr William O Grabe, Mr Justin T Chang (alternate Director to Mr James G Coulter), Mr Ricky Wai Kei Lau (alternate Director to Mr Shan Weijian) and Mr Vince Feng (alternate Director to Mr William O Grabe); and Independent Non-executive Directors are Mr Wong Wai Ming, Professor Woo Chia-Wei and Mr Ting Lee Sen.

By Order of the board

Yang Yuanqing
Chairman

Hong Kong, 25 May 2005

“Please also refer to the published version of this announcement in The Standard”