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**Speech by the Hon Mrs Selina Chow Liang Shuk-Yee, JP  
Motion Debate on Expectations for the 2002-03 Budget, 27 February  
2002**

Selina Chow:

Madam President, yes, whenever we discuss the topic of imposing new taxes, I am sure that Members will certainly feel surprised if I do not say something about the sales tax. But for the time being, I do not think that I should raise any arguments about the sales tax, because our motion today is about the imminent Budget. The Financial Secretary has stated that the sales tax will not be imposed for the time being, but I really hope that this tax will never be imposed. This is my long-standing stance, the position of the sector I represent, and I will stick to it. A Member said that the motion today is not part of our "All-Party consensus"; strictly speaking, I admit that it is not. But many Members have spoken clearly and forcefully for the proposal in the motion, and in the papers today, there are also headlines of "All-Party Actions" and "Four Major Political Parties Joining Hands to Curb Tax Increases". So, in fact, the consensus is all very clear: We all demand the Government to refrain from proposing any tax increases in the Budget for the next financial year.

When it comes to the demand on no tax increases, we all wish to put a forceful message to the Financial Secretary: the Government must not propose any tax increases in the Budget. I am not sure whether the eight political parties can really reach a consensus on this message because that was not discussed during their meeting, but today, I can see that Members' views about this issue are very loud and clear. And, at least, we in the Liberal Party do wish to say "No tax increases, please". I of course do not quite know how the political parties are going to consider the matter after the Budget has been announced. Therefore, in line with the position of myself, the sector I represent and the Liberal Party, and also having listened to Members' remarks, I insist that there should be no tax increase proposals in the Budget under discussion, that is, the Budget to be announced next week, notwithstanding the serious budget deficits as presented by the Government and irrespective of the validity of "Cry Wolf".

This is the consensus among the majority of Honourable colleagues, and the message is in fact very strong. I hope that the Financial Secretary (I am glad to see his return to the Chamber now) and Secretary Denise YUE can clearly hear this very strong consensus. I hope that they can get the message. Although the political parties may not have the opportunity to discuss the issue of government revenue with the Financial Secretary one by one, the Liberal Party still hopes that the

motion today can move the Financial Secretary and enable him to get this message: Whether or not the motion today represents the consensus of all the eight political parties, the message that there should be no tax increases (at least in the imminent Budget) is very strong and clear. It is hoped that this position of Members can bring about a Budget with no tax increases next week. Thank you, Madam President.