

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2) 1062/00-01
(These minutes have been seen by
the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/EA

LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs

Minutes of the meeting
held on Tuesday, 5 December 2000 at 2:30 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members Present** :
- Prof Hon NG Ching-fai (Chairman)
 - Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Deputy Chairman)
 - Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
 - Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
 - Hon Bernard CHAN
 - Hon WONG Yung-kan
 - Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yea, JP
 - Hon CHOY So-yuk
 - Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
 - Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
 - Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
 - Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
 - Dr Hon LO Wing-lok
 - Hon LAU Ping-cheung
- Members Absent** :
- Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
 - Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
 - Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
 - Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung
- Public Officers Attending** :
- Mr Kim SALKELD
Deputy Secretary for the Environment and Food

 - Mr Donald TONG
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment and Food

Mr C C LAY
Assistant Director (Conservation)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Mr J K CHAN
Senior Wetland & Fauna Conservation Officer
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Mr P Y TAM
Assistant Director / New Territories
Planning Department

Item IV

Mr Kim SALKELD
Deputy Secretary for the Environment and Food

Ms Annie CHOI
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment and Food

Dr Lawrence WONG
Principal Environmental Protection Officer
Environmental Protection Department

Item V

Mr Thomas CHOW
Deputy Secretary for the Environment and Food
(Division C)

Mr Howard CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment and Food
(Division C)

Mr TSE Chin-wan
Assistant Director for the Environmental Protection (Air)

Clerk in Attendance : Mrs Constance LI
Chief Assistant Secretary (2) 5

Staff in Attendance : Ms Joanne MAK
Senior Assistant Secretary (2) 2

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I. Confirmation of minutes of meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2000 were confirmed.

II. Date of next meeting and items for discussion
(LC Papers Nos. CB(2) 397/00-01(01) and (02))

Items for discussion at the next regular meeting

2. Members agreed that the next regular meeting of the Panel should be held on 2 February 2001 as scheduled to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration-

- (a) Progress report on environmental protection; and
- (b) Stage II phase I work of the Central, Western and Wan Chai West sewerage - contract 143DS.

3. On item (a) above, DS(EF) said that the Administration would provide a composite paper on the achievements made to improve the pollution problems relating to air, water, noise and waste in the past ten years. The paper would also provide information on the present level of expenditure and work plans for environmental protection.

Discussion items for future meetings

4. Referring to the list of issues to be discussed, Members suggested that the following items should be accorded priority for discussion by the Panel-

- (a) Trial scheme of the electric light buses - the Administration would provide a discussion paper around February/March 2001;
- (b) Greenhouse effect - the Administration proposed to discuss the subject in the second quarter of 2001;
- (c) Greening policy - a joint meeting with the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works would be held to discuss the subject which would include the wider landscaping policy; and
- (d) Measures on non-vehicular emissions - the discussion should include emissions generated by incineration.

5. On paragraph 4 (d) above, Dr LO Wing-lok requested the Administration to provide information on the impact of air pollution on public health, such as the number of respiratory or other related illnesses recorded during the period

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of serious air pollution. DS(EF) responded that a lot of work had been done in this respect by the Departments of Community Medicine of the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. It would take some time to compile and analyze the data collected. DS(EF) said that there was no evidence worldwide that air pollution had a direct relationship with a particular health problem. He would check with the universities and the Department of Health to see if there was any updated information in this area.

III. Protection of wetlands in Hong Kong
(LC Paper No. CB(2) 397/00-01 (03))

Policy on the protection of wetlands

6. Assistant Director (Conservation) (AD(C)) of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) briefed members on the salient points of the Administration's paper. He pointed out that according to the Ramsar Convention which came into effect in 1975 to provide for international cooperation in the conservation and wise use of wetlands, "wetlands" included a wide range of habitats like marshes, swamps, ponds, rivers, irrigated lands, reservoirs and lakes. He said that Hong Kong was obliged to protect wetlands as China was a party to the Ramsar Convention.

7. AD(C)/AFCD said that Hong Kong had about 10 000 hectares of wetlands, and a breakdown was given in paragraph 5 of the Administration's paper. The policy was to prevent the loss of important wetland resources, minimize detrimental impact on wetlands from adjacent development, and compensate for losses incurred due to unavoidable development projects. Under this policy, the Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay area were designated in 1995 as a wetland of international importance (i.e. a Ramsar site) as it supported large numbers of migratory birds. AFCD was the Ramsar Administrative Authority responsible for the conservation management of the Ramsar site, and it worked in close partnership with the green groups. A Wetland Advisory Committee (WAC) was also set up in 1998.

