

Press release

Important role for IRD in fostering Hong Kong's prosperity

Friday, March 14, 2008

The Inland Revenue Department, through its continuous efforts in enhancing efficiency and striving for perfection in the past 60 years, had become an excellent tax administration that played an important role in fostering Hong Kong's prosperity, the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, said today (March 14).

Professor Chan was addressing an eTAX Seminar organised by the Inland Revenue Department. The seminar also launched a series of events to commemorate the department's 60th anniversary.

He said that despite Hong Kong's transformation from an entrepot in the post-war era to a light industry centre and an international finance centre of today, five long established features in the tax system, including low tax rate, simple taxation law, scheduler tax system, territorial concept and a fair appeal mechanism founded on well established legal principles, had been maintained.

"In the 1947-48 fiscal year, the total revenue collected was \$14 million. Compared with the \$150 billion collected for 2006-07, this is an increase of 10,700 times with a corresponding increase of 28 times in the department's establishment," Professor Chan said.

"The cost for collecting every \$100 of revenue in the year 1947-48 was \$3.60. Last year (2006-07), it was just 69 cents. That is efficiency for you," he said.

Professor Chan also took the opportunity to introduce to the audience eTAX, a new taxpayer portal launched by the department in January. eTAX is a new online service platform offering taxpayers an easy, secure and environmentally-friendly means to comply with the tax law.

"As a taxpayer, I find this new portal very helpful. Just like a secretary, it keeps track of our tax records in a secure manner and we can access them readily. eTAX will also send alert messages to remind us when our tax returns and payments are due," he said.

"eTAX marks a new era in taxpayer services. I am confident that it will be widely received by the public," Professor Chan said.

Through the eTAX Account, taxpayers can view their account profile, check the status of tax return, assessment and payment as well as notify changes in personal particulars. They can also enjoy other online services for stamping of property document, business registration and payment.

Taxpayers may choose to receive notices and documents related to tax return filing, assessment and tax payment (including tax returns and tax bills) in the form of electronic records instead of paper. This will enable them to manage their tax records in an environmentally-friendly manner.

To gain access to the new services, a taxpayer has to open an eTAX Account by logging in eTAX at www.gov.hk/etax with his Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and Password that he has registered with IRD, or by using his digital certificate issued by a recognised certification authority.

If a taxpayer does not have a password or has forgotten it, he can apply for a new one online under eTAX. Taxpayers can choose their own TIN and password when they open their eTAX Account.

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