Land use planning control

8. AD(C)/AFCD said that the Town Planning Board had designated a Wetland Conservation Area (WCA) and a Wetland Buffer Area (WBA) for the Deep Bay area. New development was normally not allowed within the WCA. Development within the WBA had to be subject to an ecological impact assessment to prevent any development that would have a negative impact on the area around.

9. AD(C)/AFCD said that apart from the Deep Bay area, wetlands of great conservation value were zoned "Sites of special scientific interest",

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"Conservation areas" and "Coastal Protection areas" where development was normally not permitted. For development in other wetlands zoned "Agriculture" and "Green belt", prior approval had to be obtained from the Town Planning Board. As regards wetlands within the existing country parks, they were also protected by the Country Parks Ordinance.

Environmental Impact Assessment

10. AD(C)/AFCD pointed out that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance also provided a mechanism for the protection of wetlands, as described in paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Administration's paper. Work that might cause disturbance to wetlands of ecological importance could not start unless the Director of Environmental Protection approved the EIA report and issued an environmental permit under the EIA Ordinance.

Study on Wetland Compensation

11. AD(C)/AFCD explained that since wetlands in the New Territories were subject to increasing development pressure, the project-by-project assessment approach under the EIA Ordinance was not very effective in identifying and compensating for the effects of development on wetland resources. In 1998, AFCD had commissioned the Study on Wetland Compensation to obtain systematic baseline information on the types of existing wetlands and their ecological value, in order to develop criteria for ranking their ecological importance and plans for conservation of important wetlands.

Conservation policy review

12. AD(C)/AFCD said that in parallel with the on-going Study on Wetland Compensation, the Administration also conducted a comprehensive review of the nature conservation policy to assess the adequacy of existing conservation measures for all types of natural habitats. DS(EF) added that while Hong Kong currently provided statutory protection for a large area of land for conservation purposes, some important sites might not be adequately covered. The Administration also wanted to review whether the current protection was effectively achieving the objective of conservation. Through the review, the Administration hoped to develop criteria for the selection of important conservation sites and to justify mitigating measure or compensation that might be required. He pointed out that conservation of important habitats located on private land was a very complex issue as it often involved legislation and financial resources.

13. DS(EF) said that while there was general consensus that more should be done for preserving Hong Kong's natural heritage, it would require scientific data and analysis to justify decisions made on conservation. Moreover, the Administration also had to ensure that various social demands, such as housing,

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education and transport needs were met. DS(EF) said that a number of studies were being carried out to develop a database for ecological resources, and the findings of a biodiversity survey just completed by the University of Hong Kong were being evaluated by AFCD. The Administration would coordinate the findings of the policy review, the Study on Wetland Compensation and AFCD's evaluation in order to draw up recommendations on new conservation measures for public consultation in 2001.

Discussion

14. Mr Albert CHAN welcomed the open approach on wetland compensation. He pointed out that quite a substantial area of wetlands in Hong Kong, such as most of the WBA for Mai Po, were in private ownership. He said that if the Administration was to deal with wetland resources based on the existing mechanism of land resumption and compensation, the financial implications would be quite substantial which he believed would be more than \$16 billion.

15. Mr Albert CHAN added that under the current conservation policy, many private lands were classified as sites of ecological value and there were restrictions in development. Some of these landowners therefore sold their land in WBA at very low prices to large developers who were able to convince the Town Planning Board to issue permits for residential development in the area. Mr Albert CHAN considered this unfair to the landowners concerned and urged the Administration to review the present arrangement.

16. Mr Albert CHAN suggested that for wetlands within WBA and where private development projects had been approved, Government should consider granting to the landowners concerned "certificates of rights" for exchange of land. Such certificates should also entitle the land-owners the reserved rights of development on the land in future. Mr CHAN further pointed out that the present price of agriculture land was \$90 per square feet, as compared to \$1 000 per square feet for land in new towns. It would be reasonable for ten square feet of agriculture land to be exchanged for one square feet of developed building area. Mr CHAN said that the proposed arrangement was not only fairer to the landowners concerned but could also relieve the Government from the financial pressure arising from land resumption and compensation in respect of wetlands within WBA. He added that similar arrangements had actually been adopted by the Government years ago for the development of new towns and had proved to be effective.

17. DS(EF) responded that most of the conservation area was agricultural land and it must not be assumed that it would have development rights or development potential. He said that the Administration sought to provide an open system on the basis of fair principles in dealing with wetland compensations. To do so, it would be necessary for the Administration to

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obtain scientific data to justify decisions in relation to the development of or compensation for any particular site.

18. Mr Albert CHAN clarified that he was not concerned about the ordinary agricultural land but those that had been classified as sites of ecological value, such as the WBA for Mai Po, Long Valley, Sha Lo Cave and the zone adjacent to Deep Bay. He pointed out that about 80% of the WBA in Mai Po were in private hands. However, the landowners concerned were not allowed to carry out any works on their land nor could they seek compensation from Government. He considered the present policy unreasonable to these landowners. He urged the Administration to conduct a feasibility study on his proposal in paragraph 16 above.

19. Assistant Director / New Territories (AD(NT)) of the Planning Department (PD) stressed that not all the wetlands on private land had development potential. He explained that under the TPB Guidelines, WBA had been divided into different zoning areas such as Wetland Restoration Area and Wetland Enhancement Area. He said that all applications for development within WBA had to be supported by ecological impact assessment to demonstrate that no negative impact would arise from such development. AD(NT)/PD assured members that there was no preferential treatment to large land developers for development projects in WBA. He pointed out that for cost-effectiveness, very often developers would propose large-scale development projects because dividing up the wetland would not serve any conservation purpose.

20. AD(C)/AFCD added that important wetlands could be located within agricultural area, conservation area or areas zoned for specific purposes by TPB. Depending on the ecological importance and development potentials of the wetland, there would be different considerations for compensation and conservation arrangements. He said that Mr Albert CHAN's suggestion would be taken into consideration in the Administration's review.

21. Mr LAU Ping-cheung opined that in considering wetland compensation, the Administration should take into account the intangible value of wetlands such as those described in paragraph 4 of the Administration's paper. He considered that the value of a piece of wetland should not only be measured by the market price of the land. He was of the view that zoning a piece of wetland on private land as a conservation area without any compensation was unfair to the landowner concerned.

22. DS(EF) responded that the Administration was now examining a range of options that were equitable to the landowners. Details of the proposals would be put forward for public consultation in 2001. He agreed with Mr LAU that it was important to take into account all values of wetlands, and public views on the issue were welcomed.

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23. Ir Dr Raymond HO considered that given the scarcity of land in Hong Kong, there should be a balance between needs for conservation and development. To avoid wasting efforts in developing land which would later be declared a conservation zone, he suggested that information on wetlands and the restrictions on their development should be publicized as soon as possible. In this connection, he asked if the Administration maintained a register of wetlands in Hong Kong for public inspection.

24. DS(EF) replied that the on-going Study on Wetland Compensation was to conduct a survey of all existing wetlands and to assess their ecological value and adequacy of protection measures for the natural habitats. The Study also aimed at proposing plans for the conservation of important wetlands. Findings of the Study would be provided to the relevant policy bureaux and departments to facilitate the drawing up of plans for those areas.

25. DS(EF) pointed out that much information on wetlands was basically geological and was already available to town planners and the public. He agreed with Dr Raymond HO that land which had some conservation value did not necessarily mean that it must be protected as other social needs would need to be taken into consideration. However, releasing information on wetlands which would be protected might lead to people trying to destroy the ecological value of such land, in the hope that the land would then be allowed for development. Therefore, the Administration would not release such information until adequate safeguards were put in place to ensure that the ecological value of the wetlands concerned would be protected.

26. In response to Dr Raymond HO's further enquiry, DS(EF) assured members that the Administration would provide more information on wetlands which were considered important and must be protected for the community at large, after the public consultation exercise in 2001.

27. Responding to Dr Raymond HO, AD(C)/AFCD said that "wetland" was defined under the Ramsar Convention as "areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres". He undertook to provide the definition in writing.

(Post-meeting note : The Administration had subsequently provided the information which was issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 443/00-01 (01).)

28. Miss CHOY So-yuk welcomed the policy direction given in the Administration's paper. However, she considered that uncertainty about the conservation areas could lead to speculation. She therefore urged the

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Administration to provide information on those wetlands which would be classified as conservation areas, the measures for protection of wetland resources and the compensation proposals. DS(EF) responded that the Administration aimed to put forward detailed proposals on the way forward in 2001.

29. Mr WONG Yung-kan declared that he was a member of WAC. He said that he noted from paragraph 5 of the Administration's paper that fish ponds were a kind of wetland resources and there were 1 596 hectares of fish ponds in Hong Kong in 1999. He pointed out that Government had only provided limited financial assistance to fishermen to buy fish fry for their fish ponds. As fishermen were prohibited from putting nets around their fish ponds to prevent birds from flying in, much of the fish at the ponds had been eaten by birds. He considered that the Government should consider compensating the fishermen for their losses.

30. AD(C)/AFCD responded that Government was aware that there had been complaints from fishermen that fish cultured at fish ponds, particularly those located in the northwestern part of the New Territories, were eaten up by birds. The Administration had put in place mechanisms to foster communication with the fishermen on ways to solve the problem. A number of methods developed by AFCD to assist fishermen in preventing birds (mainly the Cormorant) from eating the fish at their fish ponds had proved to be effective. Mr WONG Yung-kan stressed that the Administration should provide more support to the fishermen to help them cope with the problem and balance the interests of the fishermen with the conservation need. AD(C) responded that the Administration would continue to work closely with the fisheries industry to seek improvement to the problem.

31. Mr WONG Yung-kan requested the Administration to provide information on areas zoned as agricultural land so that farmers could apply to Government for permission to farm on such land. Ms Cyd HO also expressed concern that Government had not taken proactive measures to encourage wetland conservation and to foster development of agriculture and fisheries activities on wetland. She considered that the Administration should provide more support to those farmers/fishermen who relied on their wetlands to make a living by fishing or farming. This would also encourage them to conserve the wetlands rather than selling them to developers.

32. DS(EF) responded that the Administration had introduced planning controls on the land use in order to protect wetlands. In addition, AFCD had implemented an outreach programme to introduce to fishermen/farmers better fishing/farming practices to bring about better products and more stable income. He said that the Administration recognized the need to provide incentives for landowners and farmers/fishermen to conserve important wetlands in their ownership. However, he did not agree that the solution was to pay the

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farmers/fishermen sufficient enough to offset what developers might be going to pay for the land. He emphasized that there must be good planning controls to preserve the natural habitats.

33. Mr Martin LEE said that Members belonging to the Democratic Party supported the policy on protection of wetlands. However, he pointed out that the community, including the media, did not understand the importance of wetlands and the need to conserve endangered bird species, as shown in the recent dispute over the proposed rail project in Long Valley. He therefore urged the Administration to enhance public awareness of the importance of conservation through public education programmes. He suggested that Government, and even the Chief Executive, should take the lead to explain the importance of nature conservation to large developers and businessmen. He said that conservation of wetland required the concerted efforts of all concerned.

34. DS(EF) agreed with Mr Martin LEE that public education was important. He said that some tertiary institutions were also providing educational programmes on wetlands for the public. He also noted that journalists in Hong Kong had started to take more interest in the subject. He added that the Administration would seek to provide a solid framework with scientific justifications for formulation of policies on nature conservation.

35. Referring to paragraph 18 of the Administration's paper, Mr Henry WU asked which department would be responsible for coordinating a priority list of wetlands for conservation efforts. DS(EF) replied that the Environment and Food Bureau (EFB) was responsible for coordinating the efforts to bring forward the conservation policy, while AFCD played the executive role on matters relating to conservation as well as agriculture and fisheries. A number of advisory bodies such as WAC had also been set up to monitor these issues. DS(EF) advised that the Administration aimed to ensure that sufficient controls were in place so that information on important wetlands could be made public without putting the important heritage at risk. The Administration planned to release proposals on a good range of options for public consultation in 2001, and the Legislative Council would be actively involved in the consultation and the decision-making process.

36. Ms Cyd HO suggested that the public consultation paper should explain the reasons for having a wetland conservation policy and the arguments for and against the policy. She said that the consultation paper should also provide various development options for the community to consider and decide. For example, she noted that an alternative alignment had been proposed by green groups for the Lok Ma Chau spur line project. DS(EF) noted the comments.

37. On the interface with the overall transport need, Mrs Miriam LAU noted that Government had previously abandoned the proposal of designating a 68-

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hectare area in Lok Ma Chau as the cargo handling support area for the transport industry. To prepare for the increase of cargo trade given China's impending accession to the World Trade Organization, Mrs LAU urged the Administration to consider resuming the provision of the cargo support area to the industry.

38. AD(NT)/PD responded that an area of some 50-hectare in San Tin (near Ngau Tam Mei) would be zoned as a cargo handling support area. Consideration would be given to identifying further suitable land in the vicinity as necessary.

39. Mrs Miriam LAU also urged the Administration to confirm the implementation of a Lok Ma Chau spur line to ease the heavy cross-border traffic. DS(EF) responded that he was not in the position to comment on the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau spur line project as an appeal had been lodged. As a general point, he said that the spirit of the EIA Ordinance was to ensure that the environmental issues were properly taken into account in the course of urban development. Nevertheless, the Administration could consider ways to improve the procedures in listening to views and balancing the needs for environmental protection and social/economic development. He said that representatives from the Works Bureau, Transport Bureau and other relevant parties would be involved in the Study on Wetlands, as EFB would not have an absolute claim on the priorities for conservation.

40. Referring to paragraph 12 of the Administration's paper, Mrs Miriam LAU enquired whether approval had ever been given for infrastructural projects to be carried out on wetlands by compensating parties concerned for their losses incurred. DS(EF) replied that there were a number of such cases, for example, the major drainage channels in the northeast New Territories had taken through on the recommendations of the relevant EIA studies with compensatory measures. He added that over 30 EIA studies had in fact been approved since the enactment of the EIA Ordinance and many were approved with compensation measures.

IV. Proposed amendment to Waste Disposal (Refuse Transfer Station) Regulation (Cap.354)
(LC Paper No. CB(2) 397/00-01 (04))

41. At the Chairman's invitation, DS(EF) briefed members on the Administration's proposals as summarized in paragraph 17 of the paper.

42. Mr Henry WU declared that he was a member of the Eastern District Council. He asked if it was possible to shorten the waste transfer route by delivering the waste handled by the Island East Transfer Station (IETS) to the Southeast New Territories (SENT) Landfill instead of the West New Territories

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(WENT) Landfill.

43. DS(EF) replied that the municipal solid waste from Island East, Island West and West Kowloon was transferred by purpose-built vessels carrying a large number of containers. While WENT Landfill was specifically designed to have waterfront access for transfer of waste from vessels to the landfill, the SENT Landfill did not have such facilities. Principal Environmental Protection Officer (PEPO) added that there would be practical difficulty to deliver a large number of containers to SENT Landfill as it did not have any barging point.

44. Ms Cyd HO noted that the Administration had entered into contracts for a duration of 10 to 15 years with contractors of the refuse transfer stations (RTSs). She asked whether these contracts and the RTS facilities already in place would be impediments to the Administration in exploring alternative waste management methods. Ms HO further said that if waste recycling became successful in Hong Kong leading to significant reduction in the waste load to be handled by RTS, one or two RTSs might have to be closed. She asked about the amount of compensation that would have to be paid to the contractors due to early termination of contracts.

45. DS(EF) responded that the present contracts with the RTS contractors would not restrict the Administration to make use of other methods to segregate and reduce the waste at source. He explained that the RTS was to handle the waste after the processes of waste separation and collection. In fact, the Administration was exploring if space was available at some of the RTSs for recovery of materials which could not be effectively separated at the earlier stage. Moreover, he believed that even with the best endeavour to separate and reduce waste, there would still be a great demand for RTS to transfer the waste to the landfill. He therefore did not envisage a need for closing down any RTS.

46. Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment and Food (PAS(EF)) added that the RTS contracts should not be affected even if there were changes to the waste intake. PEPO said that the contracts had also provided that in the event of early termination of contract, the contractor could apply for compensation. The amount of compensation would take into account the remaining number of years of the contract and the loss of the contractor.

47. Mr LAW Chi-kwong said that he had no objection to the proposals of opening up the Island West Transfer Station (IWTS) to private waste collectors and charging these collectors \$40 per tonne for handling municipal solid waste. However, he was concerned that the Administration might have underestimated the impact on the road traffic in the vicinity of IWTS and Pokfulam Road. He suggested that the Administration should consider increasing the IWTS charges when such problems arose in order to encourage waste

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collectors servicing Island South to use IETS instead.

48. PAS(EF) responded that the Administration had carefully considered the implications on the traffic capacity of the roads in the area before making the proposals. She explained that IWTS would mainly handle waste from the Central and Western District and some areas on Island South. Waste collectors servicing Island East would be encouraged to use IETS with a reduction in charges at IETS to \$40 per tonne (i.e. same as IWTS charges). She said that the Administration would closely monitor the traffic conditions and report the situation to the relevant District Councils (DCs) a few months after implementation of the proposals.

49. Miss CHOY So-yuk declared that she was a member of the Eastern District Council. She said that she had no strong views on the Administration's proposal if this was a short-term measure. However, she considered that the priority should be to promote waste recycling rather than reducing RTS charges as this might have the effect of encouraging disposal of waste at landfills. Miss CHOY also expressed concern that the proposed abolition of the peak-hour surcharge in the morning would increase the use of the RTS service in the morning, which would have adverse impact on the traffic load and the handling time at the RTSs during peak periods.

50. PAS(EF) responded that the proposed abolition of peak-hour surcharge for IETS and the West Kowloon Transfer Station (WKTS) was based on experience in past years that the higher charges at peak hours had not deterred users from using the service in the morning. She added that IETS and WKTS would be able to cope with a higher patronage resulting from the reduction in charges and abolition of the peak-hour surcharge.

51. Mr Henry WU expressed reservations about the proposal of dispensing with the peak hour and non-peak hour charge differential for IETS together with a reduction in charges. He was worried that the increased patronage of IETS would aggravate the traffic problems on Island East. He suggested that the Administration should substantiate its proposals with an assessment of the traffic capacity of the affected areas on Island East and provide the information to the Eastern District Council.

52. PAS(EF) responded that the overall traffic situation on Hong Kong Island would improve if waste collected from Island East was delivered to IETS rather than to IWTS or to SENT. PEPO added that at present there were only 7 waste collection vehicles transferring waste to IETS, 26 to WKTS and 20 to NLTS each day. The Administration aimed at increasing the total numbers of these waste collection vehicles by five-fold (i.e. a total of some 200 vehicles each day) by the proposed reduction in charges. The Administration was of the view that the number of additional waste collection vehicles delivering waste to RTSs should be manageable.

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53. In response to Mr Henry WU, PEPO said that the Central and Western District Council had been consulted in October 2000 on the proposal of opening IWTS to private waste collectors. Mr Henry WU and Miss CHOY So-yuk were of the view that the Eastern District Council should also be consulted since the traffic in the district would probably be affected by the proposed arrangements. DS(EF) noted the suggestion. He stressed that the number of additional waste collection vehicles going to each RTS would be very small compared with the number of other transportation vehicles. He said that the Administration would review the situation after implementing the proposals for a few months.

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V. Vapour recovery of dry cleaning machines
(LC Paper No. CB(2) 397/00-01 (04))

54. Due to inadequate time for discussion, the Chairman suggested that discussion of this item be deferred to the next regular meeting. Members agreed.

VI. Any other business

Overseas duty visit

55. Ms Cyd HO proposed that the Panel should conduct a visit to those overseas countries which had adopted advanced sewage treatment technology, such as the Biological Aeration Filter, which was recommended by the International Review Panel on the Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme (SSDS). She considered that the experience of these countries in sewage treatment would be useful to Hong Kong, and the Panel should have a better understanding of such technology to facilitate further deliberations on the SSDS options. She suggested that the visit could be made during long holidays. Mr Tommy CHEUNG and Miss CHOY So-yuk expressed support for the proposal. Miss CHOY added that the Panel should also take the opportunity to look at the waste disposal/recycling measures in these countries as well.

56. The Chairman reminded members that The Legislative Council Commission had decided that, under normal circumstances, the number of delegates sponsored for an overseas duty trip should be limited to no more than six for a parliamentary visit and four for other overseas duty visits. The Chairman said that he would discuss with the Secretariat to work out the visit programme and budget for members' consideration.

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(*Post-meeting note* : A paper on the proposed visit was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 381/00-01 dated 29 December 2000.)

57. The meeting ended at 4:30 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat

16 March 2001